

Enquiry into Poverty  
Reduction in Asia

**Who cares for  
Asia's poor?**



Front cover  
CIDA Photos: David Barbour, Cindy Andrew  
and Virginia Boyd

Back cover  
CIDA Photos: Roger LeMoyne, Cindy Andrew  
and Ron Watts

For more information, please contact:

Canadian International Development Agency  
200 Promenade du Portage  
Hull, Quebec  
K1A 0G4

Phone: (819) 997-5006  
Fax: (819) 953-6088

Internet address: <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca>

ISBN:

Version disponible en français  
March 2000

## Foreword from the Vice-President, Asia Branch

**Hau Sing Tse**  
**Vice-President, Asia Branch**  
**Canadian International Development**  
**Agency**

As a learning organization, we at CIDA feel it is very important to take stock of what we've been doing over the past 30 years, to learn from past experiences about which of our initiatives have truly reached and helped the poor and to base our current thinking and practice on this type of knowledge.

The project and the process described in this book began in August 1998 and involved many Asia Branch staff, more than 300 participants from Canadian civil society and hundreds of Asians living in poverty who told us their views.

We wanted to understand more about how poverty was changing in Asia and to find better ways to contribute to its reduction. The process we used meant learning from staff and from our partners in both Canada and Asia about what they thought were the key factors contributing to poverty in Asia and what we at CIDA could do about it. We have emerged from the process with a new commitment to increasing the well-being of Asians living in poverty and developing a set of tools that will help us to carry out this challenge.

In recognition of its innovative and inclusive work, the Poverty Reduction Project Team was presented with the President's Award of Excellence in November 1999. The project team found ways to involve both program and administrative staff in Hull and in the field. They created new ways of working in teams across divisions; provided an opportunity for Asia Branch staff to meet Canadians working on similar issues domestically; helped develop new partnerships and motivated actions to renew our focus on and attention to poverty.

My thanks to all those who were involved in CIDA, in Canada and in Asia.

**The Asia Branch Poverty Reduction Project has drawn on the skills of many people. We would like to thank everyone who has participated in our work, especially:**

The Project Team  
Janet Dunnett  
Brian Hunter  
Lynn McGuire  
Claude Michaud

The Project Advisory Group  
Syed Sajjadur Rahman  
Jill Heyde  
Lilly Nichols  
Jason Phillips  
Julia Robinson  
Eileen Stewart

Asia Branch Personnel who 'Adopted a Dialogue'

Nick Adams-Aston  
Bill Anderson  
Masuda Anwar  
Gerard Bellanger  
Melanie Boyd  
Laurie Clifford  
Denise Conway  
Dean Frank  
David Gillies  
Claude Goulet  
Jamie Graves  
Anil Gupta  
Bob Hamilton  
Rod Haney  
Michel Hardy  
Adair Heuchan  
Carla Hogan Rufelds  
Pauline Kehoe  
Joe Knockhaert  
Vickie Koskela  
Ted Langtry  
Eric Laporte  
Richard Lariviere  
Alan Leber  
Sarada Leclerc  
Jean Marc Métivier  
Marie Powell  
Wally Redekop  
Henry Rempel  
Aliza Rudner  
Stuart Salter  
Tom Schatzky  
Rajkumari Shanker  
Jason Storm

Simon Thiboutot  
Peggy Thorpe  
Brian Weller  
Anne Woodbridge  
CIDA Staff from other Branches who Participated in a Dialogue  
Marilyn Blaeser (Policy)  
Jacinthe Desmarais (Multilateral)  
John Deyell (Partnership)  
Ellen Hagerman (Continuous Learning)  
John Lobsinger (Policy)  
Ian MacGillivray (Policy)  
Kerry Max (Policy)  
Ardith Molson (Multilateral)  
Geeta Narayan (Policy)  
Martha Nelems (Policy)  
Lilly Nicholls (Policy)  
Nalini Perera (Partnership)  
Martin Ruel (Partnership)  
Jeea Saraswati (Policy)  
John Saxby (Partnership)  
Tamara Sequeira (Policy)

Website Gurus  
Sam Lanfranco (IDRC/Bellanet)  
Claude Michaud  
France Patry

Those who Made Possible the Consultations with the Poor  
Peter Berkeley, CIDA  
Elizabeth Cooper, Youth Intern  
Faruq Faisel, South Asia Partnership  
Richard Harmston, South Asia Partnership  
Peter Hoffman, CIDA  
M. Laktakia, Indo-Canadian Shastri Institute  
Cindy Lund, Indo-Canadian Shastri Institute  
Lavinia Mohr, Indo-Canadian Shastri Institute  
Tom Schatzky, CIDA

Institutions who Co-hosted a Dialogue in Partnership with Asia Branch  
Betty Plewes, Canadian Council on International Co-operation (CCIC)  
Hussein Amery, Association of Community Colleges of Canada  
Julie Delahanty, Asia Pacific Working Group, of CCIC  
James Chauvin, Canadian Public Health Association  
Barbara MacDonald, Canadian Teachers Federation  
Mike Farrell, National Anti Poverty Organisation  
Dr. Roger Buckland, MacDonald College of McGill University

Mary Coyle, Coady International Institute, St. Francis Xavier University  
Jan Walls, David Lam Center for International Communication, Simon Fraser University  
Deborah Turnbull, Association of Manufacturers and Exporters of Cda.  
Brian Gilligan, Somerset West Community Health Centre  
Christopher Smart, International Development Research Centre  
Lynne Toupin, Canadian Cooperatives Association  
Ghislain Paradis, Développement International Desjardins  
Rita Parikh, InterPares  
Daniel Buckles, International Development Research Centre

Those who Provided us with Technical, Administrative and Moral Support, and Photographs!

Pierre St. Amour  
Bill Anderson  
Janet Atchison  
Stephen Augustine, Canadian Museum of Civilization  
Faizal Beg  
Melanie Boyd  
Mary Bramley  
Anne Charette  
Laurie Clifford  
Elise Doucet  
June Emmerson  
Steve Gibbons  
Lynn McGuire  
Mario Renaud  
Tom Schatzky  
Suzanne Schnobb  
Francois Siest  
Louise Verdon  
Ian Wright

Consultants

Lisa Armstrong (Virtual Dialogues)  
Emmanuelle Beaudoin (Jobs and Education Dialogues)  
Bronwyn Best (Roots of Poverty and Private Sector Dialogues)  
Karina Griffith (Designer of book)  
Colleen Hoey (Researcher)  
Tara Hughes (Researcher)  
Marc LeBlanc (Health Dialogue)  
Carrie McAfee (Equity and Devolution Dialogues)  
Ozay Mehmet (Researcher)  
Omar Odeh (Health Dialogue)  
Zahra Popatia (Environment Dialogue)  
David Singh (Dialogue with the NGO community)

Elizabeth Smith (Our Common Agenda  
Dialogues and mentor of young  
professionals)

Shawna Stonehouse (Roots of Poverty  
and Private Sector Dialogues)

Ania Wasilewski (Rapporteur and  
Writer)

Suzanne White (Researcher)

# Table of Contents

## Executive

Summary.....7

Introduction.....  
12

### Chapter 1

**What We Heard through the Consultations with the  
Poor.....14**

### Chapter 2

**What We Heard through the**

**Dialogues.....22**

**Dialogues with the Canadian NGO Community and the Canadian Private  
Sector.....23**

**Tomorrow's Jobs: Preparing Asian workers for the  
millennium.....33**

**Social Partnerships: Do they serve the poor?.....38**

**The Link Between Health and Poverty in Asia: What makes the difference?..43**

**How do we educate for the millennium when few know how to read?.....48**

**A Just Society: Can social rights be legislated?.....53**

**The Agriculture Connection: Making it work for Asia's poor.....58**

**From Striving to Thriving: Building on the assets and opportunities of Asia's  
women.....63**

**The Good Governance and Prosperity Link: Practical approaches to  
strengthening governance in Asia.....69**

**Universal Access to Infrastructure Services: A business case.....75**

**Co-operatives mean business: Strengthening partnerships between co-operatives  
in Asia and Canada.....81**

**Food Security at the Grassroots: An Ecological Perspective.....86**

**The Environment Component.....91**

**Tradition, Values and the Process of Change.....94**

### Chapter 3

**What Happened during the  
Project.....101**

**Chapter 4**

**Looking  
Ahead.....105**

**Appendix 1**

**Net Learning: Report on the Process of the Internet  
Dialogues.....109**

**Appendix 2**

**Messages from  
Participants.....113**

**Appendix 3**

**Conceptual Framework of Rural Livelihood and  
Poverty.....127**

**Appendix 4**

**List of Participating  
Organizations.....128**

**Appendix 5**

**List of Dialogue  
Participants.....130**

# Executive Summary

In September 1998, the Asia Branch of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) began an intensive yearlong effort to better understand the changing nature of poverty in Asia, find improved ways to contribute to its reduction and develop a new approach to poverty reduction for the Branch. We launched our process with the simple question: Who cares for Asia's poor?

This book details our explorations and discoveries. All in all, it was an extraordinary year of capturing knowledge from Asia Branch and CIDA staff, from our partner organizations in development, from the poor in Asia, and from civil society actors working on similar issues in Canada. We have tried to document what we learned and how we did it, in the hope that this may prove a useful tool to those interested in reducing poverty in Asia and to those embarked on similar participatory learning processes.

Over the past year, other international institutions have also undertaken this kind of work — namely, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. And within CIDA, other branches have explored ways in which to emphasize our commitment to poverty reduction as our *raison d'être*.

Asia Branch's approach has been unique within the Agency in that it has involved hundreds of Canadians and Asians through 'face-to-face' and virtual meetings and dialogues. Our whole premise has been that even after 30 years, there is much to share with and learn from our partners in Canada and Asia.

## What we did

Our 'participatory enquiry' began with a core group of 'new-to-CIDA' staff. We asked them to identify the key issues that needed to be understood when looking at poverty in Asia. From this process we developed a series of

15 'face-to-face' dialogues, ranging from agriculture to gender to basic education to environment and co-hosted by leading Canadian organizations.

Many CIDA staff participated in the dialogues — by suggesting key participants and speakers, reviewing the background 'table documents', and co-chairing the actual dialogues. Even more attended the dialogues which took place in Ottawa and across the country. We talked to and learned from more than 300 other Canadian experts in civil society — from universities and colleges, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, the aboriginal community, municipal administrations, provincial departments, community health centres, immigrant organizations and various other groups.

The participatory nature of the dialogues allowed everyone involved to share their unique perspectives. In turn, this created new awareness and enthusiasm within the Branch, in CIDA and beyond. The dialogue process has perhaps been one of the major contributions of this exploration — an opening of new doors and new ways of working with and learning from a wide range of partners not necessarily associated with international development but still offering valuable lessons and insights.

The dialogues proved to generate so much thinking that participants didn't want to stop talking at the end of the sessions. So, we established a series of continuing 'virtual' dialogues on the Internet and opened them to the world. A group of 30 Asia Branch staff offered to act as moderators for these Internet discussions — and learned how to do so. Through the wonders of cyberspace we were even able to put together a 'missing' dialogue — on the links between environment and poverty reduction. This final dialogue took place entirely through the Internet.

At the same time as we were 'dialoguing', we asked Asia Branch staff to share their ideas with us on a large whiteboard posted at our

offices in Hull. 'The Wall' became a place where staff could identify and prioritize the factors that they believe are critical to reducing poverty. Among other insights we learned that in their view, acquiring and using basic education was the most important factor in reducing poverty.

While all this was going on, a parallel 'structured research' process, led by Asia Branch Chief Economist, Brian Hunter, was taking place. This included looking at all current Branch projects to determine their impact on poverty reduction, reviewing the activities and approaches of other organizations such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme, and developing a framework within which to analyze poverty in any context. The participatory enquiry and this structured process fed into each other, neither process alone was sufficient to meet our needs.

Last but certainly not least — indeed most important of all — we heard from poor people in Asia about how they perceived poverty. Their voices came to us through three special reports produced by the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute, the South Asia Partnership and a young Canadian intern in Vietnam, Elizabeth Cooper.

## What we learned

First, that economic growth is necessary but not sufficient to reduce poverty. The financial crisis in Asia clearly demonstrated this principle as hundreds of thousands of Asians slipped back into poverty, while millions of others never managed to escape.

Second, poverty is not related simply to income or basic needs — it reaches far beyond these concepts and is fundamentally linked to the ability to participate in the decisions that affect one's life. As we listened to Canadian and Asian experts, the idea of 'well-being' kept coming up. It reflects more accurately that poverty is not static, it moves

about and changes shape and can grow and recede in response to opportunities or vulnerabilities. We learned that, in our policy work and program/project planning, we need to look at the multiple elements of poverty; to dig deeper and examine the root causes of poverty and how they interact; and to find out what leads to 'prosperity production' in specific local situations.

Third, it is clear that that the poor can define what well-being means in their own communities and regions. Our role is to ensure that we ask the right questions. Development that is sustainable, must go beyond the band-aid solutions, although these bring welcome relief for a few for a while. We need to develop strategies that address the root causes of poverty. This can best be done by involving the poor — the men and women who actually live, work and endure poverty on a daily basis — in the selection, design and evaluation of the projects we undertake. Fourth, change does not happen overnight. Longer time-frames are required for projects that attempt to change structures. Sometimes the entire first year of a project must be dedicated to understanding the local context and simply getting the right people on board and the right processes in place. This long-term process needs to be accepted and valued as important to the final success of the project in reducing poverty.

The consultations with the poor demonstrated that poor people know exactly what type of assistance they need and want. As participants in India said: "Being poor means not having personal, economic or political independence. Well-being implies a life of personal dignity with social and political equality and the ability to make economic choices." Almost all of the participants believe the state should provide them with basic services and infrastructure. They want a government that has the courage to govern fairly. They see education and health care as important for a higher quality of life in the future. Their hope for a better life focuses on their children.

Our job requires us to listen to what the poor say and to make room in our projects, programs and policies for what we hear. There is no one solution, no silver bullet, no single strategy that will eradicate poverty. Every situation poses different challenges and opportunities; a different set of contributing factors.

Poverty reduction efforts can be direct or indirect, focused on improving the situation of small groups of people at the micro-level, on institutional change at the meso-level or on policy change at the macro-level. These efforts can fall into any one or any combination of CIDA's six priorities — basic human needs; gender equality; infrastructure services; human rights, democracy and good governance; private sector and environment. All of these efforts can lead to poverty reduction if we can identify and articulate the root causes of poverty, make the links between what we are doing to ameliorate the situation and who will benefit, understand how and why poor people make decisions and ensure that stakeholders are involved in local planning processes. In short, communities must 'own' the project and the process.

The structured research process which paralleled our participatory enquiry has resulted in the development of a new framework or lens for looking at poverty. This framework has been informed by the dialogues and provides a way to deal with the multiple, competing or interacting factors that define poverty in any particular situation, enabling the holistic analysis needed to address root causes, not just symptoms of poverty. As we learn to use the framework over the coming year, it will be adapted and strengthened based on comments from staff and emerging research from all corners of the globe. It will be a key tool for the Branch in its poverty analysis.

All of the knowledge that has been captured through the participatory enquiry and the structured research process has helped Asia Branch to review its strategies and work

processes. It is expected that **the primary goal of all our work will be to increase the well-being of Asians living in poverty — through project, program and policy level interventions that will systematically reduce poverty and eliminate the root causes of poverty.** An updated Bilateral Strategy in Asia, and a new Poverty Reduction Operational Framework will help focus this learning into action.

We will take to heart what we heard from the poor and begin to learn how participatory approaches, properly applied, can increase our understanding at all stages of our work. We are mindful of the lessons learned from our dialogues — that it takes time to build long-term effective relationships that will sustain the impacts of a project beyond its funding, that poverty is a global issue, touching both Canadians and Asians and that learning should travel in both directions.

Whether we succeed or fail is up to all of us. We know that the challenge is immense but we now have a better understanding of the complexity of poverty. We are confident that the process was, and is, worthwhile.

---

## The Big Picture:

### Key Messages from the Dialogues

- We need to pay real attention to the poor — to know who they are, how and why they make their decisions, to listen to their analyses and needs before beginning a project or program, and during the life of the project or program.
- We need more complex definitions of poverty that go beyond \$1 per day or caloric intake and take into account levels of powerlessness and isolation.
- Poverty is a global issue — both Asians and Canadians face deteriorating family and social support networks, the challenge of dealing with diversified funding sources, the tensions of developing partnerships with government, the difficulties faced by survivors of sexual violence, the need for access to credit by women, and the importance of building children's self-esteem through education.
- Projects aimed at changing structures need longer time frames — sometimes the entire first year must be dedicated to understanding the local context and simply getting the right people on board and the right processes in place.
- Links must be made between macro level impacts and micro level impacts; between those who make policy and those who work at the grassroots. We need to develop and cultivate people who can journey up and down the ladder between these two realities, bringing the learning from one realm to the other and vice versa.
- We need to build into legally binding components into project contracts that specify how the project will benefit the poor.
- Development organizations should work only with communities and governments that have the willingness to change and are committed to decreasing poverty. Communities must 'own' the project/process if it is to succeed. Policy-makers must hear the voices of local people.
- The interconnectedness of interventions needs to be examined more closely -- complex relationships between sectors means that even the best work within one sector has to be part of a holistic framework to achieve lasting change.
- Policies are important -- bad policies undermine the best efforts of people to reduce poverty. But good policies must be grounded in a detailed understanding of the grassroots. We can't have one without the other.
- Education is the beginning of empowerment and poverty reduction in any and every sector.
- Small successes can trigger big changes when learning is shared and linkages are made.
- Change doesn't happen overnight. Our commitment needs to be long-term, our attitude patient. Results count but we need to value interim results not just the final product.
- The real challenge of poverty reduction is to reach the 'people outside the door' who have been excluded by the projects and programs meant for them.
- The private sector has a role to play in social partnerships with NGOs and in just about every aspect of poverty reduction. It is time to address the two solitudes and build a new paradigm of working together to improve all of our work.
- Growing good projects to scale is a challenge for poverty reduction. How do we move from one cow

to a herd? No project should rest on its laurels without considering where it should go next.

- We need a new development mindset where development 'professionals' have the courage to let people make their own mistakes, learn from these mistakes, and share these lessons with others.
  - Multi-pronged efforts are necessary to ensure social rights — creating public awareness of existing international instruments, changing legislation when appropriate, and enforcing international covenants if not through the courts then through public opinion. It is not enough to create regulatory mechanisms, we must also help to create the institutions that can enforce them.
  - We need increased transparency in governance and we need to build collective power between government and communities.
-

## Introduction

In September 1998, the Asia Branch of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) began an intensive year-long effort to better understand the changing nature of poverty in Asia, find improved ways to contribute to its reduction and develop a new poverty reduction strategy for the Branch. As the title of our report indicates, we asked ourselves a simple question at the outset of this project: "Who cares for Asia's poor?" The answer too, was simple: "We do." But throughout the year we discovered that we were not alone.

The project began with a core group of 'new-to-CIDA' staff. We asked them to identify the key issues that needed to be understood when coming to grips with the new poverty in Asia. From this process we developed a series of 15 face-to-face dialogues, addressing a range of questions from agriculture to gender to basic education and co-hosted by leading Canadian organizations.

Many CIDA staff participated — by suggesting key participants for the dialogues, reviewing the background 'table documents', and co-chairing the actual dialogues. Even more attended the dialogues which took place in Ottawa and across the country. In this way we were able to gather knowledge through what we are calling 'our participatory enquiry'. We heard from CIDA staff and we heard from more than 300 other Canadian experts in civil society — from universities and colleges, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, the aboriginal community, municipal administrations, provincial departments, community health centres, immigrant organizations and various other groups. This knowledge was recorded, distributed to all participants and posted on the Internet. A summary of all of this 'face-to-face' dialoguing can be found in Chapter 2. Certain key messages keep popping up and it is these we must take on board as we move forward. Other specific ideas and messages from

dialogue participants, which we value, are captured in Appendix 2.

The dialogues proved to be so energising that participants didn't want to stop talking at the end of the sessions. So we established a series of continuing 'virtual' dialogues on the Internet. A group of 30 CIDA staff offered to act as moderators for these Internet discussions — and learned how to do so. These interactive dialogues were the first Internet discussion groups hosted 'in house' on our own CIDA servers. We've learned a great deal that will help further efforts to reach out and beyond the walls of CIDA. Some of what we learned is shared in Appendix 2.

Through the wonders of cyberspace we were able to put together a 'missing' dialogue— on the links between environment and poverty reduction. This final dialogue was held entirely through the Internet with no face-to-face discussion to start the ball rolling, and has been summarized here as well.

At the same time as we were 'dialoguing', we also asked CIDA staff to share their ideas with us through 'The Wall', as it became known. Installed on the seventh floor of the CIDA offices in Hull, near our mailboxes and coffee machines, this became a place where staff could identify and prioritize the factors that they believe are critical to reducing poverty. We added this to our thinking about what to do and how to do it. Some of what we learned can be found in Chapter 3, which also looks at some of the spin-offs from the project throughout the year.

While all this was going on, another parallel 'structured research' process was taking place. This included looking at all current branch projects to determine their impact on poverty reduction, reviewing the activities and approaches of other organizations such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and developing a framework within which to analyze poverty in any context. This process was led by Brian Hunter, Chief

Economist for Asia Branch, and his team of researchers and built on work that had been carried out in collaboration with Policy Branch.

Last but certainly not least — indeed most important of all and that is why we have placed it first in this book — we needed to hear from poor people in Asia about how they perceived poverty. Their voices came to us in late summer through three special reports produced by the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute, the South Asia Partnership and a young Canadian intern. They allowed us to enter into the perspectives of those living in poverty in Cambodia, India, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Vietnam. These too have been summarized and are included in this publication in Chapter 1. Full detailed reports are available from the Strategic Planning and Policy Group in Asia Branch.

All in all, it was an extraordinary year of capturing knowledge — through dialogues, face-to-face and virtual; a review of Asia Branch projects and the current literature; consultations with the poor in Asia; 'The Wall'; and conversations in the hall and elevators with fellow colleagues. We found we were constantly adapting our own process as we moved along and learned from our partners, our interlocutors and our experiences. We have tried to document some of this in this report, and hope that it may prove useful to others embarked on similar participatory learning and strategy development processes.

We continue to believe that consultations with people who have a stake in what we do or who deal with similar issues on the domestic front are a good way to increase the quality and relevance of our work — our millennial world demands civil society participation. We care about Asia's poor and Asia Branch is committed to improving their well-being.

**Janet Dunnett**

**Poverty Reduction Project Team Leader**

**December 1999**

## Chapter 1

# What We Heard through the Consultations with the Poor

Co-Hosted by CIDA and South Asia Partnership and the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute

As we began this project, we wanted to hear the 'voices' of the men and women who actually live, work and endure poverty on a daily basis. During our 'face-to-face' dialogues in Canada, several partner organizations approached us with ideas on how to do this. As a result, in the summer of 1999, two Canadian non-governmental organizations, the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute and the South Asia Partnership, and their local partners, carried out a series of consultations in five Asian countries and talked to thousands of Asians living in poverty. They followed the same basic methodology as the recent World Bank consultations with the poor, but focused on countries not covered by the World Bank study. Their reports describe how poor people in Cambodia, India, Nepal, Pakistan and the Philippines perceive poverty and well-being, and define their priorities and constraints. A summary of their reports, as well as of a report by a young Canadian intern in Vietnam, follows. We have placed this section first in our book because it made such a big impression on us, our thinking and our process. The complete, detailed reports are available from Asia Branch and from the organizations themselves.

The Institute for Human Development in New Delhi, was engaged by its Canadian partner, the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute based in Calgary, to speak with poor people in two villages in each of three different Indian states (Bihar, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh). The six key researchers involved and their teams used participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques including social mapping and wealth ranking to understand how rural people perceive poverty and what criteria they use to distinguish

between the level of well-being of groups of households.

South Asia Partnership (SAP) based in Ottawa, engaged four of its local partners to talk to villagers in Cambodia (with the Cambodia Canada Development Program), Nepal (with South Asia Partnership Nepal), Pakistan (with South Asia Partnership Pakistan) and in the Philippines (with the Philippine Development Assistance Program). These organizations work primarily with community-based groups and were able to talk with people experiencing the worst conditions of poverty in their respective countries. They organized group discussions in 26 rural villages and urban communities and used a combination of formal questionnaires, focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews and a variety of other PRA tools to generate both quantitative and qualitative data. In their discussions with villagers, they explored four key areas: the concepts of well-being and the good life, contrasting them against popular notions of ill being and a poor quality of life; the priorities of the poor; the nature of local institutions and the various roles they play in reducing or deepening poverty; and gender relations.

In Vietnam, Elizabeth Cooper, a Canadian Youth Intern, led a team of two Vietnamese NGO workers and two photographers to the village of Ngai Hung in Tra Vinh province, and spoke directly with four families about their lives and how their standard of living had been affected by Typhoon Linda which hit the area two years ago.

The poor people in our villages valued a life of personal dignity in which they could make political, social and economic choices on an equal footing with all others.

This chapter summarizes the key findings from these on-the-ground consultations and offers several descriptions of what it means to be poor in Asia today. It must be pointed out that each study placed a great deal of emphasis on understanding local contexts, stakeholders, constraints and opportunities and warned repeatedly against making simple overarching generalizations.

## Voices of the Poor: Poverty in People's Perceptions in India

### ***The Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute***

The Shastri Report begins by describing participatory studies of poverty which reveal that poor people do not define poverty simply as being income poor. A wide range of criteria are used — health and physical disability feature prominently when poor people are asked to rank their own well-being. Income, if mentioned at all, appears to be ranked much lower. Considerable importance is attached to the concepts of freedom and dignity despite that fact that this may result in greater vulnerabilities as patron-client and secure employment decline.

Villages in India are going through common transition processes as they increase contacts and transactions with the 'outside' world. This is also creating opportunities for poor people to free themselves from the burden of bondage and oppressive systems of the past. Even though the development efforts of government agencies and NGOs have shortcomings, the poor are increasingly turning towards these agencies for relief and support, thereby eroding their dependence on local elites and the habit of subservience that this dependence breeds. At the same time, rural people are becoming increasingly politicized.

Policy-makers must be ready to sit with the poor and listen to what they have to say about development — their hopes and aspirations; their perceptions of the communities of which they are a part and about their own status in the community, their assessment of the course of development appropriate to their conditions as well as to the context in which they operate.

### ***Bihar***

In Bihar, almost 55% of the population lives below the poverty line and the state has the lowest per capita income and literacy rates of any state in India.

People here perceive poverty through the quality of one's land, type of house, education of children, type of medical facility that can be accessed and livelihood security. Women have internalized gender discrimination to the point where they consider the fact that even though they prepare the food, they eat last and only if there is food remaining, for them, this is part of their family's economic problems and not discrimination as such.

The villagers see the government functionaries as inaccessible, inefficient and corrupt. Although they view education as important, they believe the quality of schooling available is quite low and partly explains the low attendance levels. Even the poorest people in the village do not take ill family members to government hospitals because they cannot afford the bribes they say are needed in order to receive treatment and they resent the "callous attitude of the public health staff".

Families are viewed as prosperous if they are self-sufficient in food all year-round. Very poor and even poor families find it difficult to have two square meals a day year-round.

Participants said the problems which prevent their village from developing include: lack of wage employment, corruption, lack of marketing and credit facilities for agricultural

produce, lack of medical facilities, lack of housing, bad roads, lack of land, lack of electricity, lack of irrigation facilities, difficult access to drinking water, corruption by their representatives and neglect by politicians.

### ***Uttar Pradesh***

Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of people living below the poverty line in India and is deeply divided by hierarchical social structures. People here feel that escaping poverty is not simply a matter of freedom from hunger and acute economic deprivation but achieving human dignity. They do not like to call themselves 'poor'.

Most respondents do not believe they are able to move out of poverty. For rural residents, it is because they are in debt and unable to pay off high interest loans, necessary to buy seeds and equipment for rice cultivation. Urban dwellers believe that although the economy has improved, only the educated and the rich have been able to benefit. The most pressing problem for all respondents is the threat of hunger.

Economic, social and political inequality and poverty are seen as two sides of the same coin. In this state, the most fundamental inequality lies in the unequal access to land. Participants did concede that some things have changed — some of the most severe, but results vary across groups of people and villages. In the social and political sphere, poor people now exercise greater freedom and choice even though the socially and economically dominant groups are not reconciled to this change. At the economic level, people are more willing and able to exercise options such as out-migration. However, in some cases public policy changes have actually made things worse for poor people — for example, the forest dwellers who are now fighting with police and forest guards to retain their livelihoods. The concept of micro-credit loans which ensure plans now

evoke fear and fright among the poor. Government programs are mediated through more powerful individuals in the community and the voices of the poor are still not heard at the public policy level.

### ***Karnataka***

Karnataka is much more urbanized than Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and has a slightly lower percentage of people below the poverty line than India as a whole. Poor people in the case studies in this state saw lack of access to land and irrigation, dependence on wage labour as the main source of income, and subsistence farming as indicators of poverty. They also regard dependence on others — government programs, middlemen for loans, large cultivators for agricultural inputs — as a sign of poverty. Compulsion to vote according to the dictates of caste leaders is also seen as a mark of poverty. They identified personal factors such as education, capacity for hard work and thrift, enterprise, and readiness to migrate as factors that help move the poor out of poverty.

### **Key findings**

- Participants reported that land ownership (and the quality of the land) was the most crucial feature and that social caste (although long outlawed) is still an extremely significant factor — even within the same economic strata, upper castes have a better chance of improving their prospects.
- While the poor find unskilled wage labour with uncertain employment and earnings; the very poor may subsist only by collecting, foraging, borrowing or charity. Although the poor are often encumbered by debts, the very poor find it impossible to borrow.
- As the economic situation of the household improves, women participate in economic activities less and less.

A good quality of life is mirrored by the individual's state — a person who is not poor is of good health and disposition.

- Out-migration often provides a cushion for poor households and sometimes the opportunity to save earnings and improve their condition.
- In all three states, being very poor means always struggling to earn or find enough for their families to eat. Being poor means not having personal, economic or political independence.
- Poor people equate well-being with a life of personal dignity that implies social and political equality and the ability to make economic choices.
- The poor said that land distribution programs — not credit — provide the most additional security for poor households. In fact they said government programs such as IRDP (subsidized credit for asset generation) usually means increased vulnerability because of indebtedness.
- The TPDS (targeted public distribution system) which provides subsidized food grains to poor households did not benefit the villages in Bihar or UP (they didn't receive the grain), but did provide some security in Karnataka where they received the grain.
- Traditional forms of social capital are under stress — families cannot provide support to individuals, and there are only a few examples of social cooperation across castes.
- Participants could clearly see their development priorities and the links between them — their first priority was land, followed by basic physical and social infrastructure and the use of common areas.

## **Te Good, The Bad, The Well and the Ill: Popular perspectives on poverty from four Asian countries**

### ***South Asia Partnership Canada***

This report provides a snapshot of the lives and concerns of poor people in Cambodia, Nepal, Pakistan and the Philippines. It begins by defining well-being in a straightforward way — three meals a day, adequate housing, 'surplus essentials' and a sense that one's relationship to the family and the community is part of a vibrant and cohesive collective. But the dialogues show that well-being is a much more complicated concept that includes appeals for citizenship and change processes to overcome both physical, cultural and gender specific forms of isolation. The men and women interviewed in this study want access to basic infrastructure such as schools and hospitals, roads and bridges, and modern communications facilities. But this isn't enough — they also want access to markets and emerging economic opportunities. Well-being is closely tied to diverse concepts of security and the realities of risk.

What the poor value most is human dignity — something which can be achieved only by relying on them as agents of change.

### ***Cambodia***

For both rural and urban poor, well-being is defined as having enough food to eat and meeting the basic needs of the individual and the family (health, clothing, housing and employment). Ill-being is rooted in food and livelihood insecurity — for rural people lack of access to land or jobs; for urban people lack of jobs.

Rural people believe that they are better off now than 10 years ago and that they have more opportunities, but urban people feel they are worse off and have fewer opportunities. Indebtedness is a major problem for both rural and urban dwellers. For people in the urban areas, building trust between communities and

government is a critical element in successful development strategies.

### **Nepal**

Well-being is defined as having surplus food supplies; personal savings; access to employment, credit facilities and markets; cash income; low levels of crime; local police stations; livestock; a cement house and the ability to resist 'shocks'. Ill-being is defined as being exploited by rich people and/or corrupt landlords, suffering from a deteriorating environment and being subject to social problems such as alcoholism, gambling, robbery and sexual extortion.

Even the words security, opportunity, risk, crime and vulnerability have different meanings in different group situations. In one village it meant adequate food, clothing and savings; in another it meant protection from forest guards. In one village vulnerability was defined as children crying because of hunger.

Poverty in Nepal is increasing. People indicate that this is due to some combination of unemployment, lack of education and inability to save money. One widow from Saguntol Jootpani VDC Chitwan is in very poor condition due to her inability to find work on a regular basis. Because of her caste, she is unable to enter the houses where her three children work as servants. Illiteracy has forced her to work as a community labourer, but she often goes without food when work is unavailable. Another widow from the same village has found a way to support her family of four. She learned how to prepare simple dress patterns after attending a six-month training course, and was able to take out a loan to purchase a tailoring machine. Working out of her house, she sewed dresses for the women in her community and paid back the loan in a year.

Wage discrimination between men and women persists. The female literacy rate is

much lower than the male rate. There are reports that women are at increasing risk from dowry practices. At the same time, disputes between traditional groups are seen as quite rare. Increased co-operation is leading to joint projects. Women are very optimistic about the future.

### **Pakistan**

In both a fishing village and a farming village, well-being was defined as being able to meet basic needs — having enough to feed, clothe and house the family; and having access to education and health care. For farmers, having productive land is critical. However, participants said that rising social insecurity is leading to further vulnerability and poverty. They said lack of employment/education opportunities and poor government policies are key factors in increasing poverty. Being poor means not having life's essentials, and suffering from deteriorating family relationships and forced out-migration. In some cases, having a small family is now seen as a sign of prosperity.

Extreme poverty forced one elderly woman in the village of Ghazi Khan Mashori to return to work and supplement her family's income by making shawls (rullies). She says that large family, a mud house and frequent rainfall are factors of her poverty, in addition to the fact that uneducated people are forced to accept a lower wage. Despite gruesome poverty she feels pride in having educated her children. Even at the age of sixty, she wants to be educated.

Isolation is a common theme. Markets and facilities for business people, small farmers and fisher folk are far away. The communications and transportation infrastructure is unreliable and expensive. The poor feel they are increasingly disadvantaged and isolated — the rich have more productive land and access to modern equipment. Both fisher folk and farmers are forced to supplement their incomes by taking on second jobs to make ends meet. There is also a growing relationship between the deterioration

of the environment and local perceptions of well-being. The government appears to be unable or unwilling to enforce existing policies, invest in education which is seen as the most important factor in attaining a better quality of life, or deliver modern infrastructure or services.

### **Philippines**

Well-being is defined as food security, good quality housing, personal savings and access to education and health care. Again, as in the case of Nepal, the ability to ride out 'shocks' is seen as an indicator of well-being. Most of the poor are engaged in activities that are directly dependent on the quality of the resource base which is widely viewed as deteriorating. Ill-being is seen as the inability to provide life's necessities (three meals a day, secure employment or income, access to land or capital) and plan for the future. The poor are perceived as vulnerable to manipulation by corrupt businesses and government officials.

Increasing poverty means that farmers and the urban poor are becoming more marginalized. More effort is now required to produce less. This leaves little time for education. Demanding accountability from government now places activists and community-based organizations at increased risk. Faith in the justice system has disappeared. Public confidence in the civil service is low. Women continue to perform double roles but are becoming more active and visible in the community.

Participants no longer believe that poverty can be eliminated, but they do believe that it can be reduced or, at the very least, contained and not allowed to worsen. They said that even if change did not occur during their lifetimes, they hoped it would happen during their children's lives.

In the Philippines, women are experiencing poverty and well-being in different and conflicting ways. While many women are happy that they are no longer 'confined to the

household', they also said this is not so much a sign of changing attitudes or a manifestation of enhanced equality but a function of increased poverty and the need for cash incomes.

### **Key findings**

- The poor are the most results-oriented of all development agents — they want results and they want them fast.
- The poor are suspicious of new promises and guarantees. They think carefully about trade-offs and investments, risks and rewards. They talk honestly about the rare but 'effective' project that can bring tangible benefits over short periods of time with limited disruption or risk.
- In each country, education is regarded as an investment with a tangible value and is considered a powerful symbol of progress, change and a means to promote self-reliance, dignity, respect and hope. Both men and women view education, basic literacy and vocational skills training as top priorities for reducing poverty. For women and young girls, education provides them with a 'voice', raises their status and gives them some independence and mobility.
- Many of the poor seem unsure about their relationship with government — they have complex expectations but at the same time their confidence in the state is quite low. Nevertheless, they believe the state should provide them with basic services such as infrastructure development, education and health care which they see as the basic building blocks for a higher quality of life. They expect governments to provide sound, responsive and consistent policies that respect their rights and treat them equally.
- Women and girls still face a wide range of cultural and institutional barriers that prevent them from attaining basic literacy, seeking employment, receiving adequate wages,

owning productive assets, participating in community decisions and escaping from domestic abuse.

With the shift from a primarily agriculture-based economy to a semi-urban and industrial economy, new forms of social organizations such as community groups, civil society groups and consumers' rights associations have emerged. Participants ranked such local and indigenous institutions very highly, in contrast to government institutions which were viewed as not useful.

- Throughout Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Cambodia, people explained that their lives were becoming increasingly complicated, difficult and risky. Well-being has not been secured. Although they plan to continue their hard work, they also said that much of what they have to endure has been created through no fault of their own. It is clear to them that they require external support to solve many of their most immediate and pressing problems.
- Despite the changes, risks and constant insecurity associated with poverty, many of the poor do more than simply survive. They have dreams and aspirations that transcend their dire circumstances and day-to-day struggles. They speak about education, dignity and self-reliance and they tell stories about successful sons and daughters, relatives and friends, real people who have made their lives better and have shown that the energy and will to escape from poverty is as abundant as its causes.

## Report from Vietnam

**Elizabeth Cooper**  
**Canadian Youth Intern**

### ***Ngai Hung, Tra Vinh Province, Vietnam***

The people living in Tra Vinh province spoke at length about their sense of vulnerability to powers beyond the control or influence of their households that could impede or thwart their work. These included: fate, luck, God's will, the omnipotence of nature, a government's inertia, the bank's restrictive lending rules. These feelings were exacerbated after Typhoon Linda hit in 1997, where families quickly learned that they were on their own to deal with the effects of the typhoon's destruction.

Each family called its children back from school or work in nearby villages and they all worked together to rebuild. But the unit of survival and cooperation was the family and not the community — there was no indication that the community had rallied together to deal with this 'rogue wave'.

One household told the story of being granted a loan for increasing their rice harvest. The typhoon destroyed this investment just weeks before the rice was ready. The head of the household returned to the bank soon after the storm to explain his losses and his inability to pay back the loan on time. He said he felt very desperate as the local lenders had no sympathy and did not show any lenience. The family was forced to sell their two pigs, the only insurance they had for such circumstances. Because they were late in paying back the first loan, they are now ineligible for any further loans. Before the typhoon, they had a sense that they were gradually improving their economic situation; now they are struggling to get back to the level of subsistence they had already surpassed before the typhoon. They live in a simple home with dirt floors, and no electricity or running water. They work six days a week on their small farm. Their hopes for the future lie not with their farm but with their two older sons who are attending high-school in a nearby town.

Lack of support is a problem that resonates throughout the village. One farmer implemented a innovative farming practice

initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture that involved digging trenches around his rice fields, filling them with water and incorporating fish. The practice would help both farming cycles: the fish feed off the insects in the rice fields as they swim between the paddies, and the rice in turn would benefit from constant fertilization from the fish. Unfortunately, the farmer observed that the practice was not sustainable for his farm. Rats and mice dug through the weakened walls of the trenches after the typhoon allowing the fish to escape. Even before the typhoon, however, he claims there were losses because the fish he had been given were too small and too few. When asked, the Ministry said thin trench walls could explain the failings of the new system, but they were not certain. The program had no means of monitoring or collecting feedback from the farmers in order to keep track of results or provide support. The Ministry was not even aware of this farmer's situation or the losses he incurred. This farmer, who had been so enthusiastic and courageous to try out a new farming technique, brought to him from the 'outside' (i.e. not his farming neighbours) was then left to struggle, and account for, its problems on his own.

The people in this area said their development priorities include access to start-up funds and appropriate training. Having choices is a freedom without equal. Making these choices available and apparent seems like the most significant contribution that could be made for and with the people of Ngai Hung, Tra Vinh.

help and understand."  
Cooper

Elizabeth

"We talked about people's fears and dreams, their hardships and their happiness. I was at first surprised by the candour and eagerness of each person to tell me their story. Who was I? Did they really think I could do something? What struck me most perhaps, was the immediate trust that was extended to me, a trust that didn't have much to do with me as an individual, but rather from a belief that there may be someone out there who wants to

## Chapter 2

# What We Heard through the Dialogues

From September 1998 to June 1999, CIDA's Asia Branch held 15 'face-to-face' dialogues with various groups of stakeholders across the country. We wanted to learn more about what works to reduce poverty from their experiences in both Asia and Canada.

Most of the dialogues were co-hosted with non-governmental organizations, national umbrella organizations, universities or community groups. The topics were identified by Asia Branch staff and developed with the help of representatives from our partner organizations. Each dialogue was supported by a team from Asia Branch that provided advice on key issues, suggested names of participants, chaired the dialogue and commented on the draft reports.

Our first dialogue — *The Asia Crisis: Lessons for Poverty Reduction* — was launched at CIDA in September with a capacity crowd. Three members of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation's Citizens' Mission to Indonesia and Thailand talked about what they had found on the ground in Southeast Asia. They reported that the coping capacity of each country to deal with the recent financial crisis was directly linked to the strength of civil society in that particular country. They recommended that mechanisms be established to enable policy-makers to listen to the voices of the people and to seriously consider the impact of their policies on the poor. They said the gains made in Asia in health and education over the past few decades must be protected.

A focus group was held in early November with representatives from 24 NGOs and CIDA. Using participatory and interactive techniques, the group began to develop a qualitative picture of poverty in Asia, examined the factors that

contribute to and mitigate poverty and started to suggest the kinds of interventions that have been proven to reduce poverty.

A series of five dialogues under the title *Our Common Agenda* took place in Ottawa. They were co-hosted by national organizations with expertise in the area and the ability to bring together a wide variety of players active on these issues both internationally and locally. The goal was to share lessons learned in a Canadian context and discuss what best practices can be adapted elsewhere. For each session, a 'table document' was prepared by our team of young interns to start us off from a common overview of the issues. These sessions were organized by Elizabeth Smith and her able team of young professionals, most of whom used work experience gained to find jobs in their field before the end of the project.

Next, we zeroed in on the *Roots of Poverty*. Three dialogues were developed with university partners and held at McGill University in Montreal, St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish and Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. These dialogues were organized by Shawna Stonehouse and Bronwyn Best.

These same consultants took on the challenge of bringing the topic of poverty reduction to the business-like ambience of CIDA's annual meeting with the Private Sector, held in Banff in April. Through a series of dialogues, "the business of poverty reduction" was thoroughly explored both as a general concern and in the "specifics" of infrastructure services.

By June, we had moved back to Hull and held dialogues on the role of cooperatives in development (the final event in a three year process of exploration of these issues), and the links between agriculture and ecology. Our final face-to-face dialogue was held at the Somerset West Community Health Centre in downtown Ottawa with a group of elders from the Vietnamese and Cambodian refugee communities. Over a communal lunch of

traditional Cambodian and Vietnamese food, these seniors shared their perspectives on the role of tradition, the importance of values, and the inevitability of change.

Overall, more than 300 Canadians participated and helped to deepen Asia Branch's understanding of the nature and causes of the new poverty facing Asia today, as well as that which is endemic to this vast continent, yet so overlooked in "the years of the tigers". Summaries of what we heard during the dialogues follow. A complete list of participants, organizations and factors relevant to poverty reduction is available in the appendices at the end of this report.

## Dialogues with the Canadian NGO Community and the Canadian Private Sector

A summary of two dialogues, the first hosted by CIDA on November 2 and November 4, 1998 during CIDA's Annual Meeting with the Voluntary Sector, and the second co-hosted with the Alliance of Manufacturers and Exporters of Canada on April 14, 1999.

"We began our enquiry in November 1998 by bringing together representatives from the NGO community to develop a qualitative picture of poverty in Asia, examine the factors that influence poverty and identify interventions that have been proven to reduce poverty. The session was led by six young CIDA staff and participants were overwhelmed by their enthusiasm and commitment to participatory processes. Six months later, in April 1999, we undertook a similar dialogue with representatives from the private sector at CIDA's major annual meeting with its partners from the private sector. We expected a good discussion. We expected challenge. We did not expect to hear the high level of support for CIDA's primary role of poverty reduction that we did. We were heartened by this support and by the consensus around that table that the private sector with its profit motive could work towards the same mission of poverty reduction as CIDA. We were also greatly encouraged by the fact that we heard some similar messages from both the private sector and NGOs about the key factors influencing poverty and the types of interventions that work. There were differences of course but there is also lots of room to work together. That is why we have decided to report on both these dialogues in one summary report."

-Poverty Reduction Project Team

These dialogues focused on the factors that influence both poverty creation and poverty reduction from the perspective of Canada's non-governmental organizations and from the perspective of Canada's private sector. They took place in three sessions, the first in Ottawa just before the annual CIDA-NGO meeting, the second in Ottawa during the annual CIDA-NGO meeting and the third in Banff during the annual CIDA-Private Sector meeting.

In all of the sessions interactive and participatory techniques were used to ask participants to identify a number of factors contributing to poverty which they felt CIDA could do something about.

The NGO View:

For Whose Benefit? Targeting the poor in a time of change

The Brainstorm

A wide range of factors emerged and were captured on a 'web chart' which literally covered the walls of the meeting room. The factors identified included education, debt and food security to migration, caste systems, loss of hope, natural disasters, religion, environment, conflict, democracy, infrastructure, good government, age, corporate greed and concentration of power. The complete list can be found in Appendix 3 of this report. Participants chose to discuss five of these factors in more detail: access to land, education, globalization, governance and population.

What we heard

### **Access to land**

- When we talk about women and micro-credit — who are we trying to influence? is increased income enough?

- For many Asians the home is also the workplace, therefore if one has a home one has access to more economic opportunities — micro-lending for housing is not enough, there has to be micro-lending for small business development as well.
- In the Philippines, land reform is a much bigger issue than in the rest of Asia, with regular marches and demonstrations.
- For many people in Latin America, the issue is not one of individual land reform or ownership but the right of indigenous communities to autonomously manage their own land — the Canadian experience with land claims of indigenous communities is of interest to many in the South.
- Interventions must occur at different levels, not just land reform but also food security, rural/urban migration, access to land especially by women, rights to land, literacy/ conscientization, micro-credit/ finance/ interest rates, protection of community- owned land, sustainable farming.
- Land is a tool for self-reliance, but land reform is a governance issue.

#### ***Possible interventions***

- Set up land trusts for indigenous communities.
- Support literacy and public education program that help people to understand their rights and how to lobby governments.
- Encourage alliances among civil society within less developed countries and between less developed countries and Canada.
- Offer income-generating activities, micro-credit, programs which help to diversify crops, rehabilitate land and use environmentally safe and self-reliant technologies.
- Support efforts to promote fair trade and good governance (for example, programs that fight corruption in courts and monitor abuses of people's rights to land).

---

#### **NGO Views:**

##### **Key messages about access to land**

- Multi-dimensional approaches which combine interventions are most effective —

these can include: land reform, public education and awareness based on a 'rights' approach, working in broadly based consultative long-term partnerships with Southern organizations, micro-credit and micro-enterprise.

- It is also important to ensure that the poor do not lose the little land they have through eviction, environmental degradation or poor management.
- Education about the human impact on the land can start in Canada ie global education programs.

---

#### ***Education***

- The Western concept of 'education' is not adequate — education can be as simple as basic training in how to use a stove.
- We must distinguish between functional versus practical education.
- The dissemination of knowledge is crucial and should be inclusive of all groups and segments in society.
- It is important to look for the 'ripple' or 'enabling' effect of education — for instance education should be empowering — it should increase self-esteem, leadership skills, pride, place in the community and enable individuals to continue to improve their situations.
- Often when people are asked about the most urgent concern in their community they do not mention education but instead talk about increasing incomes, growing food or building shelters — but education is a key part of all of these immediate needs, it is a vital component of community-building.
- Development is not a shopping list, it can be compared to making bread — you need all the ingredients but in the end you have one product.
- Focusing on educating the very poor does not allow countries to scale up their education levels and infrastructure, as is now required in Thailand. How do we deal with the knowledge revolution

- Don't underestimate the energy and dedication of people at the grassroots level — they impact on each other and empowerment is catching.

---

## NGO Views:

### Key messages about education

- Layered programming (functional and practical education simultaneously depending on the circumstances) is the most effective.
- Before developing education programs, one must have an extremely detailed understanding of the cultural context (ie family hierarchy, social structure, cycle of seasons and work).
- It is important for communities to feel they "own" the education programs.
- Train 'trainers'.
- Relate the intervention to the immediate needs of the community.

---

### ***Globalization/Economic Models***

- The primary model which CIDA is using is economic growth, does CIDA look at equity?.
- The traditional development model holds that micro-enterprise is a good investment — what is required however is an analysis of who is being displaced as a result of this new business — joining the capitalist free market is not necessarily the only solution.
- It's also important to identify openings for policy change — Oxfam, for example, has found, in its work on the debt and World Bank policy, that influencing policy change also means taking steps to get invited to the table where the decisions are being made — once there, you have to bring real evidence of impacts at the micro level, not just philosophical differences at the macro level. So small projects can trigger big changes if the successes are shared in strategic ways.
- Changing policies is a long-term process, not easily measurable in one-to-five year project cycles — it has to go beyond the number of

wells being dug to the long-term effects of those wells.

- We have to remember that the Green Revolution was not all positive and support losers as well as celebrate winners.
- NGO participation in the dialogue on globalization has been undermined recently — private sector contributions are seen as more important to economic growth — even getting to the discussion is difficult.
- For example, in a water project you need the private sector for the technical side, but for the soft side, for community participation, the best partner is an NGO — why can't they do it together? It's important for the private sector and NGOs to build that understanding between themselves, rather than having CIDA allocate roles; but it's also important to remember that each organization has a different motivation for being there.
- The Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace is trying to measure the impact of multiple local efforts and raising awareness of this cumulative impact at the national level — trying to work simultaneously at the local, national and global levels.

---

## NGO Views:

### Key messages about globalization

- We have to make more direct links between the expertise found in NGOs, Canadian policy-making and global decision-making — the grassroots must be linked to policy/decision-makers and the positive and negative impacts of projects and policies must be shared, both in the South and in Canada.
- Partnerships between NGOs and the private sector should be built on a shared understanding of the challenges faced within a particular project or program — CIDA should not allocate roles but be open to letting the partners work it out between themselves.
- National and international change must be grounded in the reality of local experiences

and change must occur at all three levels concurrently.

- Projects must be flexible in order to respond quickly to changes and crises.
  - We have to be more qualitative when measuring results.
  - Strengthening civil society/people's organizations enhances their ability to respond to crises (the difference between Indonesia and Thailand) — we must support these kinds of activities and in their spin-offs ie elections, accountability of local/municipal governments.
  - Opportunities for Canadian NGOs to access Canadian and international policy-makers should be created.
  - It may also be useful to create Southern NGO monitoring bodies to advise on aid use in Thailand and Indonesia, as is being done in the Philippines.
- 

### **Governance**

- It is important to ensure that people's organizations can stand on their own — but sometimes you need middle-class activists to open the doors, to get governments listening and recognizing that they can work with people's organizations who bring knowledge of impacts at the household level to the discussions.
- People's organizations can also act as resource organizations — finding and disseminating information; training people to exercise and assert their rights and to negotiate.
- You have to move on three fronts at the same time — political, economic and social.
- Governance is important because it is an avenue for participation, it helps people develop the skills they need to participate, organize, articulate issues, and shape public opinion which in turn shapes government opinion; it provides them with the knowledge, information and skills they need to pressure governments to implement change.
- Education (not just in schools) is an important link — we need young people not just

politicians to have an understanding of governance.

- Although bureaucracies often feel that giving information leads to lots of problems information and ideas have to flow both ways.
  - Democratization is not an unqualified good; caution #1 — democracy is a Western concept, democratic principles and electoral politics may be two different things, there must be a positive dynamic established between government and people's groups.
  - Caution #2 — there is a danger that grassroots leaders can be coopted ie local leaders can't get money unless they become puppets of the mayor.
  - People's organizations have to do whatever they can to get issues recognized but then they have to ensure that the organization can stand on its own.
  - NGOs can act as liaison between the government and the people, on behalf of the people.
  - Governance is a process — gaining understanding and skills for example, or educating young people.
  - Strengthening democracy means strengthening access to information — free press.
  - Is it really one person, one vote? Block voting is often the norm, related to family, caste, village, etc.
- 

### **NGO Views:**

#### **Key messages about governance**

- We must ensure that policy-makers hear the voices of the people when and how they can best understand and act on what they learn.
  - We have to help people prepare for governance ie learn their rights, and gain the confidence of education, skills, positive experiences, access to information — any issue is a starting point for learning about governance.
  - We need to mobilize people in a way that doesn't create dependency.
-

### **Population Issues**

- Poverty has undermined women's reproductive health.
- We need a better understanding of the damage done by focusing only on fertility rates — this focus blocks out the violation of women's rights, ignores poverty, war/conflict etc.

---

### **NGO Views:**

#### **Key messages about population**

- Programs should not be based on population alone, population does not cause poverty.
- We should reframe/redefine how we look at population issues, undertake a deeper analysis and pay attention to demographics, the age breakdown in a population and gender.
- CIDA should focus on reproductive health — access to a full range of options, youth empowerment and decision-making, economic opportunities; and redirect attention away from population control to health — use a rights perspective in the analysis.
- We need a broader understanding of the root causes of poverty and its links to population.

---

#### **The Private Sector Advantage:**

Engaging Canadian business in developing a poverty reduction strategy for sustainable development in Asia

#### **The Brainstorm: What role can business play in poverty reduction?**

- Help people with no voice get a voice — draw on Canadian experience in a variety of sectors.
- Provide leadership in introducing regulatory and legal frameworks to stimulate environmentally responsible pro-poor growth. These must be transparent.

- Provide leadership in challenging the current view of development in which government works with government, NGOs work with NGOs, and the private sector works with the private sector — this requires a paradigm change.
- Improve people's skills to use capital.
- Enhance market access for products that are truly marketable (we are not going to change the world with handicrafts). Create channels from producer to consumer to ensure fair profit gets back to the producer.
- Educate youth in technology especially in information technology
- Promote environmental awareness to protect endangered species and capture the benefits of tourism.
- Ensure participation at every level.
- Promote hands-on training and education.
- Pursue development of sustainable sources of income.
- Work only with countries that have at least made an attempt to make change or a commitment to reduce poverty.
- Limit CIDA's investment to countries or groups which are actively participating in public health, family planning and education in integrated ways.
- Strengthen financial systems — to bring stability to international financial systems.
- Encourage participation/ empowerment/ bottom-up knowledge-based grassroots governance. The poor are the most disenfranchised from participation. We need to know what poverty means to the people we want to work with and what they consider as "wealth".
- Support basic education of girls and women in particular — focus on practical job and skills training which leads to jobs or self employment.
- Demographic control — the number of poor is growing faster than those who can do something to help them. One root cause of poverty is high population combined with poor access to resources.
- Develop employment opportunities through local entrepreneurs with the assistance of Canadian experts.
- Improve access to and ability to use information and technology.
- Improve access to micro-credit small entrepreneurs, especially women.

- Take a gender perspective on poverty reduction. Take into account that the understanding and analysis of poverty may differ according to whether men or women are poor.
- Provide access to infrastructure services such as power, water, roads, communications — a wide range of resources and services which people require to draw them out of poverty situations.

Participants were asked to group the factors discussed above, vote on the top three which they felt were the most critical to poverty reduction where business could play a role, and discuss them in more detail. The factors chosen were: limited and inequitable access to infrastructure services, capital and information; lack of employment- related training (especially for women); lack of participation or transparency in governance.

Unfortunately, time constraints made it possible to discuss only the first two topics.

.....

### Notes from a Participant: Eileen Stewart

"Two things stood out for me about the NGO dialogue. One was the energy and goodwill in the room. People came to the session ready to talk about issues and concerns and to trust that their voices would be heard. The second thing that stood out was the clear message from the NGO representatives that they want more opportunities to talk directly to people in CIDA about development policy and practice. The issues are complex and we may often disagree on the best approach to address poverty issues but the opportunity for a real exchange is always valuable."

.....

### Discussion: Infrastructure Services

- Asia has an established infrastructure but it is not in the best state and it is not producing the services required for all who need them. CIDA should program and provide technical assistance to help governments create that enabling environment which will attract private sector investment — create appropriate policies for local investors to operate in those sectors. This can be accomplished through devolution of services from government to the private sector — the private sector does a better job of providing infrastructure at a cost customers can afford.
- But when you involve the private sector you run the risk that those who cannot pay for services will not have access to them. There are still immense pockets of poverty and populations with no payment capacity. How can cross subsidies be built into contracts and pricing policies?
- Only in places where it is not profitable for the private sector to operate, should aid programs help provide or rehabilitate essential infrastructure services.
- The private sector won't go in unless there is money to be made. If you don't contractually tie the private sector to help provide to the poor, it won't happen.
- The government should be the glue that ties the private sector and the poor together through a project contract. But in many countries governments only respond to the rich. For example, poor groups often suffer negative impact to ensure the profit of the larger electricity sector and a certain segment of the population which also has power to control.
- The public sector has a role in making sure that benefits for the poor are built into contracts with private sector firms. In Peru the government privatized telecommunications and paid a Spanish company to operate the sector but insisted that the company provide at least two telephone lines for every village with more than 300 people.
- Weakness of regulations is a governance issue — we need structures that have a carrot and a stick. If you get something that is

profitable, there is a social imperative that you provide service to those who can't.

- CIDA could take a lead in managing this new process where government becomes an arbitrator and makes sure these services are provided. Should CIDA go one step further and become a mediator? CIDA can say these are the circumstances under which we will fund this project. CIDA should convey these 'social' concerns to the Export Development Corporation (EDC).
- CIDA already does this in the environmental sense because it has to meet the conditions of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.
- We need to formalize the 'mediator' activities. CIDA should not allow activities that are not anti-poverty. How do we enforce that? By not approving the non-compliant. By regular CIDA monitoring mechanisms. By ensuring significant changes in direction are made in response to monitoring reports. These mechanisms are already in place and only need to be used.
- There is a big difference between a project that is totally CIDA-managed and a private sector project. CIDA can bring in enough money to fund these projects, but how do you get it done through the private sector? CIDA should make socio-economic and/or environmental impacts on the poor a legal undertaking of the project contract —companies with a good track record at home —don't necessarily have a good environmental record overseas.
- The whole area is changing, moving towards very minimal government involvement. What happens to leverage then?
- Reaching the poor isn't an EDC or CIDA issue, it should be a governance issue within that country. For example, in the oil and gas industry, production-sharing contracts always have a social component built into them by the recipient government. Don't restrict private sector investment — poverty alleviation only happens with investment.
- What about the Canadian system in infrastructure service supply where a customer

in Frobisher Bay pays the same money for services as one in Calgary? Cross subsidies work well for equity of access.

- A lot of countries need help to establish exactly these kinds of systems. In the telecommunications sector, the CRTC often goes in to a country for two to three months to help write the regulations on the technical and policy side. This is a change in direction for CIDA — it's long-term and takes 10 to 15 years to get some results. We need to provide technical assistance to appropriate institutions to support the regulatory mechanisms we help to put in place.

### Discussion: Capital/Credit

- Access to rural credit is important because of the need for investment capital to start a business.
- CIDA is helping to organize local credit schemes, not providing money but education and organizational support — an enabling environment for credit. The pools of money required are larger than what CIDA can provide. It is important to create capacity within a country that allows micro-credit to happen, create stable banking systems that people feel safe about putting money into. Savings are a powerful investment engine when mobilized.
- Micro-enterprise is patchy compared to banking systems. But banks avoid small rural populations like the plague. Building bridges makes sense.
- Micro-credit doesn't fit within a normal regulatory system therefore we need an environment that makes micro-credit legal — regulation, monitoring, training, developing capacity of institutions to deliver it and safety for individuals to use it.
- Developing the private sector creates jobs. People who have jobs are less poor.
- To sustain our development assistance program we need stakeholders that benefit and are involved. Who cares for Asia's poor?

- The motor of development is the development of the local private sector — you have to create wealth.
- Alberta Economic Development has a project in India with Ministry of Environment to help create new environmental laws in the oil and gas sector. This is an important area — providing technical assistance at the level of ministries and state government, helping to put these in a framework that can be implemented and followed.
- Implementation is often at lower levels — laws have to translate into action at the municipal level as well because laws that are not followed are useless.

.....

## The Pig Project: An exercise in creating capital

Twenty years ago, CIDA contributed C\$5,000 to a poverty reduction initiative in San Miguel, a small town in the Philippines. The idea was that the profits from raising pigs would supplement the meagre incomes of poor women, allowing them to help their families and themselves. The scheme was simple: pigs were given to women to fatten and raise. When piglets arrived, two pigs had to be given to another two women in the village, while the remaining pigs could be eaten or sold by their owner. Thus, an increasing number of women in the village had a simple way to supplement their incomes.

The idea was successful, and the women used these pigs to build nicer homes, educate their children and send them to university, and otherwise improve the lives of their families. It also got them thinking....

These women/activists started a knitting project, again using the free time of the women and their families, to knit sweaters for commercial use. They arranged for funding (not from Canada), to build and equip a sewing factory, where young women could learn the skills necessary for fast production, and could then be hired on at the many clothing and textile factories in the region. The women obtained contracts to make women and children's clothes, toys and household textiles, thus turning the profits of the factory back into helping the community.

Concerned for the welfare of very poor women, who didn't have the money to raise pigs or to wait until they could eat them, the group developed the "Greening of San Miguel" initiative. By planting fruit or nut trees and bamboo in their yards, poor families could supplement their incomes without any additional expense. The project also developed smaller-canopy mango trees, so that rice farmers could inter-plant these trees in their rice fields and have some insurance in case the rice crop failed or prices were low.

Over time, the women/activists sought funding from a variety of donors-- and their efforts received recognition from the then-president of the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos, as well as from UNIFEM. There were rules for the length of time the women could serve on the governing Board of directors, and many of the key women were nearing the end of their time, yet wanted to remain involved. Thus, they began entering community politics, and educating themselves and others on how to vote, and how to run for politics. It was only at this point that these women came

back to Canada with a request for additional funding, this time for educating local women in community politics. Several women won seats on the town council, on a platform of community development.

As a result, the initial investment of only \$5000 resulted in improving the lives of an entire community.

.....

---

### Key Messages from the Dialogue NGO Views

- No-one fully understands the processes that lead to poverty or what will reduce poverty in the long-term but it is clear that we need to bring people into the process of decision-making. As one participant remarked: "We need to listen to the people we're working with and bring their experiences back to this table. Poverty reduction is what we begin with but poverty eradication is what we're all about."

- The interconnectedness of interventions has to be examined more closely — for example, increasing education levels (whether formal or informal) does not by itself increase employment opportunities; although land is a tool for self-reliance, land reform is a governance issue; helping poor communities deal with the negative effects of globalization means helping them organize, educate themselves and participate in, and hold, local governments accountable

### Key Messages from the Dialogue The Private Sector Advantage: Engaging Canadian business in developing a poverty reduction strategy for sustainable development in Asia

- CIDA should focus on increasing equitable access to infrastructure services, capital and information; providing employment-related training; and increasing participation and transparency in governance.

- Aid programs can do three things in terms of improving access to infrastructure services: create an enabling environment to help governments develop policy reform; support capacity-building and provide/rehabilitate essential infrastructure services only in places where it is not profitable for the private sector to operate.

- Recipient governments should ensure that contracts with private sector companies have a social component to benefit the poor.

- Donor countries should help create regulatory mechanisms in developing countries and provide support to the institutions which enforce them.

- Development of the local private sector creates jobs and wealth.

---

## Tomorrow's Jobs: Preparing Asian workers for the millennium

Co-hosted by the Association of Canadian Community Colleges and CIDA on February 15, 1999

Co-chairs: Janet Dunnett, CIDA and Hussein Amery, ACCC

"We chose this topic because we see a critical link between investment and the availability of skilled labour. We know investment creates jobs and bread-based growth in the economy. And we know the poor can increase their well-being if the benefits from this growth are equitably distributed. Thus, skill production can lead to poverty reduction."

-Poverty Reduction Project Team

This was the first in a series of five dialogues co-hosted by CIDA with national organizations based in Ottawa. On a cold Ottawa morning, the Association of Canadian Community Colleges hosted participants from nine different organizations focusing on training issues in Canada or Asia including the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, the Canadian Cooperative Association, the Canadian Labour Force Development Board, Carleton University, Human Resources Development Canada, OC Transpo/Ottawa Board of Education, South Asia Partnership, World University Services Canada and CIDA.

In the first part of the dialogue, Hussein Amery from ACCC, spoke in detail about the Canada-India Institutional Cooperation Project (CIICP) as a potential model for training

programs. He called this project one of the best the ACCC had ever undertaken and cited its cooperative participatory design process as a critical element in its success.

The project focused on three main areas: management; continuing and non-formal education; and in-service teacher training and distance education. By 1995, 25 polytechnics were involved. Mr. Amery spoke about the importance of 'institutionalizing the change process' and of developing and formalizing collaborative decision-making processes with all relevant stakeholder groups.

He said that in fact the spin-off effects have been more important than the original project. Over the last three years, the project has essentially been delivered by the Indian partners. Several Indian polytechnics are now linked with Canadian colleges. Impacts have been recorded at four different levels: better qualified students with skills that the workplace needs; more effective management and administration of polytechnics by polytechnic staff; increased capacity to plan, monitor and evaluate at state level; and increased capacity to promote women's involvement in technical training and industry. Other impacts include the development and delivery of environmental awareness programs, curriculum development, policy development, systems planning and training of trainers. In Mr. Amery's words "the key to success is starting at the local level and working up to the top".

The project also brought industry people into the technical education system. By participating in program advisory committees they were able to link the training provided at the polytechnics to the types of jobs they believed would be available to students upon graduation. Many technical colleges established links with business for the first time.

One of the project's key successes was the establishment of continuing education programs -- these were introduced as a way to ensure that the facilities were used beyond

regular class hours ie. in the early morning and evenings as well (from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.) and to generate further revenue and reach a "life long learning" clientele.

In the ensuing discussion, participants commended the model but questioned the link to poverty reduction. What is the entry-level needed to attend a polytechnic? If it is a high-school education, then obviously this system is not for the majority of the poor. Several participants replied that although the mainstream technical programs target the lower middle class, the continuing education programs reach the poorer members of society -- the working poor. They help women get jobs or create their own jobs in food services, textiles and other fields.

ACCC tried to replicate the Indian example in another country but wasn't as successful perhaps because they tried to work at the teacher training level and not at the grassroots level. Mr. Amery suggested that instead of changing the infrastructure first and people later, these kinds of projects should focus on changing people first and then infrastructure.

He also wanted to point out that if one is considering this project as a model, one has to recognize that the growing pains/setting up process cost money (an estimated \$1 million) and time (one to two years). It was very important to determine from the beginning who would be involved, and to identify and recruit the right people. In a similar project in China, the start-up process cost 10% of the total value of the contract -- it was spent on forming committees for project governance, doing baseline research, establishing effective teams to carry out the work.

Key notions in the discussion included: 'working with' versus 'being co-opted by' business, how to avoid training people for unemployment, and lessons that CIDA could actually use in future work.

.....  
Notes from a Participant:  
Aliza Rudner

"The keynote presentation and resulting discussion alone made the entire dialogue more than worthwhile. I was left with several important lessons on successful capacity strengthening, through the emphasis on co-operative partnerships, taking the time for careful project design and redesign, institutionalizing change, and the adoption and expansion of the model by the partners, and through the comment during the discussion that CIDA's projects should be a means for achieving a broad strategy. The discussion relating to whether this project truly served the poor stressed the importance of defining "poverty" (abject poverty or working poor?) and how it should be addressed.

The knowledge and commitment in the room was exciting, and the projects these groups were undertaking were fascinating. A common thread in the discussions was the need to take into account the views of the employees as well as those of the employer- the successful workplace training programs meet all needs. It was a timely reminder that employers may be critical to job creation, but training needs to be broad-based and meet the needs of individuals, in order to attract as many students as possible.

All in all, I found the session filled with a good range of talented participants willing to make their opinions known. It was a delightful intellectual exercise; very informative. It's too bad this can't be done on an annual basis so everyone else in CIDA can attend something like this as well."

.....

Participants suggested that:

- CIDA needs to be ready to invest in the early stages of a project. There is a risk that the money will be spent but there will be no ensuing project, but on the other hand, if that investment is not made in the early stages, chances are higher that things will go fundamentally wrong.
- An agency like CIDA has to be prepared to accept and deal with open ended, sometimes even conflict-ridden processes.
- CIDA expects relationships to be developed before a project begins, often however, these relationships have to be part of the project, especially when an intervention requires multiple layers and community- level advisory committees. This kind of process takes time, not just to plan but to bring a whole lot of people through their prejudices by taking the time, and "drinking a lot of tea".
- Replicability is a difficult concept. One cannot assume the model presented by ACCC is replicable, perhaps the general principles might be. ACCC responded that in this particular project, the idea of replicability came from the Indian partners -- they hadn't even approached ACCC about it, they had just gone out and replicated it.
- CIDA must consider how a project of this kind (successful on its own terms) contributes to a broader strategy -- a need to focus on projects as a means, not an end.
- The involvement of industry in policy is a loaded issue -- it's what makes it possible to design programs that respond to labour market needs but does it respond to employees needs? This has to be considered even in the design of curriculum and teaching defined. How will workers understand that they also have rights?
- There appears to be a willingness to design and deliver programs, but once a project is

designed everyone just wants to spend, spend, spend. Sometimes that's the wrong way to do things -- there needs to be redesign along the way as well.

## Best Practices Session

### **Canadian Cooperative Association**

In the CCA's experience projects which link savings and loans programs to education and training initiatives have been the most successful in reducing poverty. If individuals can increase their savings, their opportunities increase. As an example, CCA cited a savings and loans project in Xinjiang, a remote area of China, designed to improve the social and economic circumstances of poor women belonging to minority groups in this region. To receive a loan, women must first participate in an 8-month training program including literacy, business planning, learning how to work together, skills related to the proposed activity and they must get a health check-up. More than 50 villages are now participating in the project with 4676 loans and a 100% repayment rate. Meticulous records are kept at all levels of the program from the village through to the county and the region. The interest rates being charged are the market rates and they are quite high -- about 20%. However, by the ninth loan cycle, the project will have generated enough income to cover all the costs of the program. This project differs from the Grameen Bank model as the loans are built on the savings of the women themselves and not on money from outside.

### **OC Transpo/Ottawa Board of Education**

Nine years ago, a special training program to provide OC Transpo employees with a chance to finish their high-school education was established (in-service training for people with jobs). An on-site person facilitated, designed and provided individual independent learning programs for operators, and administrative managers. Through coaching, the learning was immediate and it was applied immediately to the workplace.

### ***Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada***

Targeting multiple sectors and levels is a necessity. There is a connection between basic skills, vocational skills, job skills, leadership skills, thinking skills and people who cannot only do work but also initiate work -- they are found in government, education, enterprise. Canada has an advantage in multi-layer strategies that involve policy, training and basic education. There is increasingly more overlap between university and technical college projects as human resources development in general and not just technical education for example, AUCC and ACCC are working together on projects in Tunisia.

### ***Canadian Labour Force Development Board***

The CLFDB is a partnership-based organization bringing together government and non-government representatives at the federal and provincial levels to shape a training system that supports Canadian workers now and in the future. Challenges include finding the balance between meeting employers needs and workers needs and defining the role of the private sector. For example, is workplace training a realistic contribution (ie literacy training) or should the private sector support shared public institutions? Whose needs are the more public institutions intended to meet? In a changing world of work, people need to have the skills to move around in the workplace -- how do they combine earning and learning? We need the skills to make choices. How do we build infrastructure in the technical areas ie prior learning assessment and recognition; training of trainers; the apprenticeship "revolution"; distance education?

In terms of access to training, we have to look at who is left just outside the door and why. For example, if the goal is to provide training for single unemployed women, it doesn't matter how good the training is if access to child care is not provided. It is important to remember that the deliverer of training and the consumers of training often have different

views but both sets of views have to be interpreted into project design.

### ***Human Resources Development Canada***

It's very difficult to develop successful programs for labour market training -- these types of programs tend to have modest results, however modest gains can be cost-effective and justifiable.

### ***World University Services of Canada***

One of WUSC's training programs in Vietnam is directly tied to the emerging jobs identified by the stakeholders and involves constant monitoring and conducting of tracer studies following both the employee and the employer at selected time intervals to learn from work experience of graduates what training would be most effective.

---

## Key Messages from the Dialogue

Tomorrow's Jobs: Preparing Asian workers for the millennium

- Technical education programs while aimed at the middle class, can create opportunities through continuing education efforts for poorer people to learn new skills and get better-paying jobs, especially women.
  - Projects that involve changing structures need a long lead time, and they need to be well-planned in advance. In order to succeed the first year must be dedicated to finding the right people for all of the committees and processes and getting them on board.
  - Participating in a process of change also means participating in defining the need for change and how the change should occur.
  - What do we mean by grassroots -- stakeholders in the institution or those living in poverty? Should we distinguish between abject poor, working poor etc.?
-

## Social Partnerships: Do they serve the poor?

Co-hosted by the Asia-Pacific Working Group of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation and CIDA, on February 23, 1999  
Co-chairs: Brian Hunter, CIDA and Julie Delahanty, Asia-Pacific Working Group

"We developed this topic in collaboration with a group of Canadian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in Asia. Everyone agreed that decentralizing governance and downloading services to the community level offers both threats and opportunities in Canada as well as in Asia. Being closer to the consumer is a good thing — but the consumer needs a voice in decision-making. Problems arise when NGOs become substitutes for government in providing public goods. The Asia Pacific Working Group wanted to focus discussion especially on the challenges of forming new relationships when business or government look to NGOs to help them decentralize and reach the poor. They call these 'Social Partnerships'".

- Poverty Reduction Project Team

Julie Delahanty opened the dialogue by talking about the changes in the external environment for those working in international development — the effects of globalization, technology and the devolution of services from government to non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Traditionally the private sector and the NGOs each received a certain amount of separate

but direct funding from the government for development projects. Increasingly, NGOs are cooperating with the private sector both in Asia on development projects and in Canada on domestic issues. There are successes and good lessons learned from these efforts, but they also offer unexplored dilemmas and challenges.

Brian Hunter indicated that social partnerships are an important issue for CIDA in the broader context of how to manage and take advantage of trends towards devolution in Asia. We need to understand the processes impacting on the poor and on economic growth. We need to know how the poor are doing in these processes and who is left out. What are the steps needed to reduce vulnerability? Although Asia has experienced unprecedented growth and unprecedented poverty reduction, in the last ten years economic growth has not led to further poverty reduction but to growing inequities. Faced with the Asian crisis, we need to know how resilient are the systems? What are people's assets and do they have opportunities to use them? What is the appropriate role of the mediating institutions — government, private sector and NGOs? What are the criteria for choice?

The dialogue consisted of two sessions — in each session, two experts presented their views and a discussion followed. The first session focused on defining social partnerships and the second on exploring how donor agencies engage with various stakeholders to reduce poverty.

### What we heard

**Fabien Leboeuf, Executive Director, Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP)**

CCODP believes that economic growth often generates poverty because the growth strategies are based on impoverishing others. In terms of social partnerships, although CCODP believes in cooperation and dialogue among NGOs and between NGOs and

government, it tends to shy away from devolution or social partnership approaches.

According to Mr Leboeuf, social partnership is synonymous with devolution in a limited sense — the sub-contracting of social services by the private sector to NGOs. CCODP does not have any experience in this area nor does it foresee any future involvement. Mr. Leboeuf described two instances where CCODP was approached to participate in such projects and declined, and one instance of cooperation between CCODP and the private sector.

In February 1998, CCODP was invited to a meeting with Canadian mining firms and NGOs working in Congo (ex-Zaire). Organized by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the objective was to discuss whether the firms were willing to work with Canadian NGOs in fulfilling their social responsibility' to the local communities (ie Canadian NGOs would manage the social development funds established by the companies in the communities where they were mining). There was some debate among NGOs about whether they should participate in these kinds of initiatives — many NGOs feel that corporations have a social responsibility to provide good conditions of work and to respect the local environment. Others believe that instead of giving money to NGOs, corporations should pay more in taxes to the government so the government is able to provide more social development services. CCODP believes that its role is to help consolidate local people's organizations so they can manage the social development funds provided by corporations.

In 1996, after an environmental disaster occurred on an island in the Philippines allowing mine tailings (ground up rock and water) to escape from the mine into the environment, the mining company involved approached CCODP to manage a compensation/ rehabilitation fund. CCODP refused because they felt the disaster could have been easily averted by the company, and they felt the fund was an attempt at damage

control and image revamping and not social development.

Mr Leboeuf said that although most NGO-corporation relationships are conflictual, collaborative relationships do exist. In Peru, for example, CCODP has been supporting the Federation of Indian Nations of Peruvia-Amaonia in its negotiations with corporations including a Sell-Mobil consortium interested in oil explorations. The consortium consulted the Federation on how these explorations should take place, but eventually withdrew from Peru because the government made the negotiations so complex. With the support of the Inter-American Development Bank, the Federation is trying to develop a regional natural resources development strategy as a basis for further social development. Two Canadian companies are also involved. Mr Leboeuf urged participants not to be afraid of the words "tense" or "conflictual" partnerships — the key is to ensure that these relationships help to mobilize people's organizations for human economic development and not simply for economic growth.

**Catherine Coumans,  
Calacan Bay Villagers Support Coalition**  
Academics, NGOs and government are working together more often. All three are also being courted by the private sector and becoming weaker vis-a-vis the private sector. Social partnerships can be examined in three ways — what do the NGOs and corporations get from the partnerships, how is trust established and what are the social dynamics of the relationships?

In terms of what corporations gain from working in social partnerships, Ms Coumans cited the example of a Canadian mining company in the Philippines. According to Ms Coumans, although the company has been mining in the Philippines for 30 years (years of struggle and confrontation related to the pollution emanating from various forms of mine waste), it is only since the 1996 disaster that the company has been actively reaching

out for social partners. At that time, according to Ms Coumans, the company called NGOs to a meeting and asked them to work together on the spill and not to call in the media. The company talked about the possibility of a long-term, large-scale sustainability project for the entire island. When Ms Coumans wanted to include other situations and the long-term effects of the dumping in the discussions, the company refused, saying it wanted to work on the spill first and she was not invited to any further meetings.

According to Ms Coumans, the advantages for NGOs in social partnerships include: the hope that they can be more effective working through a cooperative relationship rather than a confrontational one; the hope that they will be seen to be more effective (sense of legitimacy); and the possibility of direct financial support from corporations. For the corporation, the advantages include: derived public credibility (from the NGOs good name); a perceived buffer against criticism (if the NGOs are involved they can't be as critical); as personal inter-relationships evolve it is more difficult to be the enemy' (the independence of the critic suffers); and direct access to information about what the NGOs are doing. In terms of the relationship of trust, Ms Coumans argued that trust has to be established between the local people and the company, and not the Northern NGOs and the company.

## Discussion

- If you want to change behaviour, you have to look at self-interest. What are the perceived interests of the corporation, of the NGO? What are the limits of partnerships?
- Local government can be viewed as a people's organization. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has found working with local governments very effective as long as devolution of power has not also meant devolution of corruption. FCM's programs aim to make local government more credible, more transparent and more responsive to citizens. It is important to pay attention to the different spheres/ levels of government.
- NGOs should not take the place of the state or the government. Economic activities must have social goals, this only happens through political control. Perhaps the role of the state needs to be realigned — through democratic politics, economics can serve humanity.
- If the motive behind corporations is profit, and the motive behind NGOs is people's empowerment, how can they work together? Once this border disappears, there is confusion. For instance, The Body Shop appears to be a wonderful corporation to work with. But some of the other examples are less positive. The Grameen Bank, started working with CitiBank and IBM, and then moved on to a relationship with the multinational, Monsanto. On the other hand, in one country, a corporation worked with a dictator and established a great health plan. Then the government changed and the health plan disappeared.
- We have to move slowly, on a case by case basis, after much analysis. The key is who initiates the dialogue? Is it the company or the NGO? At the local level, communities can take their needs to the company. This is very different from the company saying we will provide this and that for your community, and then asking the community to help meeting company objectives.
- What is the role of NGOs in social partnerships? According to CCODP, to have a partnership, you must have something in common — vision, analysis, values. If none of these are shared, there is no partnership — but there still can be a relationship.
- The strategies for economic growth spearheaded by corporations and financial institutions very often generate poverty. Within the global context, corporations are frequently part of the problem. CCODP helps people get organized for a real democracy, and develops economic alternatives. The

example of cooperatives in Quebec, and in particular of Desjardins, now one of the most powerful financial institutions in the country (micro became macro) was cited. People's organizations need to control the economy.

- The state is present by its absence. It is clear from the presentations that the state is pulling out of social services, but in some instances it may never have been very active in providing social services. For example, in the Philippine island described above there were no health services.
- The question for CIDA and the NGOs is where do we act as development actors? Whose role will we strengthen — the government? Citizens organizing so they can define development? What if strong corporations are already there? What choices do we want to make about who needs to be strengthened?

What we heard

***Ted Paterson, Director of Finance and Special Projects, The North-South Institute***

Canadian agencies are working in a changing environment. CIDA has been a world leader in devolution — it does not execute any of its own projects. There are two possible reforms that could be undertaken. CIDA could change its policy framework regarding poverty or working within the existing framework CIDA could change how policies are implemented.

CIDA now selects executing agencies for its bilateral programs through open competition. A recent evaluation indicated that both not-for-profits and for-profits each won about 20% of the competitive bids. What types of unsolicited proposals does CIDA receive? Can not-for-profits implement competitive projects that alleviate poverty? What types of proposals are coming from the private sector? Why isn't there more cooperation between non-profits and for-profits? Can the open competition experiment/process be extended to cover policy development?

***Gerry Barr, United Steelworkers of Americas-Humanities Fund***

Social partnerships also exist between labour and NGOs — they focus on community development and the strengthening of workers rights, as well as codes and labelling. Informal sector workers often have poor levels of legal and social protection, restricted access to capital and credit and lack representation in planning processes.

In Bangladesh, Proshika Kendra, supported by an NGO called UBINIG, has provided legal training and helped mobilize unions working in both the formal and informal sectors. Recently the Centre helped to negotiate an agreement between the government and the garment workers unions (there are more than 3000 garment factories in Bangladesh employing 1.3 million workers — almost a quarter of whom are children) which reduced the work week from 7 to 6 days through a paid weekly holiday'. In Mexico, a coalition of trade unions, credit unions, worker cooperatives, shanty-town organizations and peasant farmer organizations has emerged as an important policy voice.

The labour-NGO partnership is a crucial component of the response to private sector development and an opportunity for CIDA. They can help develop inclusive strategies for a private sector which benefits and supports large numbers of people. Unions can help distribute the benefits of development (spreading the wealth) and even though rates of negotiation of collective agreements are modest in the South, unions can help ensure wage and benefit security, job security and health benefits. Today governments are having greater difficulties supporting and servicing regulatory regimes. Unions are in a position to "fill the gap" — to enforce and improve standards. Through coalitions, unions support the growth of civil society.

Labour is the single most extensively organized civil society actor in the private sector. In 1996-97, private sector development

received about 14% of CIDA's disbursements. Most of these programs were designed without any consideration of labour's role. Almost half of CIDA INC funding (1995-96) went to countries the OECD considers to have serious restrictions on freedom of association. The Steelworkers have begun discussions with CIDA to address these questions. Mr Barr concluded with a few remarks about codes and labels which may provide opportunities for CIDA to ensure that private sector development meets basic labour rights criteria.

## Discussion

- How do we mainstream poverty reduction policies into CIDA's operations? Is there a mechanism that can be established to ensure there is a shared mandate/understanding of poverty reduction between CIDA and its executing agencies? CIDA should clarify its six development objectives, and make poverty alleviation the first objective, so that all the players will be moving in the same direction.
- In a research project on partnership models in Canada, Caledon Institute has found many similar concerns — NGOs are hesitant to partner with business because of the power imbalance and the possibility that business just wants to improve its image. Often the relationships among Southern partners are discounted. If you look at how projects are designed, implemented and monitored, much more attention is paid to the Canadian executing agency than to the relationships at the receiving end. This needs to be reversed in our thinking and in our practice. Ultimately it's the organization of people, whether state, non-profit or private sector, which will be of lasting value.
- CIDA's accountability is effective development projects in the field. This implies changing attitudes and changing structures. These are not disparate elements but part of the same process. We have to look at incremental changes over time and

understand what the processes are. How can we engage the various players?

---

## Key Messages from the Dialogue Social Partnerships: Do they serve the poor?

- The varying roles and responsibilities of government, corporations and local communities in social development must be taken into account, articulated and understood by all the partners. The key question is whose role should be strengthened?
- The relationship between corporations and NGOs should be defined at the local community level and not between multinational corporations and Northern NGOs.
- Unions can play a constructive role in ensuring that private sector development does not negate workers rights. They can enforce and improve existing standards, and if there is no existing legislation establish labour codes and labels which are often precursors to legislation. CIDA should keep this in mind when developing private sector projects.
- In its contractual arrangements, CIDA must articulate its values and goals for poverty reduction. As well, CIDA's accountability structure should take into consideration the Southern relationships that are built/created through development projects.

# The Link Between Health and Poverty in Asia: What makes the difference?

Co-hosted by the Canadian Public Health Association and CIDA on February 24, 1999  
Co-chairs: Peggy Thorpe, CIDA and James Chauvin, CPHA

"We had no trouble choosing the topic of health in relation to poverty reduction, as the two realities collide and impact on each other in a multitude of ways. But we looked for a way of approaching the topic that would raise it beyond discrete interventions, with a limited time horizon to focus on the nuts and bolts such as systemic changes. We hoped the discussion would lead to a sharing of Canada's experience with its own health care system. What elements can be applied in Asian contexts?"

- Poverty Reduction  
Project Team

**T**wenty-six participants from 16 different organizations attended this lively session which brought together experts on the Canadian scene with international health experts.

## What we heard

### **Dr Nancy Edwards, Director, The Community Health Research Unit, University of Ottawa**

Dr Edwards opened the dialogue by examining the links between health and poverty. These can be viewed through the traditional approach

to health by identifying the 'determinants': causes; mediating factors and contextual influences. However, when one looks at the causes of disease or illness it is hard to make 'poverty' fit neatly because it is such a complex issue.

Under poverty as a cause of illness, Dr Edwards talked about the psychological and physical effects of poverty — depression, stress, nutritional status and impaired immunological status — all of which can lead to vulnerability and poor host resistance. One also has to look at the chronic versus the acute effects of poverty. For example, poverty resulting from displacement may be temporary or could develop into a lifelong condition. She also talked about the insights found in reverse 'causal' thinking — where do we expect poor health status because of poverty but instead find good health? What is the synergistic effect of poverty with other risk factors? In order to understand these factors, we must unwrap what poverty means and find more sophisticated ways to measure poverty other than income levels.

When looking at poverty as a mediating factor, Dr Edwards pointed out that it was necessary to understand how poverty can modify a relationship between two or more factors such as credit, safe working conditions etc. Poverty creates barriers to accessing resources. It influences transitions and change processes. In terms of poverty as context, Dr Edwards said we need to shift the focus from the circumstances surrounding absolute poverty to the inequalities existing within a country or society. Gross GNP or infant mortality rates may not tell us as much about health and poverty as the gap between the rich and the poor does. We need to look at the effects of macro changes at the micro level — how did the collapse of the Asian markets shape the values and expectations about what is possible in a community? How does poverty increase the risk of exposure to environmental hazards? All of these factors must be taken into consideration when we look at poverty because they will shape the nature of our interventions.

According to Dr Edwards, there are several major challenges to be faced:

Poverty and social inequalities are complex and dynamic, creating constantly changing conditions for multi-component programs (many of these conditions are out of the control of the average Ministry of Health or program manager). What does living in poverty mean for optimal combinations and sequences of health interventions?

What kinds of synergism can be created in the face of poverty and social inequalities?

In situations of poverty (family poverty, community poverty) what are the sufficient and necessary conditions for effective implementation of primary health care strategies?

How do macro and micro-level poverty issues modify our primary health care strategies?

**James Chauvin, Assistant Director,  
International Programs  
Canadian Public Health Association**

Mr Chauvin continued the discussion of health determinants focusing on how we need to re-interpret the 'conventional' determinants in order to understand the relationship between socio-economic environment and health. He said that access to health care and services is important but not enough. A review of current disease patterns shows that focusing on individual disease risk factors will not reduce health inequities. Improvements in medical care will not reduce health inequities either. In fact, per capita economic growth is no longer as important a factor in determining overall health status as income distribution.

As a result, attention is now focusing on the health-enhancing influence of supportive environments and the health impacts of different sectors such as education and skills development, literacy, unemployment, homelessness, violence and discrimination. For example, the research indicates a direct link between education/skills development and health status (both perceived and real). Education can improve 'health literacy' — the ability to gain access to information and services to keep individuals, their families and communities healthy. Recent research also shows a strong association between unemployment and increased mortality rates.

He concluded by saying that reducing relative poverty and narrowing income distribution are likely to have a much greater effect on improving health and well-being than increasing aggregate wealth. Good health is a reflection of societal values. A broader range of potentially health-enhancing public policies must be developed and implemented and mechanisms put into place to evaluate their impact.

**Rieky Stuart, Executive Director  
OXFAM Canada**

Ms Stuart addressed the topic from what she called a 'bottom-up' perspective rather than a systemic overview. According to the Canadian Council on International Co-operation, the way in which economic resources are distributed are a result of human choice. There are inter-relationships between poverty and health, poverty and education that are not linear and causal but circular and co-determining.

For example, in a remote area of Sudan Ms Stuart met a group of 14-year old girls who got up at 3 a.m. to walk 10 kilometres and carry water back on their heads. When she remarked that in Juba donkeys do this type of work, the girls replied "poor donkeys". She also talked about the high rate of violence against women in Bangladesh and referred to an old proverb which says that "This is the way for the husband to get to heaven". In the face of these realities and this type of self-image for women, how can a woman demand or even request health care?

These are the issues that need to be addressed — the inability for communities to stand up for their own rights to health and well-being. Oxfam sees poverty as being systemic, political and complex and has chosen to work with people who are disempowered (these are not necessarily the poorest people). One of the key issues is how to use what worked at the local level to improve health and link this to systemic change and policy learning. For example, in China a Ford Foundation project aimed at reproductive health in a remote area, did not start with the isolated women in the hill tribes but with the various ministries at the provincial level. The project helped the ministries dialogue with each other and with the women. And the first intervention was an income

generation project for the women — after this, they were able to intervene in other areas such as violence against women and the provision of reproductive health services.

Neither CIDA nor Oxfam can change the world. CIDA should be very opportunistic — work in areas where there is a possibility where working at the grassroots can influence how ministries think about and work on health issues and learn more about the very tangled relationships between health and poverty and how to sequence complex problem solving.

.....

### Notes from a Participant: Peggy Thorpe

"I was pleased to be given the opportunity to meet and hear first hand experiences of Canadians who are working with poverty in developing countries or within Canada. The dialogue heightened my awareness of how vulnerable Canadians are with escalating global poverty. I have increasingly become aware of the failures of our own Canadian system to deal with poverty but am convinced that as a nation there is a wealth of human resources preoccupied with this. The dialogue proved this. To those working in the Canadian system, I share the concerns about the erosion of our social safety net but I have some optimism. Despite the warts of our nation, for example, it seems that one significant strength is our passion about the principles of our health care system. These Canadian values are threatened and we at CIDA need to work with you in better understanding how not only to preserve them but share our experiences with others. "

.....

### Discussion

- We need some agreement on the factors that are determinants of health and how they measure health status. In the area of safe

motherhood CIDA looks at maternal mortality, prenatal care etc. as indicators of health. In general, CIDA does not have a specific set of indicators but relies on the indicators established by the partner organizations carrying out the various interventions. These could include child mortality, age of death, potable water, sanitation, Vitamin A deficiency in children, etc.

- One participant indicated that the WHO definition of health — ‘Health is a state of complete mental and physical well-being which allows an individual to lead a productive life’ — is not very useful. It was argued that in Canada, health is defined in terms of economics, while in Asia a purely economic definition is not used. One can have a very dignified life and be very poor. What are the conditions we are trying to bring about that would allow an individual to have a wholesome and productive life?
- Recent experiences from the field indicate that the poorest people are no longer getting services — they are very expensive to reach. Stressed-out overburdened NGOs trying to provide social services are now being asked to undertake advocacy and lobbying work as well. Many organizations are facing a crisis of service delivery versus empowerment versus advocacy for policy change. And NGOs are spending a lot of time fighting each other for small amounts of money and writing project proposals. How can NGOs both deliver services (paid for by donors or governments) and also advocate for change?
- A Canadian living in poverty remarked that it is really important for people who are living in poverty not to be ‘administered to’ but to be involved in developing solutions — even at a small level such as a community kitchen. When you feel like you can do one thing, you feel like you could do other things. It creates an environment of confidence. This is much more valuable than having a specialist come in to give advice.
- Internationally we have seen what advocacy groups can do (environment, HIV/AIDS, consumer groups). It is clear that when individual groups at the grassroots link

together they can make an impact at the policy level and on the allocation of resources.

- The whole question of advocacy is very important. Grassroots groups have influenced policy but the situation has not greatly improved. Can't we do something more useful than say throw more money at it? Why don't we try and get the system working as it should? We need to listen to each other and find new ways of collaborating.
- Why is health considered to be a gift from government and not a right? We should be holding governments accountable. Within the United Nations system we have developed certain rights — these can be levers for kicking health systems into gear.
- Over the last few years we have seen governments take less and less responsibility for health. Now people and communities must take care of their own health. Everything is available for a fee. When there are inadequate health systems, NGOs step in. This builds government dependency on NGOs. Governments must take responsibility for health, NGOs can't fill the gap forever. We need more of a collaborative relationship than dependency. In the meantime, individuals and communities are becoming poorer.
- It is often very difficult to work with governments in developing countries to 'make change' when corruption is a big factor.
- What do people really see as health? Health and illness are two different concepts that should not be confused. Health is much more than the absence of illness. We should help communities determine their own priorities and get control over their own lives — not what to do but how to do it.
- In Ontario's Waterloo region, a community economic development group established a leadership roundtable which brought together anti-poverty groups, social service agencies, government, and Health Commissioners — people who had never come face-to-face in a discussion before. When they focus on the barriers they can actually do something about them.
- How do you ensure sustainability in the long-term? Do you do it at the community level where the intervention will make an impact locally but conditions will continue to deteriorate in the rest of the country or do you do it at the systemic level where you have to wait for 5 years to see an impact? One way is to build on the existing UN conventions and infrastructure even if we are cynical about the system as a whole. Another is to always involve local government in any infrastructure intervention.
- Why is environmental change not being discussed? Scientists have finally accepted that global climate change is occurring — what is still in doubt is the rate of change. A great number of people will be affected by this — flooding in Bangladesh and China, major changes in hurricanes and disease vectors (malaria into new regions). Unfortunately, climate change has been identified as a Western top-down problem and is not seen as a problem in India or China. There is a very important role for the NGO community in identifying where the effects of climate change are going to occur and how we can adapt.
- In Canada, health has two components — physical and mental. But in poor countries this is not the case — health automatically refers only to the physical component. Often families can't even provide basic needs such as food. For them, the mental stress of poverty can be overwhelming.
- The wrap-around process was developed in Alaska a few years ago, to deal with troubled children whom the system seemed to be failing. Its basic assumption is that the individual has the right to be in charge of getting healthy. A trained team leader asks a number of questions relating to what the individual wants and needs and then builds a team to literally 'wrap around' the child — to listen, build on strengths and never give up. The team could include a health professional, mental health trainers, neighbours, pastor, teacher, family friend, grandparents. Professionals in the minority in the team.

- Determining needs versus wants is a critical first step. Using facilitators who do not know the answers in advance and can listen with an open mind to what the individual/community is saying is the key.
- Fundamentally, poverty alleviation is about shifting resources to people who don't have any. We have to be upfront about this. We have a huge number of policies about working across the different sectors and yet we still work within in our own sectors. How might we be contributing to inequities? We ask people to take huge risks without safety nets. We have to make sure that we're not pushing too fast, setting people up for a fall.
- Perhaps the approach taken to mental health is an appropriate model. It's built on the resiliency of the individual — identify strengths and build upon them. Recognize that people in poverty are still alive, have families, resources, and sometimes go on and thrive.
- Use the positive deviants approach, find the family that is doing well in a bad situation and discover what they are doing differently from others and help other families learn from their experience. Build on strength.
- Although it is important to for communities to identify their needs, sometimes the health burden is not seen by the community. For example, immunization has to be taken up at the policy level.
- One of the problems is that the poor are not seen as human beings but as a problem to be dealt with. The poor can also be a resource that needs to be exploited. The poor should not become the cannon fodder in ideological battles between the right and the left. According to a Canadian participant who lives in poverty, we have to see ourselves as all part of the same bird. We won't fly if the left wing wants to go in one direction — we'll just have an empty belly dragging on the ground. We have to work in harmony so we all benefit as a society.

---

## Key Messages from the Dialogue

### The Links Between Health and Poverty: What makes the difference?

- There is a complex inter-relationship between health, education, employment and poverty.
  - We have to look beyond economic growth to equity as a major determinant of health.
  - Any policy work must be grounded in the grass-roots — we must make work at both levels simultaneously and make the links between the two.
  - We should make use of existing legal or international instruments to promote human rights while recognizing that in certain cultures people cannot even ask for assistance yet.
  - We must listen, build and never give up.
-

# How do we educate for the millennium when few know how to read?

Co-hosted by the Canadian Teacher's Federation and CIDA, February 25, 1999

Co-chairs: Marilyn Blaeser, CIDA and Janet Eastman, CTF

"Though wisdom has been a cherished value in Asia for millennia, today more than half of world's illiterate adults live in South Asia. What is going on? We felt that basic education had to be addressed as it is the most noticed cause and consequence of poverty, anywhere in the world. But we also felt the topic needed to be broader than that. The world of the 21st century is fundamentally different. So we decided to focus on what must be learned beyond the 3 Rs — whether in a Canadian or an Asian classroom — in developing adults who can thrive in the modern world ."

- Poverty

Reduction Project Team

This dialogue consisted of two presentations, two workshops aimed at sharing experiences, best practices and initiatives that worked, and the resulting group discussions. Twenty - eight participants from 12 different organizations attended.

***Jeanne Shields, Teacher at Centennial Public School and Carol Scott, Teacher at Charles H. Hulse Public School***

Two local teachers talked about the challenges and the joys of teaching in 'inner-city' schools in Ottawa where many of the students are refugees, do not speak English and live in poverty here in Canada. They spoke about the importance of focusing on more than just the '3Rs' and of getting to know their students, their families and communities. In their teaching, Ms Shields and Ms Scott use the concept of a five-legged stool with the following essential 'legs' — literacy/numeracy; cultural experiences, nutrition, community outreach and professional development for teachers.

They said that in order to accelerate literacy and build confidence and numeracy, teachers often provide students with 'home' kits they can borrow which contain learning materials not easily available in poor homes. These include math cards, crayons, paper, pencils, games, so that children can continue to explore these new concepts and introduce them to siblings, families and neighbours.

They also said that Breakfast Programs are critically important. If children are to succeed at learning they must have proper and substantial nutrition.

Since it is sometimes difficult to bring the parents into the school, teachers bring the entire community to the school. They exhibit the strengths in the community, and involve community members as guest speakers and volunteers and organize pre-school drop ins, clothing/ skating/ toy/ game exchanges, ESL, Adult Education and Parent Literacy classes. They also hold special parent orientation sessions to explain the curriculum and student assessment procedures and build the confidence of parents too. Children learn better when parents are involved in their education.

They said the teachers need to know the 'whole' child and the experience the child brings to the school. Children must be welcomed to the school, known and called by name and their presence valued. Children treat others the way they are treated.

At Centennial School (a special needs school), the Environment Club collected \$152 in pennies for a CODE project in Zambia. Even though these children live in poverty in Canada they are able to recognize that others are in need as well. The teachers encourage the children to work in partnership and on caring/sharing projects with groups of children from around the world. This nurtures the perception that everyone has a voice, everyone can make a contribution and builds the values of sharing within 'one world'.

## Discussion

- Will this type of education make the children less poor or help them cope with poverty? Children must be provided with a strong self-concept that allows them to empower themselves and battle the powers that be, the powers that impoverish their families. In the final analysis, poverty can only be beaten one person at a time.

Children's self-esteem must be built and encouraged. But we must not assume that if poor children get the proper skills they will achieve success. We have to fight on two fronts — at the policy level, we need to make government feel uncomfortable about increasing poverty (and ensure that poor families have access to food and health services) and in the schools we have to make children feel they count and can make a difference.

- The teacher is the agent of social change in the classroom. Thus teacher training has to install and support human rights and values.
- A Canadian study entitled *Poor Children in Our Schools (1984-86)* showed that poor children outnumbered middle-class children 3 to 1 in special needs classes. Poor children were failing at four times the rate of children of the middle-class. The children saw themselves as failures. Thus the poor need our best resources.

## **Ron Hughes, Education Specialist and Consultant**

Mr Hughes talked about the importance of autonomy and self-determination — individuals must feel that they control their lives and have the resources to do so; the global context must facilitate this as well. He spoke about two non-formal education projects in particular that focus on the whole child in a larger world where change is possible.

BRAC's Non-Formal Primary Education program helps communities set up groups and decide where schools should be and what teachers should be trained. BRAC schools must be within walking distance for children, otherwise the parents do not want them to attend. BRAC teachers are usually women (this helps parents send girls to school more willingly) and have no more than six to nine years of schooling.

Although several large donors contribute to BRAC, they only contribute 20% of BRAC's operating costs; over 50% comes from the villagers. BRAC's experience is that financial resources can be found, even in the poorest communities, once people believe that they have control and are able to influence the process.

BRAC works closely with the Ministry of Education. They share goals to improve the access and quality of education and when they talk about a national system of education they include government, NGOs etc.

In 1980, the World Bank began a concerted effort to study education policies around the world. They began with primary education and pointed out that education as a panacea to solve all of the world's problems was not working. As well, the report found that it wasn't possible for governments alone to foot the education bill. NGOs, private sector companies, the informal sector, and parents would have to contribute. Change has to happen at the macro level as well as at the micro-level.

.....

## A Second Look at Basic Education

On September 1st, 1999, a follow-up dialogue on the issue of making basic education available and attractive to the poor was held in Ottawa.

One of the authors of the Public Report on Basic Education (PROBE), Dr. Shiv Kumar, presented its findings to a special session of the South Asia Seminar Series.

.....

### Discussion

- Are Canadian experiences replicable in Asia? Poverty is a relative concept and has to be addressed everywhere. In a Canadian classroom, not far from where this dialogue took place, students from poor families don't have access to a washing machine. One child spent the first two months of the school year on the street. In the same class there are children who will spend March Break holiday skiing at an expensive holiday resort. This inequity reflects the problem in the world at large.
- Development practitioners have to take the time to really understand the context in which they are planning to work — not just 15-minute consultations with one group of villagers. Knowing a little can sometimes be dangerous if it leads to judgements made too soon.
- Strategies developed from the outside don't work — they only work when they are developed by someone from the community
- A Canadian teacher who worked in Nepal talked about working with 50 teachers, only 4 of whom were women. She also explored the concepts of equality/ rights of women/ importance of girl child education and strategies teachers could use to welcome girl

children and continue girl child education. She found men more responsive than the women, reflecting the deeply ingrained disenpowerment that will not be addressed overnight. Simple approaches were suggested like using girls names in math problems.

- Asian countries should make literacy for women and girl children the highest priority for expenditure for at least a decade.
- Promotion of gender equity in the classroom starts with teachers who inspire.
- Invest in girls education systematically. This is a long process of social cultural change.
- Donors and NGOs should pick the right indigenous partner and work with/ support them for a long time as change does not happen overnight.
- Get communities involved in education supply, quality, content so they become the 'owners'.
- Equality of opportunity. Eliminate barriers to learning and provide additional supports to poor children to compensate for their lack of home-based schooling/support.
- Promote independent learning among primary students. Often after primary education no jobs are available and students lapse into illiteracy. Life long learning needs attention too.
- Provide mentors to encourage, support and set a good example. Not necessarily a teacher — they could be older students, family members, etc. "Each one teach one."
- Link school to the issues of real life.
- An integrated and holistic approach. Changes need to be made simultaneously at all levels of the system. People can identify their problems and needs best, but the solutions often lie at the national levels.

- Provide incentives to attract the poorest children. For example, provide them with a meal. Target education at the entire family. Studies in Kerala show that when you provide literacy to mothers, health indicators rise and infant mortality decreases.

### Best Practices and Initiatives that Worked in Basic Education

- The most effective way of helping children is to validate the experiences poor children bring to school. People have to think: "I am somebody." They have to have a vision of themselves beyond the constraints of poverty.
- Co-op education is a good model — applying what you learn in the classroom to real life. This makes it easy for kids to see why what they are learning is useful.
- In Chicago, one program brought together illiterate and semi-literate parents in a school with their children — they were all taught to read at the same time, it became a family event.
- Research shows that it is important to: encourage play to break up the school day so children can concentrate; have breakfast and lunch programs; hold professional development workshops for teachers; promote group study — ie after-school homework clubs; have children participate in decisions that affect them in class and at the school level.
- UNICEF uses animated role models for girls, "Sarah" in Africa and "Meena" in South Asia. Partners for Rural Development is working with the Manitoba Teachers' Federation and the All-India Teachers' Federation to develop a unit on biogas development that can be used in schools in both countries. Linking school to problem solving in the real world is important.

- Mentorship is critically important and can happen at all levels — for example, "Reading Buddies" or team planning on environmental projects. Older kids feel a lot of pride in helping younger children.
- A Canadian student participating in the dialogue said that "school is really expensive". Club fees are \$15, computer classes require \$20 to \$30 to belong, total is close to \$100 for fees alone.
- We let governments off the hook far too easily and far too often. In Canada, early childhood education is critically important. Research backs this up but even so the government cuts back in this area when money gets tight. Why do we allow this to happen?

.....

### Notes from a Participant: Melanie Boyd

"Throughout the Basic Education Dialogue, I was struck by what passionate advocates Canadian teachers are for all children and for their right to quality education. Committed teachers see the whole child as important and consequently recognize that there is as great a need for activism on the poverty front as for activism on the education front. What a powerful resource for CIDA! We should seriously look at the role of teachers as change agents in any basic education programming we undertake. "

.....

---

## Key Messages from the Dialogue

How do we educate for the millennium when few know how to read?

- Those working in education in Canada and in Asia face many similar issues: self-esteem, funding, parental involvement.
  - The definition of poverty cannot simply be GNP per capita, but must include dimensions of powerlessness and isolation.
  - Educating girls and women is the first priority because of roles of mothers as caregivers. It is not just poverty which keeps girls out of school but social and cultural practices.
  - Poor children fail at higher rates than middle-class children. Children living in poverty need a special support system. Help children find their voice and ensure they have skills and self-esteem so they can challenge the system and make change.
  - Programs work when the community owns the process and the schools. Individuals must feel that they control their lives and have the resources to do so.
  - It takes years to achieve social change. Have the courage to let people make their own mistakes and learn from them. Don't give up on the basis of results in one short project.
-

## A Just Society: Can social rights be legislated?

Co-hosted by the National Anti- Poverty Organization and CIDA on February 27, 1999  
Co-chairs: Angela Keller-Herzog, CIDA and Michael Farrell, NAPO

This dialogue was the last in a series of five dialogues co-hosted with national organizations in Ottawa and focussed on what we can learn about "our common agenda" through links to domestic knowledge and experience. Twenty-five participants from 15 different organizations participated and interacted with three speakers.

"It took some doing for us to find a partner for this dialogue. We first approached the Canadian organisation that holds Canada's feet to the fire in honouring its international commitments made at the Social Summit. But they challenged us to approach the National Anti Poverty Organization, a coalition of the poor engaged in advocacy for a Canadian "just society". The head of NAPO was leery — "I have to fight for the rights of people living under bridges all over Canada, or lining up with their children at food banks. What does Asia have to do with me?". Fortunately , for this dialogue, an astute board member visiting from Newfoundland encouraged him. "Global solidarity starts with realising it is all one problem, " she said. And so he agreed, and we worked with NAPO to develop the most challenging of all the dialogues: How to shine the light of rights into the darkest corners of poverty ... and then what?"

-Poverty  
Reduction Project Team

What we heard

**Michael Farrell, Acting Executive Director, National Anti-Poverty Organization**

Mr. Farrell opened the dialogue by indicating that in his view social rights can be legislated. Whether or not they actually are legislated, depends on societal attitudes. It is important to reiterate that **economic and social rights are human rights** because this view is not widely accepted. For example, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, Antonio Lamer, recently remarked: "We must accept that there are simply some matters, important as they may be, even though they may be referred to as rights, [that] are not justiciable before the courts of law even in a free and democratic society. Some matters have such a large component of public policy at their core that they cannot be readily resolved in judicial proceedings. I am simply saying we should not be too quick to label as legal rights everything we happen to think is desirable or beneficial to society. Mr Farrell pointed out that the 'social rights' Justice Lamer referred to are part of an international covenant that Canada has signed. In fact last December, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights said: "The Committee, as in its previous review of Canada's report, reiterates that economic and social rights should not be downgraded to 'principles and objectives' in the ongoing discussions between the federal government and the provinces and territories regarding social programs. The Committee consequently urges the Federal Government to take concrete steps to ensure that the provinces and territories are made aware of their legal obligations under the Covenant and that the Covenant rights are enforceable within the provinces and territories through legislation of policy measures and the establishment of independent and appropriate monitoring and adjudication mechanisms."

Mr Farrell gave examples of three different perspectives on social rights:

*Darwinists* who feel that individuals are entirely responsible for their own problems and should

be left alone to deal with them. They believe that people need incentives so they will try harder. Darwinists tend to stay out of the social policy arena.

*Sympathizers* who feel sympathy for those suffering and want to do something to ease their pain. They view social and economic rights as desired policy objectives more than human rights. This often results in a patronizing approach towards people experiencing difficult social conditions.

*Justice-seekers* who are concerned that people are being treated unfairly largely as a result of government decisions. They believe that they must change the political and economic systems so it does not force people to live in poverty.

He concluded by saying that the problem in legislating social rights is not technical or logistical. It depends on who has decision-making power and which perspective they follow. Increasing people's awareness that government actions through fiscal, monetary and trade policies create social problems along with the positive outcomes may spur the legislation of economic and social rights.

.....

## The Sach Project: Providing an equal opportunity to learn

The Sach Project in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, (a program CIDA supports through the Canada Fund), creates non-formal education schools for underprivileged children.

The photos below are of children who were learning to read through the project, many of whom work as rag pickers in the village.

.....

## Discussion

- People tend to think of human rights as those defined under the political/civil covenants of the Universal Declaration of Rights. They do not usually consider those defined under the social/economic covenants as being equally important.
- It seems as though the rights currently focussed on are those that benefit investors — NAFTA and WTO.
- Debate on economic policy direction is so polarized that there is no longer any middle ground. The spread of capitalism and free markets is not the same as democracy!
- It's a question of values — what value system do we support? Is there respect for human rights and dignity? What does Canada hold itself accountable for?

### ***John Crump, Senior Policy Analyst, Nunavut Planning Commission***

Mr Crump spoke about the Nunavut Lands Claim Agreement as example of legislated social rights. According to Mr Crump it is disturbing to see a country and a culture advocate rights on one hand and deny them on the other. Although most Canadians favour the development of social rights, there has not been much thought or reflection about what happened to aboriginal nations. The people of Nunavut feel that they have long been denied their right to territory, culture and language. They look to the Dene in the Western Arctic and other groups have used land claims to push for their rights and have their rights enshrined.

People in the North are very aware of this, of the difference legislated settlements can make. Nunavut is viewed as a shining example by non-Canadians, while being largely unknown at home. He concluded by asking how Canadians could fight for social justice in other countries and not at home, and how can we build public support for legislating social rights?

## Discussion

- What made it possible for indigenous communities in Canada to achieve these kinds of settlements? Leadership? Organization? Probably timing and insistence — several big oil and gas development projects such as the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline were ready to start. There was a small opening in history and people seized the opportunity.
- Perhaps the success of the aboriginal people can be traced back to their concept of community and the idea of 'Seven Generations' where one is looking so far ahead that one just keeps moving through apparently intractable opposition. Non-aboriginal societies are very short-sighted — we just see the fight in front of us, and don't see it as a building block. Aboriginal people in Canada have all the social indicators of an underdeveloped country. One immediate concern is how to use the land claims agreements to change this, while maintaining the long-term viability of the environment and increasing wage labour opportunities.
- CIDA often works with 'justice-seekers' in developing countries, even though as an organization it seems to produce projects that fit it in the sympathizers category.
- There is a lack of coherence between the laws and implementation. For example, Mexico has better environmental laws than the United States. But American industries are moving to Mexico because these laws aren't being implemented. China has a wonderful women's law — but the institutions to engender power and awareness are missing. This is where the relative importance of the civil/political versus the social/economical comes into play. Women in Canada are denied economic and social rights whereas women in China are denied civil and political rights. Should we be more

concerned about civil/political rights or are all rights equal?

**Anil Gupta, Environment Specialist, Asia Branch, CIDA**

Mr Gupta spoke about the challenges of applying the concept of social rights in Asia. He does not believe that social rights can be legislated in Asia. Even if they are, he feels they will have little impact. His argument is that in Canada we have a fairly advanced legal system which supersedes community rules. But in most Asian countries, the socio-cultural rules are far more important than the legal rules, and predate legal rules by thousands of years. In fact, most legal systems in Asia were derived from colonial administrations and were used to oppress people for many years. Therefore there is less trust in them now.

He used the example of caste. Although the caste system in India has been banned for a long time, the effect of this legislation to date has had little impact on the vast majority of people, especially in rural area. In Asian societies, community rights are more important than individual rights. In order to impact on social justice in Asia we need to improve primary education (in one state in Kerala, India, basic social indicators are the same as those in Western countries primarily because of universal education), raise public awareness (Gandhi's fight for the untouchables raised more awareness than the legislation) and make use of new information technologies (CNN impacts more on social mores and gender equity in Asia than legislation does). It all takes time.

### Discussion

- The use of rights law and litigation only works to the extent that the powers that be allow it to work. This is what has happened in Canada in the attempts to use legal instruments in refugee rights.
- Although there has been an enormous amount of advocacy and resources invested in international instruments, when the Review

Commission on the Rights of the Child says that Canada has not abided by the covenant, it has limited impact. These international instruments have no force of law in Canada and do little to force social change. Perhaps it is more useful to undertake small initiatives that help specific groups of people. For example, Ottawa-Carleton Immigration Services has two small employment projects which help individual immigrants get good jobs in their fields. Does action speak louder than words?

- Structural adjustment is a homogenous paradigm globally, just the impacts vary. We have to find ways of increasing people's understanding of these similarities, that we too suffer its consequences in Canada as well as enjoy any benefits..
- Canada has some experience with 'rights-claiming'. It is important for Canada's poor on welfare. It's not a choice or outside of daily life.
- Rights-claiming is as important in Gujarat or Chiapas as in Canada. We are one world. We need to get rid of the artificial boxes. CIDA's initiative in holding this meeting is appreciated, but it shouldn't be a special occasion, it should be a regular part of our work.
- Women's equality is fundamental to poverty reduction.
- The Canadian Court Challenges Program deals with federal legislation. Although it has been successful for some groups, it is very expensive to bring a Charter of Right case to the Supreme Court, and it only applies to federal (not provincial) legislation. Although equal pay for equal work has been legislated in Canada, it is difficult to enforce. Estimates in the U.S. indicate such an initiative would reduce poverty in families by 50 to 60%.
- The case of Burma shows that you have to work on many different levels. First, you must draw attention to the situation. The regime in

Burma is very sensitive to international approval. On the one hand it is important to isolate Burma and prevent investment in this region. There are a lot of instruments by which we could say to investors in Canada don't invest in this regime unless you think you're having a beneficial social effect. But this would also violate the World Trade Organization agreement, unless a Special Economic Measures Act from the UN was passed or an international emergency declared. On the other hand, it is also clear that nothing is going to change unless someone is working on reconciliation with the current regime, as Canada is open to doing in appropriate circumstances. Carrots and sticks work best when they work together.

- Part of the approach to legislating social rights is seizing opportunities wherever they appear. Another way is to provide support to poor people directly. Do we need more advocates or do we need more funds for the poor? How do we allocate our resources among the different priorities? The constitution of the Soviet Union was a beautiful document, with entrenched social/political and economic rights but there was also a great deal of repression in the Soviet Union. Likewise, The International Conventions have to be used with care — they can be paternalistic and create further poverty if misused. Legislative changes are a beginning, but it is also important to involve the poor people in the country you are working in — ask them what they think and want.
- There are opportunities to use the law in some settings, even though in developing countries, sometimes the law is the problem. In India, street-vendors used the class action approach and the law was very successful in helping them take their cases up to the Supreme Court. The Canadian Supreme Court could learn from the Indian Supreme Court about social rights. Can we facilitate those kinds of exchanges?

.....

## Notes from a Participant: Anil Gupta

"The discussion proved very stimulating, as it brought together a wide range of Canadian activists, including aboriginals, womens' rights, and Third World champions. I had the opportunity to present some personal views on the importance of socio-cultural values in S.Asia, and how these often supersede the more formal, legal systems which are so valued in the North. A personal highlight of the session was when an Aboriginal Canadian approached me to indicate how much the discussion resonated with some of the concerns of Canada's First Nations' groups. Sometimes we need reminders that there are many lessons to be learned from the "Fourth World" as we set about trying to work in the Third one..."

.....

---

## Key Messages from the Dialogue

### A Just Society: Can social rights be legislated?

- Legislating social rights will only work if decision-makers are in favour of this approach. The international covenants are not legally enforceable, although countries can be 'shamed' or 'embarrassed' by non-compliance.

- A multi-pronged approach is required to ensure social rights — creating public awareness of the existing international instruments, changing legislation when appropriate, enforcing international covenants if not through the courts then through public opinion.

- At the same time, small initiatives that improve the actual living situation of poor people, refugees, unemployed must be undertaken, even in the absence of social rights legislation.

- Some countries do have domestic laws that enshrine social and economic rights. We need to share these successful experiences, and encourage South-North sharing.

- We cannot decide on behalf of the poor. The poor themselves have to be involved in change strategies.

---

# The Agriculture Connection: Making it work for Asia's poor

Co-hosted by McGill University's Macdonald College and CIDA on March 25, 1999

Co-chairs: **Jamie Graves, CIDA and Dr Roger Buckland, McGill University**

"We brought in all of the Asia Branch specialists to craft the title for this dialogue. Over many cups of coffee, the debate raged about whether the key words should be 'food security' or 'rural livelihoods' or 'agriculture' — all critical concepts for the understanding of poverty in rural Asia. 'Food security' is currently the popular word in CIDA and includes issues such as food aid. 'Rural livelihoods' goes well beyond what happens in the farmer's field. But overall, the specialists decided that 'agriculture' had been lost as a concept in CIDA, and thus needed special attention. Hence our title. Enthusiastic participants from McGill's Macdonald College ensured highly energetic preparations and one of the liveliest dialogues of the entire series."

Poverty Reduction Project Team

This was the first of three dialogues co-hosted with a Canadian university focussing on the roots of poverty. It included twenty-nine participants from 17 different organizations.

In many parts of Asia, agriculture is still the main source of income for people living in rural areas. However the returns are significantly lower than those from other industries or urban employment. This dialogue focused on how agriculture can help build rural livelihoods, reduce poverty and hunger, and improve social equity and wealth. It revolved around two central topics: agricultural and marketing systems, and land utilization. In the first session, participants discussed wealth creation and distribution through agriculture, agro-processing and market development. Can food security and incomes of Asia's poor be increased through improved systems of production and marketing? In the second session, participants examined the increasing demands on food security, the deteriorating population to land equilibrium and the resulting impact on the management, distribution and ownership of land. What are the implications of improved land use on poverty and the nutritional status of the poor? Participants offered suggestions on how CIDA could help Asia's poor increase family incomes through agriculture and improved resource management.

## What we heard

### ***Sonny Enriquez, Program Officer, International Programs, World Vision Canada***

Mr Enriquez spoke about food security. It is extremely important to know who the poor are — this helps us become more realistic and more accountable.

The urban poor are as vulnerable as the rural poor. Soon, half of Asia's population will be living in cities. Most of these migrated to the city from rural areas in search of a better life. But without access to land in the city, they live in slum areas, in make-shift houses. Jobs are difficult and there are no relatives to run to for help. People can't return to their villages because of loss of face — they become angry and frustrated. Food security in the urban area is very different than in a rural setting. In terms of farming systems, the policies and strategies we develop must be rooted in the lives of people at the community level so that they may achieve their 'good life' in the rural setting.

## Discussion

- What weight should be given to agriculture versus other sectors? To rural areas versus urban areas? In many countries it's difficult to distinguish between rural or urban areas since rural people have off-farm activities and urban gardens abound. The urban area is often the major food market. It needs to thrive in order for rural areas to thrive. So it is not 'either-or'.
- Most aid agencies move from one buzz-word or simplistic solution to another every five years — from community development to integrated rural development to sustainable development to food security. Now we need a global system perspective which tackles poverty from different angles at the same time and sticks with a plan long enough to see results.
- Agriculture has an image problem — fertilizer missused can destroy the land, pesticides can destroy the environment. On the other hand, "the only thing worse than agricultural technology is no agricultural technology".
- An issue to bear in mind is macro-efficiency. We have to come to this with an open mind. For example, Indonesia is importing 20% of the world's rice supply. Is this terrible? Not at all, unless that rice isn't available on the market, if Indonesians don't have the money to buy it; or if the rice is coming in as a safety net and doesn't get distributed to those in need. CIDA needs to address agriculture on a regional and holistic basis, seeing it as part of rural livelihoods.
- CIDA also need to look at new and more complex definitions of poverty. Again in Indonesia, 11% of population lives below poverty line, based on one criterion established by government and World Bank — 2,200 calories a day. This left a huge number of people on the edge of 'poverty', the vulnerable "non-poor".
- In addition to the narrowness of the calorie view of poverty, the issue is not just the amount of calories, but also the safety of the food and the need for nutritional fortification.
- 'Farming systems' are often interpreted too narrowly. For example, In Bangladesh, fishing should be seen as part of the farming systems. Farming systems must be oriented towards both production and the market.
- There is an attempt to privatize the delivery of agricultural extension services rather than leave it in the public sector. We need to examine, what happens then? Who gets the services? Who is left out? What happens when you move to cash crops that can pay for these services?
- In Japan, 60% of all agricultural extension work was done by women in the 1960s. Today, entire provinces in South Asia have no women agricultural extension officers.
- Many households organize production to meet both commercial needs and subsistence needs. But some inputs such as credit are geared only towards the commercial side. Have we given enough attention to developing technologies appropriate for users of inputs for subsistence?

.....

## The BAMPHE Project

With CIDA support, McGill University and the Bangalore University of Agricultural Sciences are collaborating on this post-harvest technology project in Karnataka, India. Between 25 to 50% of the region's increasing crop production was being lost between the farm gate and the consumer plate. Through extension work undertaken by the university, rural communities were introduced to low-cost post-harvest processing techniques which improved the shelf-life of their produce.

.....

.....

## Notes from a Participant: Jamie Graves

"This dialogue brought together representatives from many different interest groups, from NGOs to the private sector and from academics to farmers' coops and federations. To be honest, I was a little apprehensive that the dialogue might be, at best, a monologue between like minded people and, at worst, a polemic between production minded specialists and ecological champions. But it was, in the end, a very healthy exchange with diverse viewpoints and experiences on how to reduce rural poverty. If people agreed on anything, it was on the need for balance and complementarity of approaches."

.....

- The primary goal of most farmers is to maintain their family and improve their living conditions. Programs that don't meet that goal are destined for failure. Dividing land up as families grow to feed more people is not sustainable. We must develop other rural economic opportunities, so rural people aren't forced to migrate to the cities. We need to take a more systematic and less targeted perspective.
- Education does help improve income — it is part of an individual's capital/assets and helps people size up their opportunities.
- There is a feeling that if you get the price right or the incentive right, people will move out of poverty. But that's just moving along a supply curve, not shifting it. The Green Revolution shifted the supply curve. We need to shift it again.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization says 800 million people are food-insecure, marginalized farmers living in stress prone areas. In some countries there is no possibility of growing enough food to feed the population.

If the focus is on poverty, let's limit the term 'food security' to the household level and define it as people not having to worry about where their next meal is coming from.

- Access to credit, land ownership, research, education and marketing — all these need to be considered and they need to be considered at three different levels — local, national, international. Farmers need to organize and become actors of development.
- What do we mean by agricultural development? Increases in food productivity or availability?
- We're at the end of an era benefiting from technical improvements (plant varieties, irrigation). We've reached our limit, now water supply is an issue. New production increases will have to come by raising yields on existing lands.
- In the last 50 years we've increased food production 2½ times. With the growing world population will we have to do it again in the next 50 years? How? Increased harvest? Expanded use of irrigation, fertilizers? New technologies such as genetic engineering — who will control it? Who gets the wealth? Within the next 13 months, we'll have the gene sequence of a plant. Climate change means the trading patterns will be different in the future.
- Monetization of food commodities takes into account consumption in the area of production and outside the area, cost of production, cost of transportation to market, ... The key is cost-effectiveness — soybeans produced in Java are still more efficient than imports, because even though production costs are higher in Java, transportation costs are not.

## What we heard

### **Sylvain Larivière, Chair in International Development, FSAA, CREA, Université Laval**

Professor Larivière described a structured conceptual framework that he and his colleagues had developed to address rural poverty, as part of a background paper prepared for The World Bank Development Report. We like his framework so much we have included it in this report as Appendix 3.

In their view, the most efficient long-term way to reduce poverty is privatization of land ownership. Small holders are more efficient, produce at lower costs, use more labour intensive technologies and make local purchases. Allocation of land use by individual producers is rational when seen from the perspective of the poor, even though planners may not agree.

Poverty reduction programs require a package of combined technologies, institutions and policies that define the incentives influencing household and community behaviour. Growth in the agricultural sector reduces rural poverty by increasing food availability at household levels; increasing food supply on the market; reducing food prices for net buyers; increasing employment opportunities for the poor.

### **G.S. Vijaya Raghavan, Chair, Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering, McGill University**

Professor Raghavan presented a series of 'good news' graphs which showed that the population growth rate has peaked and is on the decline. Will it flatten out or see further decreases? He said it is important to consume whatever we produce. According to Amartya Sen, a recent Nobel Prize winner and a leading economist from India, "Grain saved is grain produced."

## Discussion

- On the one hand we extol the virtues of trade, on the other we say that agriculture has to be more diversified, that intensive culture is too specialized and needs to be abandoned in order to improve ecological conditions. But the large intensive crops contribute to trade.
- Are we asking too much of agriculture to provide the social welfare function for the whole economy (through cheap food) to the detriment of its own performance?
- In very simplistic terms, there are three types of poor: those who with macro/sectoral reform can seize economic opportunities and move out of poverty; those who lack one element of capital ie credit but if offered micro-credit can pull themselves out of poverty ('entrepreneurial poor'); those who are poor in capital and even under good conditions can't pull themselves out of poverty — these are the ones who need safety nets.
- What is the size of the entrepreneur that can gainfully employ people? People who earn less than \$1 a day are not moving out of poverty. Perhaps we need to move up the scale to community-level enterprise with fuller employment and higher wage possibilities.
- If we accept that smallholder agriculture is the engine of economic growth, when is small too small? It depends on the diversification of activities — for example, a study of 10 villages in India showed that redistributing land from households of 10 hectares to those with less than 2 hectares, had a 3% impact on poverty reduction but if this land reform was coupled with technology then the incidence of poverty was reduced by 75%.
- Government officials (Ministers of Supply or Finance) are susceptible to political pressures and sometimes seek temporary solutions to food crises at the cost of local production.
- Supply management is not the same as a marketing board. Supply management can't work if you don't constrain imports, if you don't have government onside, if you don't have minimum access and tariff barriers. You have to be careful because when you implement supply management you create artificial
- What is the best way for scientific findings in educational institutions to reach small-scale farmers? By building on-going linkages between research institutions and farmers, through experimental plots, learning from each other etc.

increases in price. Take the example of Canadian milk — less than 1% of the population produces milk. Through supply management the prices are forced up. It's supposed to ensure fair prices. One out of five kids in Canada lives in poverty and can't afford milk. We're subsidizing producers — it's a regressive transfer, very harmful to the poor.

- Agriculture is more than just producing food. Farmers can grow all sorts of things (after-market productivity) that can bring in money such as tobacco, flowers, Christmas trees. When prices fall, producers often diversify into fodder or fruits and agricultural growth continues.
- Over 90% of what is consumed in hungry developing countries comes from within. If we don't intensify food production we are in trouble — there is an increasing food gap that can only be avoided through intensification of agriculture at the country level.
- Poverty reduction is based on a process of empowerment of the individual or the group. Frameworks can help us understand but we shouldn't forget that people are involved.
- Each country should have the capacity to monitor poverty and analyse changes.

---

## Key Messages from the Dialogue

The Agriculture Connection: Making it work for Asia's poor

- We need to know more about the poor and we need a more complex definition of poverty which goes beyond daily income or caloric intake.
  - Access to land is key. Land should be privatized not by legislation but through purchase at market value by the state and redistribution to poor farmers.
  - Programs need to be long-term (beyond 5 years), deal with systemic changes and include both horizontal and vertical integration.
  - Increase the number of women agricultural extension workers.
  - Small may sometimes be too small — scale up micro-enterprises to community enterprises. Consider inputs for both household/subsistence and commercial agriculture.
  - More attention should be paid to why small farmers make the decisions they do — they have their own reasons and we need to be aware of those reasons, not ignore them.
  - Don't just look at food production, move beyond the farm gate, to include food processing, marketing and distribution in agricultural programming.
-

# From Striving to Thriving: Building on the assets and opportunities of Asia's women

Co-hosted by the Coady International Institute  
(St Francis Xavier University) and CIDA on  
March 29, 1999

Co-chairs: Helen Thomas, CIDA and Mary  
Coyle, CII

"There is a 'culture of barriers' among the many that struggle with gender issues. In this dialogue we wanted to pay special attention to the best of the past and present experience— to ignite our collective imagination of what could be. And so we turned to Coady Institute, known all over the world for building on the positives coming out of the Antigonish movement in the Maritimes. Just as we had hoped, examining the lessons of success, while still being realistic about the lessons of failure, was the right way to tackle some key gender issues in their relation to poverty reduction."

Poverty Reduction Project Team

In her introduction, Mary Coyle, Director of the Coady Institute, provided participants with a glimpse of the history of the place they were gathered in — the Sister Marie Michael Library in beautiful Antigonish. She explained that Sister Marie Michael was the first woman hired by Moses Coady, the leader of the Antigonish Movement to develop a program for women. She organized kitchen meetings and study clubs where women talked about the economic problems they faced during the Great Depression and what they could do together to lead "full and abundant lives".

Helen Thomas, Gender Equity Specialist in CIDA's Asia Branch, having just returned from meetings with women in Asia talked about their sense of the catastrophic failure of the growth model, their understanding of how women had been exploited, their sense of marginalization from macro-economic processes, and their observation that women had subsidized this economic growth and not been recognized for it.

Experience has shown that the organization of women in poor communities leads to their increased status, both within the community and the family. This dialogue focused on the opportunities of women in Asia and Canada to increase their economic, social and physical well-being.

What strategies are women using to help communities not only survive but thrive? What barriers need to be addressed?

Twenty-eight participants from 16 different organizations shared lessons learned from experiences with fishing communities in the Maritimes, aboriginal groups, youth groups, Community Futures groups, women's centres, health centres and micro-credit groups and offered recommendations for CIDA. The dialogue consisted of three sessions, each with speakers and ensuing discussions: critical success factors and obstacles to women organizing; the role of micro-credit and enterprise development in poverty reduction and women organizing for healthier communities.

## What we heard

### ***Dr Najma Sharif, Professor, Saint Mary's University, Halifax***

It is clear that organizing women helps them participate in development. Women have access to two types of resources that help them achieve well-being — intangible resources such as autonomy, solidarity and security and tangible resources such as skills,

knowledge, access to property. Social organizing helps women acquire intangible resources which in turn help them access tangible resources and change power structures. Results come very slowly over time. When we look at organizations, we can see that self-selection occurs. Often it is women who are already empowered that belong to organizations. It is the marginalized and younger women who are not yet members. Thus, do these organizations really reach the poorest — those on the streets, the homeless, prostitutes? How can we change this?

## Discussion

- There is a distinction between organizing women and women organizing that we should keep in mind.
- We shouldn't be 'mobilizing' but helping women mobilize — our role is that of facilitators not actors.
- It's encouraging to see the goal of development defined as health, well-being and security — too often it is simply defined as increased income.
- If you want to address the poorest of the poor you must look at the sickest of the sick — poor people suffer the most from ill-health. A recent study showed that 91% of pregnant women in Bangladesh are anaemic. What are we asking of them when we ask them to come together, or to participate in new projects?
- Organizations need some tangible successes immediately so they can 'see what we mean' and reduce their sense of risk in being involved.
- The leader/motivator or driving force must come from within the community.
- Often funding requirements determine internal organizational structures which are useful for accounting purposes but not for development work. With recent cutbacks organizations are finding it difficult to afford the staff they feel they need to be the most effective.
- There is a difference between poverty reduction and poverty relief. Do we have to have certain elements of relief (such as meeting basic needs) for organizations to be effective?
- We need to factor in transportation and child care costs when organizing events.
- We should focus on what women themselves have identified and articulated as opportunities or issues and support initiatives that focus on building women's assets such as land, money, housing, and making connections beyond the local unit (networking).
- People need to learn how to organize. Poor people won't form associations unless they can see a direct benefit. It all takes time and energy which we need to be rationed.
- Inter-generational and class differences can be an obstacle — even in the poorest communities women are heterogenous. In patri-local marriages, women have to make alliances with the family they marry into. This is much more important to their survival than alliances with other women.
- Why do we expect all organizations to be sustainable? Why not fluid or ad hoc organizations where people can move in and out on an issue by issue basis? At the same time, we do need to create sustainable institutions to provide such services micro-finance services to the poorest of economically active with professional people who know the area/skills/ approaches.
- We need to recognize that we often partner with organizations that are located in central cities, have English-speaking staff, and are managed by women of a certain class or ethnicity. We do a really good job of

participatory development and organizing with them but we don't help them reach out to the poorest of the poor, to women who are less connected and accessible...who hover outside the door. It has to be a participatory process — ask the women you are going to work with what works for them.

- Another obstacle is the 'opportunity cost' of a woman joining an organization — not just economic but social. For example, a woman may be beaten up by her husband because the housework doesn't get done.
- People have developed a whole range of ways to have access to cash when they need it. It may be difficult to join an organization and give up all those other ways of getting cash that worked over the years.
- Informal education (learning how to read, raise chickens, grow food to eat) helps women with their daily lives but doesn't necessarily empower them to move forward. Quality formal education shouldn't be given up for informal education. We need to support the kind of education that has the ability to get people farther up the ladder and out of poverty.
- Girls are often educated not for a career but for the marriage market. Women who work in export-market textiles or garment factories have broken barriers. They are earning money but find that they are no longer considered 'marriageable'. We should keep this in mind when designing projects for women.
- Most micro-credit programs are aimed at married women who have some property or collateral. This leaves out young unmarried women. They also offer education for women and their children, but this can leave out young voiceless women (14 to 18) who can't go to school because they do the housework while their mothers do association work.
- The recent trend towards decentralization of administrative decision-making is a potential

success factor — it motivates cooperation and partnerships between civil society and local government. For example, Bangladesh has reserved a number of seats for women leaders in each village.

- We need to look for opportunities — when a catalytic event happens in a community that brings people together — for organizing, taking control and making change.
- Poor women have tremendous skills and assets that aren't recognized because we don't ask about them, don't value them. We need to understand how people exist, what assets they use, the concept of social reciprocity at work in marriages, funerals, dowries (these are strategies to advance in the community). Women don't necessarily need 'entrepreneurial training in the informal sector' — they already know about switching production and other such issues, they are the successes!
- The 'photocopy' approach can also be a barrier. For example, there is a whole movement worldwide to replicate the Grameen Bank without taking into account the local context. If we ask women/organizations what they want, we should be prepared to listen, learn and adjust our strategies/interventions based on what we heard, not just abandon the effort.

### The role of micro-credit and enterprise development in poverty reduction

#### **Colleen Tobin, Executive Director, Women's World Finance**

Ms Tobin spoke about Womens' World Finance, an affiliate of Women's World Banking, a non-profit organization that provides lending, savings and business development services to hundreds of thousands of low income women entrepreneurs around the world. WWF began as a pilot project in Cape Breton Island; ten years later it manages a program for the entire Atlantic Canada region in partnership with the Royal Bank. WWF is an

example of how you can take a concept or a model and fit it to what you need to do, but you can't simply duplicate it — factors such as the profile of the clients and the absorption capacity of the local economy determine what will fit. In Atlantic Canada, over 65% of women who started their own businesses used their own resources (less than \$10,000) and their average age was 45. Today, most WWF clients are single parents who need help in establishing or improving their credit, are under-capitalized and need an injection of cash (sometimes as small as \$5,000 which is too small for banks to handle) or have very high debt ratios. WWF helps women survey the market, discover who needs their product, find out if their loan application is approved (within 24 hours of a request), create strategic alliances within the community and bring in partners from larger organizations when required.

**Gordon Cunningham, Lecturer, Coady International Institute**

Mr Cunningham spoke about the framework used by Marty Chen and Marilyn Carr to understand the situation of low-income women in Asia. He then went on to describe the work of SEWA which is a confluence of a labour union, 72 mainly sector-based cooperatives and a women's organization based in Ahmedabad, India. He said that SEWA tackles the barriers inherent in marriage and kinship systems by ensuring that if women borrow money to purchase land or property their name goes on the title. SEWA helps women start new enterprises by providing loans and insurance schemes for widowhood, illness, communal riots and maternity leave.

In their book, *Speaking Out*, Marty Chen and Marilyn Carr identify four categories of workers: vendors and hawkers, home-based producers, labourers and service-providers (cleaning, cooking, laundry). They also describe the constraints faced by the working women, for example: marriage and kinship systems that deny women rights to land, and relegate women to lower-paying work; lack of power within the household and extended family; debt/dependency within patron/client relationships; community groups and local councils are not usually a focus for mediation but corruption; government policy biases neglect women's work; and macro-economic policies associated with structural adjustment often lead to increased competition in the informal sector.

**Discussion**

- Kinship systems can also be an obstacle in Canada. For example, in Newfoundland, many women who come to the women's centre face family violence. Others have problems with marriage breakdown and in dealing with the legal system for divorce and custody.
- But kinship can also be a success factor — the extended family can also help women keep up with loan payments.
- The Medellin Conference of Bishops called impoverishment the primary form of violence. In the Philippines, Development and Peace works with a variety of stakeholders to try and bring about consensus and sustainable solutions, sometimes in complex four-partite negotiations. Risk-takers in the Philippines run the danger of losing their lives, here in Canada we just lose credibility.
- The relationship between government and NGOs is fraught with contradictions —

should NGOs work with government and take their money? Calmeadow does not take any money from government, the Coady Institute gets 44% of its funding from the government.

- USAID's experience has shown that providing microfinance services helps to keep the peace in post-conflict societies.

## Women Organising for Healthier Communities

### ***Marilyn Porter, Professor, Department of Sociology, Memorial University of Newfoundland***

Women's studies (based in the academy) can contribute a great deal to the community. Some of the best projects come from small one-on-one initiatives which are later institutionalized. For example, a rape counsellor from Newfoundland has worked with Sapparina, the director of the Graduate Women's Studies Program at a university in Indonesia to provide training in counselling skills in a remote Indonesian province. The need for professional counselling is very urgent, but it can't be done without also meeting basic human needs for food and shelter. After the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998, many violent rapes took place throughout Indonesia. A new National Commission on Violence headed by Sapparina will address some of these issues. Thus, a small success has triggered a big change.

### ***Jane Robinson, Program Co-ordinator, St John Women's Centre***

There is new poverty in Canada as well as in Asia — the government has cut UI, withdrawn from job creation and closed the cod fishery. More than 15,000 women have been thrown out of work — there is increasing family violence and breakdown. At the Women's Centre, staff have been reduced from four to one position shared by two women. The clients (300 phone calls and 60 drop-ins per month) are mainly survivors of violence and/or sexual assault and single parents. 60% of

female single parents live in poverty. The centre provides one-on-one lay counselling and women move from being clients to volunteers assisting other women. Everything the centre does is a stepping-stone to helping women become self-reliant. But individual advocacy attempts don't lead to policy change, that happens through the legal system. A continuing challenge is the fact that when the centre lobbies for change it comes up against the department which provides its funding and fears 'rocking the boat'.

The PATH project "Healthy Communities" focuses on how to support people to look at their community in a broader context and assess their health. It raises awareness of the multiple factors that have an impact on the health of a community; and it can be used as a tool to assess how programs/policy/service will impact on the health of the community.

## Discussion

- These are global issues: deteriorating family networks, reduced and diversified funding sources, development of partnerships with government. Each situation is different in context, yet there are some fundamental universal principles: doing a needs assessment with women in the community; the important role of social intermediation (necessary before any economic program starts); the fact that change is a constant. How do you help organizations come together to understand the change, anticipate it, and deal with it or be out-in-front of it?
- Sometimes governments need to play more of a strategic role in protecting women's rights and supporting innovative models of civil society engagement with local government. For example, a project at the local level in Bangladesh has helped bring a number of cases to court but unless there is

policy reform at the higher levels, unless there is sensitization of the judiciary and the police things won't change.

- In Canada we have built up a good infrastructure around women's development. But it is starting to crumble and this poses a huge problem — if we lose local women's centres we've lost one of our basic elements of organizing.
- There was much optimism when micro-credit first came out. Now we know the limitations of what organizations can do. We shouldn't put all our eggs in one basket.

.....

### Notes from a Participant: Helen Thomas

"The discussions in Antigonish were energising and stimulating. I needed that because I was just back from a marathon mission to Asia. The connections between what poor women in Asia think about and those struggling in the Maritimes were striking. Using collective power is key everywhere, as is building trust between Government and NGOs. The importance of communities — healthy communities — as the crucible for meeting needs in an integrated way was raised over and over, in Antigonish and Asia. This linking and learning from each other is a process that must go on!"

---

### Key Messages from the Dialogue

From Striving to Thriving: Building on the assets and opportunities of Asia's women

- Success factors include: good health, focusing on what women themselves have identified as opportunities, possibly the trend towards decentralization/devolution and taking advantage of catalytic change to organize.

- Barriers include: violence against women; lack of self-confidence; time, money and government support; cutbacks; kinships systems which promote family alliances rather than women's solidarity and inter-generational differences.

- Understand the social cost of organizing. Recognize that women already have overburdened days. Listen to what women and communities say their needs, priorities, and opportunities are and build on their existing knowledge.

- Help communities adapt to change, learn how to organize and develop more sophisticated collaboration tools to build 'collective power' between government and communities.

- Although sustaining organizations over the long-term is important, fluid issue-based organizations may work better in certain instances.

- The "photocopy" approach won't work. Consider/understand the interconnection between issues and the particular circumstances of each community. Support activities at both the micro and the macro levels and the links between them.



# The Good Governance and Prosperity Link: Practical approaches to strengthening governance in Asia

Co-hosted by Simon Fraser University and CIDA on April 12, 1999

Co-chairs: David Gillies, CIDA and Jan Walls, SFU

"Good Governance is perhaps the most fundamental underpinning of poverty education. We chose to narrow the topic and explore the aspects of governance that have become known as "participatory governance". Whether through traditional top down control by elites, or in dialogue between empowered governed and those who govern, the way that a community encounters and handles this basic governance relationship has important consequences for good governance and poverty reduction. Can a donor support empowerment for participatory governance at the grass roots?"

Poverty Reduction Project Team

**T**his was the last of three dialogues co-hosted with a Canadian university exploring the roots of poverty.

Twenty-three participants from 14 different organisations shared experiences and best practices in the area of participatory governance. Four speakers presented their perspectives on this issue.

## What we heard

**David Gillies, Governance Specialist, CIDA**

Dr Gillies began the dialogue by setting out the context. In many parts of Asia there are a variety of experiments under way to re-arrange relations among various levels of government and to open up to new players such as the community, the private sector, NGOs and local politicians. In other words, to move from local government to participatory governance.

Beneath the diversity of national experiments, there are common issues which all relate to determining the optimal political, financial and managerial arrangements required to devolve power. On the political level: arrangements have to be made regarding policy and legal frameworks, jurisdictions and balance of power among different levels of government, constitutional reform, local elections and reserved seats. On the financial level, arrangements include fiscal federalism and transfer payments, local revenue generation, financial management and probity. On the managerial side, one can look at issues such as institutional capacity, mind-set/attitude, training of local government functionaries and elected officials, and stakeholder participation.

The promise of participatory governance at the local level is considerable. It provides the opportunity to renew democracy by broadening its base. For example, in India 30,000 more people are now elected to local bodies. In addition, resources and decision-making flow to the lowest levels at which they can be carried out efficiently.

Greater government accountability and responsiveness to people's needs and greater local participation (especially by women and disadvantaged groups) are the result of this devolution. Finally, participatory governance can lead to a mixed deliver system of services with partnerships among private, public and voluntary sectors becoming a new norm.

The risks of participatory governance include adding another layer of corruption and the leakage of development funds, re-enforcing feudal attitudes and vested interests, deflecting NGOs from social change by turning them into service contractors, complex and protracted decisions on resource allocation due to multiple stakeholders, and the drag of entrenched

stereotypes leading to failed public/private collaboration.

How can CIDA facilitate successful multi-stakeholder processes? How can we enable weaker groups of people to have their say? How can we foster new mindsets to undermine entrenched stereotypes? These questions are important but may not have instant answers. **Jan Walls,**

"A climate of civil liberties is necessary both to perceive a variety of claims as legitimate and to encourage an active role of the poor in putting forward claims and getting involved in activities and organizations oriented to satisfying those claims ... the poor should be free of fear that they may suffer from any sanction or disadvantage when they take an initiative with a view to improving their institution."

-OECD Policy Brief

**Director of the David See-Chai Lam Centre for International Communication, Simon Fraser University**

Dr Walls continued in this vein, indicating that there need to be infrastructures and practices that address local, national and international expectations. Democratization can not be implemented from above, local expectations need to be addressed from the beginning of projects.

For example, he spoke about a project in China where the State Council developed environmental protection policies which were then ignored at the local level. He concluded by saying that because poverty reduction requires the economic empowerment of local communities to take command of their own lives, efforts to understand participatory governance are much needed.

**Tony Beck, Independent Researcher and Author**

Dr Beck maintains that participatory governance and community participation as presently practised by donors is erroneously seen as a panacea. He spoke about community-based organisations and community management of resources and identified two types of interventions. The first type is a technical 'tied-aid' project that has been turned into community management project. These projects often fail to differentiate communities and to unpack them by class, gender and ethnicity. Women are often excluded, and the projects are run by elites.

"Governance comprises the institutions, processes and traditions, which determines how power is exercised, how decisions are taken and how citizens have their way. "  
-Table Document for the Governance Dialogue

The second type of intervention holds more promise, but demands CIDA's readiness to "untie" its aid. In Bangladesh where a decentralised government offers intensive support to micro-credit and civil society run by indigenous NGO. The four largest NGOs provide support to over 8 million people, mainly women, through small loans. Proshika, an NGO with 1.2 million members actively promotes an anti-poverty policy. Many NGOs have federated and become very successful in building democratic structures. They have opposed Islamic fundamentalism, directly contributed to democratic processes through voter education and held massive annual anti-poverty rallies. It is a risky venture to align with politics, but a necessary risk to bring the poor into a knowledgeable role in local democracy. Effective institutions support participatory governance and advocate for poverty reduction.

"Participation of the stakeholders in the process of decision making, as against more passive forms of participation (eg. in information, implementation, or benefits) is the hallmark of participatory governance."

-OECD Policy Brief

## Discussion

- The assumption that devolution automatically means that better poverty reduction programs are delivered needs to be examined. The process of empowering the local community does not automatically ensure poverty reduction policies will work.
- In 1992, the city of Rossland started working with the Rural District Council in Zimbabwe. People had a "work ethic". Although, the Canadians focused on developing skills this didn't make much of an impact because the Zimbabweans were very submissive to local authorities and the status quo. The only model they had was that of colonial administrations. They craved 'things' such as a Caterpillar bulldozer to build roads so they could get produce to markets, but didn't realize that even if they had a bulldozer they couldn't afford to run it. The objective should have been to build a road, and not to have a bulldozer. The Canadian team offered a governance/ leadership course where they talked with District Councils about accountability and responsibility and how to identify problems, prioritize objectives and make policy. The city of Rossland has developed a municipal constitution that empowers people to participate in its governance.
- We need to take the long view and understand that global policies have limits. Donors need to "let go" and allow local groups to seek the solutions appropriate to their situation. Governance and poverty reduction are very local and there is no "one size fits all" approach. Though results are needed to

satisfy donor's political masters, organizations acknowledged as successful in grassroots poverty reduction have been successful and unsuccessful at different points in their long histories.

- Governance is not just asking for things but understanding the system within which one operates. We have to work with elites as well as they are the enablers of local governance by stepping aside and allowing it to take place.
- Projects succeed if they build ladders for Asians to move between the national level (pressures and opportunities) and the local level. For example, a project in Yunan which also provides ideas to the National Environmental Protection Agency in Beijing can have a long-term impact that is much broader than developing a rural strategy on its own. Building that ladder and finding the person who is at ease in moving up and down, carrying information and influence back and forth, can weaken the singularity of power and make real change.
- Governments are not homogenous and CIDA has to know the internal debates and find allies. How can we do this in a way that won't alienate those who are more radical? Can participatory governance address or diffuse any of those concerns?
- National and local levels can work together but immediate measurable results are not going to follow. For example, there is a law that there should be local village committees in China. People who are supposed to participate are very leery of the entire process. So there needs to be a local education process before certain projects that depend on village committees are implemented. It takes time and patience but is a necessary first step.

### ***Jim Cooney, Director, Sustainable Development, Placer Dome Inc.***

Mr Cooney spoke of shifts in the traditional model for development where aid money flows to civil society and the private sector is off doing its own work. A new model is emerging, where the private sector capital flowing to the developing world is increasing while the relative importance of aid money is decreasing.

He spoke in particular about a gold mine in the Highlands, Enga Province, Papua New Guinea where Placer Dome is involved in extensive community development work (micro-credit, business development, local governance) valued at \$5 million/year. He said Placer Dome was doing this not because they are good corporate citizens but because this is what the local community and the national government expect and demand in their written contracts with multinationals. The more Placer Dome undertakes, however, the less the government does in that particular area. The mine will last only 10 to 20 years and what will happen after that? Placer Dome has taken on a very paternalistic relationship with the local community mainly because the community doesn't want to think about the long-term future, preferring to focus on today. One concern is that corporations like Placer Dome are becoming agents of erosion of national sovereignty. Civil society organisations should be strengthened to do this kind of work.

In Canada, the Canadian Council for International Cooperation has developed a set of principles by which their members can enter into agreements with corporations. And the Alliance for Environmental Innovation has released some guidelines for working with business for example, setting ground rules through signed agreements.

Placer Dome is working on a sustainable development strategy that includes ensuring that projects benefit local people and communities; stakeholders participate in decisions that affect them; organisations that will remain in the field after the mine has left are strengthened; and finding a 'profit' combination that works for all the players. He said it is much easier for business to operate in an area where they have strong support, where something sustainable is being built, rather than somewhere where they are barely tolerated. The challenges include dealing with corruption and the fact that paternalistic models are much more efficient than true stakeholder co-operation.

At the World Economic Forum in Davos in February 1999, UN Secretary General Kofi

Annan declared that: "The spread of markets outpaces the ability of societies and their political systems to adjust to them, let alone guide the course they take. History teaches us that such an imbalance between the economic, social and political realm can never be sustained for very long." He called on business to support and enact a set of core values in human rights, labour standards and environmental practices.

## Discussion

- There appears to be a change in the mindset of NGOs regarding collaboration with the private sector and they are at least considering the idea now, rather than simply rejecting it at first glance.
- Is the real challenge to empower government to reduce poverty or to create an environment that will empower people to reduce poverty?
- How can you generate employment with viable incomes? Surely medium-sized and multinational business should be able to help small businesses get established? Placer Dome has just such a program in place but it is a struggle to establish small businesses in remote areas. When Placer Dome started the mine in Enga, there were about 4000 people living in the area, now there are more than 25,000 needing housing, food and employment. Rather than trying to do this all on its own, Placer Dome would prefer to work with a small NGO or business that could do this.
- How is it possible that after having experienced the phenomenon of "company towns" which have gone 'under', Canadians can replicate this model overseas, knowing the consequences before we even start? It was not Placer Dome's intention to build a company town in PNG. But the local community demanded 30% of the jobs, so the remaining 70% are flown in and out on a rotation basis. The local community would have preferred to have all of the employees

living on location but Placer Dome refused, precisely because of the Canadian experience. The local community would prefer not to think about what will happen in the long-term future when the mine is closed.

- The poor make tremendous sacrifices on behalf of their children and do think about the future. We need to listen to their priorities and not assume that they prefer not to dwell on the long term.
- On a project in China, one individual complained that China didn't have any legislation concerning co-operatives, they weren't even legal. SFU staff encouraged him not to wait for this legislation to come from the central government but to write his own, based on his knowledge and experiences, and send it to the government. He did and now the government is writing counter legislation. At least the process is underway.
- What happens when business starts using community development and participatory techniques to convince communities they want something that they don't? It may be dangerous for business to use the tools and techniques of NGOs without the accompanying philosophy and idea of empowerment.
- Donors increasingly choose local partners based in part on technical issues such as accounting and decision-making. This is transforming the nature of many NGOs and may alienate them from their grassroots support. Perhaps CIDA needs to rethink some of these indicators. How do we measure a community that has been enabled?
- It shouldn't be a question of decentralisation versus centralization – you need strong systems at both the local and national levels. To fight poverty you need a multidimensional strategy. The real issue is the choice of what activities should be carried out at the national, regional or local level.
- Participatory governance means communities are part of their own development or autonomy – timelines, indicators chosen to measure change disbursements, who links with whom, and how the power is appointed. People are the local or mid-level are able to

say to government: "Look, if you do it this way it will make us poor."

- Poor people spend 80% of their energy on locating food. These are the people we need to involve in developing and formulating policies that deal with their community. But the time/energy crunch is real.
- We need new indicators for multi-stakeholder processes and building trust. Should business have a social responsibility that goes along with their commitment to resource extraction? Can codes of conduct provide space for multi-stakeholder dialogues to take place?

In addition to the short table document that was prepared for this session, participants shared a Policy Brief of the OECD Development Centre called "Participatory Governance: The Missing Line for Poverty Reduction", by Hartmut Scheider, dated 1999. It may be found at [www.oecd.org/dev/Publication/Cahier.HTM](http://www.oecd.org/dev/Publication/Cahier.HTM)

---

## **Key Messages from the Dialogue**

### **The Good Governance and Prosperity Link: Practical approaches to strengthen governance in Asia**

•While aid money is decreasing, the flow of private sector capital to developing countries is rapidly increasing. Companies with a conscience are being forced to deal with poverty issues mainly by local communities and national governments that have great expectations of what private corporations can contribute to their development and growth. What are the responsibilities of the state, the private sector and local communities in delivering social services and creating employment and income opportunities?

•We need to build ladders that enable a country's own indigenous development actors to move between the national and local level creating long-term structural change as well as immediate local change. Don't provide policy advice, provide the space to enable people to make policy.

•Governments and communities are not homogenous entities they contain allies that can help.

•The first step in strengthening governance practices is ensuring people are aware of their basic rights.

•Without indigenous community organizations already active on the local scene, Canadian assistance can achieve very little that can be sustained beyond the influx of resources.

•Ask the poor what they want.

---

# Universal Access to Infrastructure Services: A business case

Co-hosted by the Alliance of Manufacturers and Exporters of Canada and CIDA on April 15, 1999

Chair: Jean-Marc Métivier, Vice-President, Asia Branch, CIDA

"This dialogue took advantage of CIDA's annual meeting with the private sector to broach ideas about how poverty reduction efforts can coexist with profit production efforts -- the basis on which firms function. One of Asia's critical needs is infrastructure to support equitable growth. But we know this investment can no longer come from aid. The monetary amounts required are too large. This is where the private sector flows come into play . Can Canada's private sector zero in on the services that support infrastructure investments that serve poor communities? Is it possible to use aid resources to encourage and enable broad participation of all groups of society in the benefits of infrastructure? "

-Poverty Reduction Project Team

**T**his dialogue explored how the private sector can work with CIDA to provide infrastructure services to poor communities, thus contributing to their socio-economic development. It was held in two sessions — the first concentrating on water and electricity and involving 25 participants; and the second on telecommunications and transportation, involving 20 participants.

## What we heard

### **Jean-Marc Métivier, Vice-President, Asia Branch, CIDA**

Mr Métivier opened the dialogue by explaining why infrastructure services are so important to poverty reduction. In his view, poverty is a symptom of a society not working well. CIDA recognizes the important role of infrastructure but its contribution is no longer aimed at the physical elements of infrastructure such as building dams or bridges.

These types of investments far exceed CIDA's modest resources. Instead, CIDA focuses on the services that infrastructure should be delivering to people.

Mr Métivier said in order to succeed in raising themselves above the poverty line, poor people need basic capacities — education, knowledge, and health — and 'opportunities' to use these capacities, to be productive. These opportunities are created by the economic activity of the country and infrastructure services support economic activity.

### **Stuart Salter, Director, Scientific, Technical and Specialist Resources Division, CIDA**

Mr Salter outlined CIDA's Policy on Poverty Reduction and said it was the heart and soul of the agency. In the policy, poverty reduction is defined as: "A sustained decrease in the number of the poor and the extent of their deprivation." He said it is important to look at the root causes of poverty. Programs must focus on improving a person's access to, control of, and benefit from economic, social and natural resources and decision-making. It is not automatic that economic growth will lead to poverty reduction.

He said there was recognition that private sector development is both a fundamental and necessary element in economic growth in developing countries -- in creating wealth and jobs. It is also necessary to attract foreign capital to bridge financing gaps, both in developing human capital and in helping developing countries deliver infrastructure

services such as water, energy, sanitation and transportation.

CIDA encourages private sector development in developing countries by establishing enabling environments for business to flourish; supporting enterprise development and building linkages with Canadian capabilities.

The basic principles include focusing on poverty reduction, the recipient country's needs, strategic partnerships (domestically and internationally) and leveraging capital and ideas. This could include for example: promoting public-private investment, supporting projects put forward on a cost-recovery basis, creating or restructuring regulatory and tendering processes, expanding access to non-traditional financial services such as micro-finance or local venture capital, and promoting joint ventures and partnerships. He added that he does not see a contradiction between good business and good development.

***Tony Zeitoun, Director, Technology Development, Asia Branch, CIDA***

Mr Zeitoun said CIDA's mandate in infrastructure services is to help developing countries deliver efficient, environmentally sound services, with particular attention to poorer groups. The sectors involved include energy, information and communications technologies, transport, water and sanitation.

He defined infrastructure services as the flow of services produced by physical infrastructures that improve the quality of life. This includes access to potable water; roads to transport people and goods; services such as telephones, faxes, Internet, television and radio; electricity in homes and businesses. These services can improve social and economic development and reduce poverty.

CIDA's role is to provide technical assistance to governments to help create the enabling environment required for efficient and equitable infrastructure services that lead to poverty reduction. Traditionally, the government provided all of these services, now there is a

movement to privatize many of these services and the government's role has changed to developing appropriate policies (and regulations) to attract private sector partnerships. There is also a role for CIDA in increasing the human and institutional capacity of countries to manage these services.

The focus for CIDA is on equitable distribution. How can the private sector target services flowing out of these projects and help reduce poverty? Mr Zeitoun mentioned a series of projects in Ghana where two Canadian companies had been involved in setting up rural and small town water supplies. They had invested heavily in the local communities, consulting with rural beneficiaries and water institutions for 1 ½ years before the actual engineering work took place. As a result, water has flowed to all, and the foundation has been built for long-term sustainability.

***Focus on Water and Electricity  
Ross Milne, Divisional Manager, Acres International***

Mr Milne said that CIDA is in a difficult situation of trying to accomplish its objectives in the electricity sector while bringing less and less money to the table. Upgrading distribution systems is a capital-intensive effort. He said that although there is a lot of infrastructure in developing countries, services are still not being provided. Increasingly, BOT (built, operate, transfer) projects are being carried out with little government involvement. Canadian companies may or may not have the same objectives as CIDA, but they do have a strong social conscience. However, he added that any company doing international work would meet the legal requirements of that country but will not go out of its way to do more. Regulation is key and an area of importance for government action.

In his view, successfully linking private sector projects to poverty reduction outcomes means moving beyond what's written on paper to what really happens in the field. He cited as an example a recent project that was supposed to have approval from each community it passed

through. In reality this didn't happen because the requirement was not translated into binding terms with the developer. Communities that will be affected by certain projects should be built into the project planning process.

He said CIDA should be more involved in defining these types of projects, in helping to develop regulatory mechanisms (in clear, concise and binding language) and in piggy-backing on profitable private sector projects to ensure that poorer areas benefit. Independent monitors should be funded to ensure that what is promised is delivered.

The name of the game is leverage. If the 'economics' of a project turn bad, the first thing to disappear is the socio-economic benefit and the second is the concern for the environment. The skills to put both aspects into contract language and make them stick are required.

### Discussion on Water and Electricity

- In environmental assessments the focus needs to be on solutions rather than on defining problems. An emphasis on environmental management plans is a more useful approach. A regulatory regime needs to be transparent and have community involvement.
- Often it appears as though the enabling environment is there, but one finds it's not working because no one is committed to making it work. The question of resources is significant but it's not the only one. Political willingness to enforce the regulations requires a coincidence of values — and this is perhaps the hardest change to be made.
- Creating an enabling environment through sector-reform is a long-term process, and sometimes governments don't have the will to do it.
- CIDA has asked itself: Do we have all the instruments we need? Our resources are limited so we cannot reinstate the loan program. Loans can be financed from other

sources that can offer them at better rates. The thinking was that the new mechanisms such as BOO (Build Own Operate) and BOT (Build Operate Transfer) could bring in the huge capital required for infrastructure. But the investments that should be being made in infrastructure are not happening — this is a big problem.

- In developing countries capital is no longer a problem, but the issue is that it is not being invested locally. The provincial government in British Columbia does all the borrowing and financing for B.C.. It makes credit available for small communities. Is this a possible model?
- Another problem is the ability of the user to pay for the infrastructure services. We need to segregate financing requirements — for example, the bigger infrastructure projects and programs can be financed by BOTs; but when we look at rural electrification perhaps we need a return to long-term loans and more co-financing with other IFIs. We will still need to subsidize loans for rural infrastructures.
- In terms of delivering electricity to households, traditional rate structures are very expensive for the poor and very cheap for large industries. A utility has to find ways to establish a rate structure that allows poor people to afford electricity.
- In the old economic models of the Asian miracle, countries invested heavily growth shifted, it was no longer growth by employment but growth by capital. Wealth is now concentrated in fewer hands.

### ***Focus on Telecommunications and Transportation***

#### ***Ron Berlet, Project Director, PEARL Project, Philippines***

Mr. Berlet described a project in Burkina Faso where a company building a road, after talking with the local community, constructed the road so that it was also a dyke for agricultural purposes. The local community was so

involved they even provided advice as to where each post should go. He concluded by saying that although this kind of project may take a little longer, and perhaps a little more money, it works better in the end.

**Graham Williams, Corporate Manager, Power Division, Acres International**

Mr Williams described the challenge – the demand for infrastructure in developing countries is vast, there are 2 billion people without access to electricity. He said it would be useful to distinguish between two different types of infrastructure needs:

In the megacities (within 25 years the bulk of the world’s population will live in cities, for example, 30 million in Mexico City, 15 million in Cairo), transportation needs alone will be staggering as more people have access to vehicles. The best delivery mechanism is BOO (build, own, operate) because it can attract private investment (toll highways, airports). As cities develop, the more advantaged can pay the fees and the less advantaged can still use the system.

In the rural areas, however, people don’t have the ability to pay for infrastructure. And yet, improved transportation (road systems) could help alleviate poverty. This is a role of the governments concerned who must decentralize and relegislate taxes to enable new infrastructure to be built and the old maintained.

Communities can work in co-ops to hurry the process along. Opportunities for co-financing can be pursued. CIDA funds can be used to define a project and to lever concessional financing from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

.....

Notes from a Participant:  
Tony Zeitoun

"Throughout the two workshops on infrastructure, I was pleasantly surprised to hear comments and suggestions emanating from the mouths of CEOs, VPs and engineers of private firms about their own experience being involved in participatory development processes, and this during the execution of "commercial" non-CIDA projects. I suggest we should dialogue more often with the private sector on development issues, and not just assume that the only thing they are after is making money."

.....

**Discussion on Transportation and Telecommunications**

- Participants were reminded that it is not enough to just build a road, it also has to be maintained and this costs money. The World Bank has apparently developed the mechanism of a 'gasoline tax' – the funds are turned over to a separate government agency to maintain roads.
- Funding is a critical issue, as a community we have to come up with new ideas and mechanisms. The issue of co-financing is key. Private sector companies are constantly being told by the IFI's: "We're interested, what will Canada do?"
- In telecommunications, CIDA has gone quite a long way in articulating what it can do – privatize ownership, establish regulatory environments and policies, as well as institutional frameworks.
- Perhaps a small CIDA-Business Task Force should be created to recommend how a small amount of money (eg. \$100 million) could best be used to leverage other funds. For example, EDC (Export Development Corporation) has resources that might be available.
- How do you ensure governments have the power to guarantee services are accessible

to all? There has been a swing of the pendulum. For a long time people thought the marketplace was the solution to everything, now the pendulum is swinging the other way and there is a recognition of the important role governments play. One of the results of the Asia crisis is the realization that we need stronger institutions. Government must arbitrate between the needs of the marketplace and the people.

- In Peru and Bolivia, the telecommunications sector has been privatized and the efficiency of services has increased. Contracts contain clauses that force companies operating in large cities to provide a certain number of lines to rural areas.
- Rural communications is a Canadian strength. Perhaps what is needed is a rural development fund where 1.5% of all telecom revenue goes into the fund, and rural areas are divided into franchise areas. Canadian companies with expertise could be tied to local companies and together they could submit proposals that say we know how to serve rural people, we want access to your bureaucracy and we could put together a project that may help you make money. The money earned from the profitable part of the sector (the 1<sup>st</sup> lines in cities) could help subsidize the additional lines to the rural areas.
- World Bank studies show that most people are prepared to spend 1 to 2% of GNP on telecommunications. We shouldn't think in terms of Bell Canada access (1 telephone per household), but in terms of one phone per village. Telecommunications can provide better access to health and education services. Pilots to prove this would increase demand for these services.

---

## Key Messages from the Dialogue Universal Access to Infrastructure Services: Providing water, electricity, telecommunications and transportation to Asia's poor

- Creating an enabling environment for government and the private sector to work together is key. CIDA has a role to play in helping governments initiate sector reform, develop and implement transparent regulatory mechanisms and create transparent institutions. (The CRTC was cited as an example.) Of course, this requires long-term political willingness for reform on the part of host country governments that can only come about with the establishment of mechanisms to share and balance power.
- Environmental assessments need to focus on solutions, not problems.
- The issue of cofinancing is problematic. The Canadian private sector needs CIDA's assistance in leveraging funds from the IFIs. Perhaps a CIDA/Private Sector Task Force could be created to provide recommendations on how limited funds could leverage larger resources from other sources.
- Contracts between governments and the private sector need to be binding and include the expected socio-economic benefits for the local community as well as the environmental criteria that need to be met. They have to be written in clear and concise language that is understood by all partners.
- Infrastructure projects that involve the local community may cost a little more and take a

little more time but they are also more likely to succeed. Local capital should be invested in infrastructure projects.

---

## Co-operatives mean business: Strengthening partnerships between co-operatives in Asia and Canada

Hosted by CIDA, the Canadian Cooperative Association (CCA) and Développement International Desjardins (DID) on June 8, 1999  
Co-chairs: Janet Zukowsky, Vice-President, Partnership Branch, CIDA and Sajjad Rahman, Director, Strategic Policy and Planning, Asia Branch, CIDA

"There are a many ways to provide financial services to the poor. Some have impact and staying power, others do not. Among the ventures supported by CIDA have been cooperatives and credit unions (which of course extend far beyond financial services). Why do they succeed? What elements work best? Can these models be extended to poorer groups? We chose to invite cooperatives and credit unions to be part of our dialogues process to help us explore these issues. The Canadian cooperatives sector is, after all, an almost unique resource for poverty reduction in Asia."

- Poverty Reduction

Project Team

**T**his dialogue was the result of a three-year study on the role of cooperatives in Asia entitled *Local Actors on a Global Stage*. The study was co-funded by CIDA's Asia Branch and Partnership Branch, as well as by the CCA and DID. While CIDA supports variety of cooperatives and self-help models, this was the first real effort to find out what works and

why, identify the challenges that need to be overcome and offer suggestions on how to meet those challenges. CIDA President Huguette Labelle also attended part of the dialogue.

Ms Zukowsky opened the dialogue by saying that that people working in international development are constantly looking for models, when one emerges that meets multiple objectives and bridges the strengths of the self-help movement with the formal commercial system it is worth examining closely. She pointed out that CCA and DID draw on a larger network of resources than most donor agencies — at the global level, assets managed by cooperative banks total \$5,589 billion.

Mr Rahman talked about how the study identified potential roles for cooperatives as catalysts of economic and social development. He said the Asian crisis has shown us that we need strong institutions capable of safeguarding the interests of the poor. Cooperatives are not a panacea for all — they develop around an economic opportunity. Cooperative members believe that individual needs can be better met through collective action. Can today's cooperatives fulfill today's mandate? Can large cooperatives relate to people in the same way as grassroots cooperatives could? In Asia, its association with government tarnishes the image of the cooperative movement emerging from the people. Are cooperatives there still an expression of self-help capacities?

### What we heard

#### **Lynne Toupin, CEO, Canadian Cooperative Association (CCA)**

Cooperatives are one of the better-untold stories in Canada. The first cooperative was formed 75 years ago; a small group of people pooled their resources, time and money to meet their common need. It was a practical and pragmatic approach. The needs were largely economic needs, but a cooperative is

both a social and economic organization (pure social needs are not the entry point).

Cooperatives are managed by Boards of Directors, leaders from the local community who are very involved in all aspects of their community and its development. More than 60,000 Canadians are volunteer elected leaders. Cooperatives contribute to the creation of good decent jobs and are one of Canada's largest employers with nearly 150,000 employees. The two largest sectors are financial and agriculture – credit unions and caisses populaires have more than 10 million members and \$120 billion in assets, 40% of total farm cash receipts are handled by cooperatives.

The process of continuous learning is inherent in cooperative systems. Cooperatives are leading the future in service to low-income or underserved members. They are community-based organizations. Cooperatives are based on seven principles: voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; member economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training and information; cooperation among cooperatives.

***Ghislain Paradis, CEO, Developpement International Desjardins (DID)***

Mr Paradis said he wanted to emphasize that cooperatives are a business – a private Enterprise, a system designed to produce goods and services with profit. Cooperatives are collectively owned by people, a community, and are democratically controlled.

Cooperatives whether they are in China, Vietnam or Canada have shared values, shared dreams and ambitions, a shared analysis that globalization dehumanizes people, and a very strong desire to work together to identify commonalities and build a future.

Again, whether in Asia or Canada, success depends on whether cooperatives are based on a business opportunity; and whether or not they have good legal frameworks, good leaders, necessary cash, necessary technical

and management savoir-faire, the capacity to adapt/change, participation from members and leaders who respect their members' opinions.

A growing dilemma comes from the fact that cooperatives are expected to pay attention to community development and to stay small, but this marginalizes them. The perception is that if you grow, you forget your soul and your mission. So cooperatives are trying to strike a balance, not remain too marginalized and grow enough to have influence. Another question is that of clientele – it is very difficult to have profitable cooperatives with only the very poor as members. These will always have to be subsidized. The goal is to provide services to a range of clients — from the very poor to the middle-class.

The strategy is to transform as many of the poor as possible into entrepreneurs, by supporting small business owners who can create jobs for those who are poor. Sometimes, it appears as though it takes too long for cooperatives to get established, but if one compares the statistics, these are the ones that exist for longer periods of time.

What do cooperatives contribute? In Eastern Europe, they helped move political systems toward democracy. They create wealth but in a more equitable fashion. They help create social entrepreneurs. They reinforce the notions of citizen responsibility and give people a place to express their opinions thus contributing to social peace. They partner with the state, for example, in the financing of agriculture in Canada or in development of rural telecommunications in the West. They contribute to good governance, provide a counterbalance to the takeover of the economy by a minority, strengthen the local private sector, and provide economic stability.

.....

## Notes from a Participant: Janet Dunnett

"This dialogue was actually the culmination of a three year process with many high points of engagement with members and leaders of co-operatives and credit unions in Canada and all over Asia. We tried to link the co-operative dialogue to the broader issue of supporting the poor in raising their incomes. The dialogues allowed us to ask the cooperative leaders some pretty tough questions. Two that stay with me are also relevant in whatever endeavour we undertake in poverty reduction: How much of our results are wishful thinking? Do co-operatives and credit unions in Asia really function as engines of poverty reduction, private sector development, governance at the grass roots, democracy in action, life long learning, gender equality? We think they do. We believe in the potential of group action. We have learned how Canada has a competitive edge in the co-operative movement. But we were warned in this dialogue never to take this edge for granted!"

.....

### Discussion

- We clearly see the value of cooperatives and their involvement in international development, but what is the capacity of Canadian cooperatives to do more projects and maintain a level of excellence? How do co-ops on their own 'reach out'?
- Members have a growing interest in commercial 'twinning' projects with partners in developing countries for processing. Some members want to work directly with a local cooperative because they want to source products from it.
- Cooperatives in Asia get support and collaboration from cooperatives in Canada. More and more partners are requesting help from Canadian co-operatives with creating an enhanced pool of human resources in Asia, by providing expertise and training materials, and sharing best practices and capital. Most recently, one Canadian co-operative has added an Investment Fund – some partners require more equity to expand their activities.
- In spite of significant investment over the past 30 years, the success rate for cooperatives in Asia is low. In many countries in Asia, cooperatives were brought in by the state, and the official cooperative sector is state-controlled, rather than controlled by the people. As markets become more open, many cooperatives are making an honest commitment to organization by the people, there is a genuine desire to move in that direction. For example, in the Philippines the new NATCO cooperatives are 'true' cooperatives.
- There are over 200 million cooperators in several states in India. Recently, laws were changed at the state level, privatizing the cooperatives. As a result the government removed its seed capital. Now those cooperatives need equity and capital to replace what the government removed.
- As governments move out of telecommunications and the private sector moves in there are great opportunities for communities to operate and maintain these services, through cooperatives (for example, telephone coops). There are several cable cooperatives in the Canadian North which are working quite well, they have mobilized the community, developed skills in certain areas and even support tele-medicine. Electricity coops in the United States are capturing a growing part of the market. Can this work in Asia? How do we kickstart this process?
- Has the cooperative movement reached the point where cooperatives in the South can

cooperate regionally? Some cooperatives do meet on special topics such as legislation.

empowerment at the individual level and at the community level.

- Even though women hold over 60% of the memberships in Asia, they are not represented in the leadership. Projects of Canadian cooperatives in Asia have gender components. The results will probably be visible within the wider movement in the next five years.
- The international cooperative movement has really gotten its act together since the early 1990s. It has governments engaged in changing the legislative basis for cooperation and is establishing pre-conditions for success.
- Cooperatives are not a panacea for dealing with the poorest of the poor. A cooperative member has to have some resources. If the seven basic principles are not in place then CIDA should move on to another group that can walk the talk.
- In Sri Lanka, villagers don't care which movement they belong to – Sarvodaya or Sanasa – it is a continuum, wherein Sarvodaya, a self help group starts the process of co-operating and Sanasa is connected to the market. The challenge is to establish linkages so that each organization can do what it does best. At the beginning, a self help group supports the small investor, say to own one or two cows. But a larger co-operative structure can support the critical links to larger investment, say to ownership of a herd of cows.
- In self-help groups, micro-finance is limited by the availability of resources – they are not internally generated. They offer limited products and access only to small loans; they are blocked from larger loans when they graduate to bigger needs.
- Cooperatives have the financial resources and the expertise to graduate products. A member of a cooperative knows that s/he 'owns the place' – this provides

.....

**Key Messages from the Dialogue  
Cooperatives mean business:  
Strengthening partnerships between  
cooperatives in Asia and Canada**

- Cooperatives are most useful when you need some kind of economic organization and collective action to help communities take advantage of market opportunities that will help them meet their needs.
- It is important for cooperatives to work with government as allies not agents.
- The issue of lack of women in leadership positions in cooperatives remains crucial. There are some hopes that current programs will have demonstrable results within the next five years.
- It is difficult for cooperatives to strike a balance between remaining true to the community and growing enough to have significant influence.
- Not all cooperatives adhere to the 'seven values' – Canada should only support those cooperatives that are trying to work towards those values.
- Clearer links need to be made between the entrepreneurial poor you can work with and the very poor – for example, support to the entrepreneurial poor can often result in the creation of jobs for the very poor.
- It is important to link cooperative-to-cooperative. Some cooperatives are already involved in

international business – processing, sourcing, etc.

- Cooperatives contribute to good governance by reinforcing the notion of citizen responsibility.
- Whether in Asia or in Canada, success depends on whether cooperatives are based on a business opportunity, and whether or not they have good legal frameworks; leaders willing to listen to the membership; necessary capital, technical and management skills; the capacity to adapt or change; and participation by the members.

.....

# Food Security at the Grassroots: An Ecological Perspective

Hosted by CIDA, InterPares and International Development Research Centre on June 10, 1999

Chair: Dean Frank, CIDA

"We were eager to support this dialogue because of the growing questions and discomfort around the role and power of big business in agriculture, even at the grass roots. Our opportunity came with the visit to Canada of the leaders of a South Asian farmers movement which refuses to use chemical pesticides and genetically modified seeds. Would this dialogue degenerate into a shouting match between proponents on either side of the debate? We thought it was a risk worth taking."

Poverty Reduction Project Team

Two speakers from Bangladesh led off the dialogue and were followed by three commentators from Canada and a wide-ranging discussion. Farida Akhter is a founder of UBINIG, a leading Bangladeshi NGO, rooted in the lives of the poorest and most marginalized people. Farhad Mazhar is the founder of the first plant for manufacturing generic pharmaceuticals in Bangladesh (affordable by the poor), a political writer and poet, and also a co-founder of UBINIG.

With support from CIDA and InterPares, UBINIG has played a crucial role in the creation of Nayakrishi Andolon (New Agricultural Movement), a social, political and cultural

movement that includes 50,000 farmers across Bangladesh. Nayakrishi farmers have tried to redefine their relationship to the land – they refuse to use pesticides, are gradually withdrawing from using chemical fertilizers, favour multicropping to retain soil fertility, practice agroforestry, consider domesticated animals as members of their farming households, practice aquaculture, share and share and preserve seeds at the community level.

## What we heard

### **Farida Akhter, Executive Director, UBINIG**

Ms Akhter began her presentation by saying that UBINIG didn't just suddenly come up with the idea to create Nayakrishi. In the late 1980s while in the rural areas, they came across poor farmers who said they needed help. They had been using chemical fertilizers on plots of land that were less than one acre in size. The cost of the fertilizer was increasing, they were getting less of a yield and they were becoming even poorer. But they weren't able to get loans without agreeing to using chemical fertilizers and pesticides. They knew about alternative methods such as compost from banana stalks and water hyacinths, but needed support that UBINIG provided.

Ms Akhter said it is important to remember that when we talk about poverty we should refrain from saying 'give them', these are our food-producers even if they don't own the land they till.

A person is part of the agricultural system, simply by virtue of owning a cow. The farming community involves all of those working in agriculture and all of their livelihoods. The Western notion is that agriculture is what you produce on your farm. The Bangladeshi notion is that agriculture also includes the community and how they all live together. Every person in a rural area is involved in producing something – even the poorest widow will cultivate a pumpkin plant in her hut. Potters produce the pots required to store seeds, blacksmiths the plow. When you ask someone in Bangladesh

to describe their family, they will say: “My son, my daughter, my two cows and three goats ...” It’s not a dichotomy between a technical form of agriculture versus organic agriculture – it’s about a community-building process that involves the entire community.

Women are responsible for keeping seeds (the biogenetic resource base) – this is a woman’s wealth. This traditional activity has been undermined in modern agriculture where people go to the market to buy seeds. It has also resulted in worsening gender relationships – men are no longer dependent on women for many agricultural activities. As farmers grow poorer, many families break up. Pesticide use has even made women’s lives more difficult as it changed the taste of certain crops and the women were blamed and in some cases even beaten because the meals they prepared were no longer as ‘tasty’. Sometimes the abundant use of pesticides meant that animals could no longer roam and graze. Midwives have described the deterioration of women’s health.

In village families not all the food comes from cultivated sources, a substantial part is gathered from shared common areas such as fruit, seeds, fish, green leafy plants. For example, a leafy uncultivated vegetable called ‘shak’ is available throughout the year. People are directly involved in its management by not picking it all at one time, ensuring that it will grow again next year. The tender leaves are consumed by humans, the seeds by chickens and the stalks by cows. If pesticides are used, the leafy vegetables can no longer be eaten by humans nor fed to the animals. In Bangladesh, unlike the West, people only eat what grows in that particular season. The entire basis of biodiversity in Bangladesh relies on keeping the environment safe. Food security can be assured by mixed cropping. Even in the last flood, people were finding small fish and leafy vegetables growing in the water – they didn’t need to wait for flood relief.

**Farhad Mazhar, Managing Director, Policy Research for Development Alternatives (UBINIG), Bangladesh**

Mr Mazhar said the image of a small subsistence farmer is wrong – we should refer instead to bio- diversity- based production systems which take full advantage of multi-functional agriculture (i.e. crops, livestock etc). People in rural areas depend on uncultivated food for 40% of their food intake. He counseled getting rid of our ‘industrial’ notion of agriculture – it’s not a factory with inputs and outputs but an organic system that took thousands of years to evolve. It has been well documented that the use of pesticides harms the environment.

The simple challenge is this – how do we ensure that people do not go to bed hungry? Mr Mazhar said he is not a proponent of traditional agriculture either. Agriculture has to evolve, as does our indigenous knowledge system. For example, seed keeping appears to be very simple, but when examined closely one can see that it is a rather sophisticated technology although not documented, it exists in the social memory of people. When building the new paradigm for thinking about agriculture we have to take this knowledge into account.

Conventional agriculture polarizes social classes in an area, some become rich, and others poor. In community resource management, the poor woman has the right to pick jute leaf from the common areas, but the rich woman does not. Although any one can fish for their own consumption, if non-fishers take their fish produce to the market, people will not buy it from them. This system ensures social security. We need to understand the dynamics of new technologies that totally disrupt existing social patterns. It is very important to take this into account when designing poverty alleviation or food security programs.

In ecological agriculture, a farmer can produce 13 crops in one field – some for consumption, some for market. Conventional agriculture can’t compete with this and it also has

inadvertent health consequences. If we can produce food without using dioxin, why not?

The last myth to be discussed is that of technology – if it comes from the corporate world it is called technology, if it comes from rural women it is not called technology. Choosing a pot, drying seeds, all of these are equally valid knowledge and community knowledge, and assess and compare them with new inventions.

## Commentaries

### **Bill Anderson, Senior Development Officer, Asia Branch, CIDA**

Mr Anderson said he felt modern agricultural technology is doing a rather fine job of providing sustainable agriculture to the world. He does agree that there is a need for more crop diversification. He said we have to stop looking at things in terms of black and white — alternative agriculture is good, modern agriculture is bad. He said: “We’re squishing ants while we ignore the elephants.” In his view, agricultural technology has done wonders for the planet in the last 30 years. Land is our scarcest natural resource – how will plans for low-impact farming fit with sustainable agriculture for the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

Mr Anderson said all the good land suited for agriculture is in production. Our highly affluent society will demand more meat, more eggs and more vegetable products in the next 25 years. We cannot encroach into the forest areas to find more land.

Green technology at the community level is a good thing, but what about the ‘big picture’, the global needs for the 21<sup>st</sup> century? So-called ‘chemical’ fertilizers are made out of natural resources but they are discussed in the same breath as nuclear waste. There is not enough organic manure to provide for plant needs in the present or in the future. He concluded by saying that we need to refocus our discussions.

### **Brian Weller, Senior Environment Specialist, CIDA’s Asia Branch**

Mr Weller said Mr Anderson’s views make sense in the Western context. But in other parts of the world, where literacy is not very high and the environmental considerations/ethics of companies providing chemical pesticides and fertilizers are quite low, disasters can happen.

The whole question of biological inputs and products is becoming even more complicated with the arrival of bio-pesticides. These are considered ‘non-chemical’ so they must be good – but we don’t yet know how safe it is to introduce bacterial influences. Even introducing fodder-like plants into forest ecosystems means that we are also importing pathogens, bugs and weeds and inadvertent environmental consequences.

There is a debate about whether we are yet seeing the effects of climate change, but no debate as to whether climate change will come. When it gets to be too hot, too cold, too wet, too dry, we will see new diseases arise. Modern technology will play a huge role in helping the farming community respond to these changes. In Bangladesh itself, will flooding become a larger issue? How do we adapt?

### **Daniel Buckles, Team Member, Sustainable Use of Bio-Diversity, International Development Research Centre**

Mr Buckles said he found it useful to have an open discussion on contrasting views and he hopes this is the beginning of an ongoing dialogue between these organizations. He spoke about two issues: the large and increasing amount of university-based research on ecological agriculture in both the North and the South; and the increasing number of farmers using ecological approaches in both North and South.

It is useful to clarify the issues and criteria being used by farmers to decide how our food should be produced. The question is not

whether farmers should use technology. All technologies are dynamic and build on innovations of previous generations (companies, farmers and scientists). We are all engaged in the process of inventing and re-inventing ways of producing food. There is a lot of evidence of widespread misuse of many agricultural technologies, especially pesticides, both in the developing countries and in the developed countries.

Despite a ten-fold increase in the toxicity of chemical pesticides in the United States, the crop yield loss due to insects has doubled, due in part to insect resistance, increasing crop monocultures and the planting of susceptible plant varieties. The mounting cost to farmers and the impact on groundwater safety are also issues. We know that farmers in developing countries often use pesticides that are less safe than those used in developed countries and they have suffered the consequences (i.e. tanks spilling, death from toxicity, etc.)

Farmers look at the multi-benefits of a practice, not just the product. The criteria used to make decisions include: whole-farm productivity, environmental impacts of alternative methods ('do-no-harm' concept) and the social trade-offs (capital-intensive versus labour-intensive).

There is mounting evidence that agriculture can remain productive while adapting ecologically sound practices. Studies from Cornell University show that current use of pesticides, fungicides and herbicides can be reduced by 50% without reductions in yields. The World Resources Institute has shown that in Pennsylvania production costs can be reduced by 25% and soil erosion by 50% on ecological farms. In many developed countries, growth rates on ecological farms exceed 20% per year. Although the initial switch to ecological agriculture was driven by health concerns and ecological convictions, it is now being driven by the economics of agriculture and the private sector. There is a growing market for ecological products from developing countries.

.....

## Notes from a Participant: Dean Frank

"This dialogue was about as eclectic as they come. Discussion varied from the global nature of the debate around how 'ecological' agriculture should become--many principles are as relevant in Bangladesh as they are in North America--to the fact that solutions for the individual are heavily dependent on their own ecology and economy. Many parts of Bangladesh produce three crops a year so the effects of chemical agriculture are significantly different that in the sub-arctic Canadian prairies where plants grow for about 100 days a year. There was consensus that our agricultural systems must become even more adaptable but there was no agreement on whether 'ecological' or 'modern' agriculture had the edge here. What was clear is that agriculture touches all our lives and the striving for improvement must continue."

.....

### Discussion

- Why is it that one-sixth of the world's population lives in the Western world but consumes 2/3 of the world's food? The pets of the Western world consume in one year what the population of India and China consume in one year. In every corner store in Canada, one can find Basmati rice and yet there is such poverty in India that Basmati rice is beyond most families' dreams.
- In North America, food is abundant and relatively cheap, even though 80% is produced elsewhere. In India and Bangladesh it is not so abundant and relatively expensive. But population is not the only factor in the demand for food, countries with increasing incomes usually demand more food as well.

- Egypt can produce all of the wheat and rice it needs to feed its people, but switched to high-value export crops destined for Europe instead, and imports food.
- Modern agriculture cannot solve food problems. The poor are being blamed for everything – environment, population, and poverty. What about resource consumption? Western lifestyles are producing pressure on the land and on food.
- Development plans have been isolated from what the communities are doing. Donor agencies need to do a lot more homework. CIDA should support community initiatives.
- There are certain knowledge systems outside of our formal development system. Can they contribute to the discourse? Let's listen to some new ideas, alternative views, create new traditional knowledge banks

---

### Key Messages **from the Dialogue** **Food Security at the Grassroots: An ecological perspective**

- Let's not get stuck in a black and white view of the world where modern agriculture is bad and alternative agriculture is good. All technologies are dynamic and build on the innovations of previous generations (farmers, scientists and companies). Scientific evidence shows that agriculture can remain productive while adapting ecologically sound practices.
- But the question remains, can we produce enough food to meet the demand?
- In Bangladesh, agriculture is not a series of inputs and outputs but an intricate set of relationships among community members, involving not just cultivated crops but

uncultivated fruits and vegetables, aquaculture, and forestry.

- A very sophisticated system of indigenous agriculture exists in developing countries. The message for aid agencies is that agriculture is not being carried out in a vacuum we need to build on what is already there and not disregard it.
  - Women are often placed at a disadvantage with the advent of modern agriculture which ignores their key role as keepers of seeds, reduces their ability to gather foods that have not been touched by pesticides, hampers their ability to continue to cook tasty foods and risks their health.
  - It is impossible to talk about poverty alleviation without doing agriculture. How can we come up with new agricultural practices that integrate our experiences at the informal level (which hasn 't been tapped) and the formal level (where we made mistakes)?
-

# The Environment Component

Hosted by CIDA on the Internet from July 23 to August 4, 1999

Moderated and reported by Zahra Popatia, CIDA Consultant

"Although by June we had almost finished all of our formal face-to-face dialogues we felt that we were still missing some valuable information on the links between the environment and poverty reduction. So, we experimented with an electronic dialogue format. Over a period of 12 days, we invited colleagues from NGOs, institutions, the private sector and our Southern partners to answer two general questions through a series of e-mails, and to share with use their own experiences and ideas through the Internet. We learned that most participants considered our opening questions too general, but they still responded and provided us with valuable input. "

Poverty Reduction Project

Team

Urban pollution and natural resource degradation are ever-increasing trends throughout Asia. The majority of the world's most polluted cities can be found on the continent. At the same time, Asia has destroyed most of its "frontier forests", and is severely threatening much of its remaining fisheries and coral reefs. The causes have much to do with overconsumption — among Asia's elite's as well from the West — but poverty is also believed to be both a fundamental cause and result, although the

complex inter-linkages are not yet fully understood.

Today, the pressures of globalization threaten to further exacerbate these trends. And Asia is facing large amounts of predominately rural to urban migration. It is estimated that by the year 2010, fully half of the world's population will reside in urban areas. With diminishing resources and the need to concentrate efforts in order to achieve tangible results, aid agencies are often confronted with difficult choices on where to focus environmental programming — on urban pollution or rural natural resource degradation?

## The Electronic Dialogue

Participants were asked to respond to two introductory questions:

1. Should Canadian development assistance focus on urban environmental issues, such as pollution or should resources be concentrated on rural environmental issues, predominately natural resource management? and
2. As we enter the 21st century, are these approaches still valid in terms of environmental programming for a development agency?

.....  

## Improving the Environment in India

The National Treegrowers Co-operative Federation is an environmental sustainability project created six years ago. Its aim is the rehabilitation of debilitated land by improved community based agro-forestry methods.<

## Discussion

- Development assistance must focus on both rural and urban issues. Environmental interventions will clearly have an impact on both rural and urban dwellers and therefore, both their needs should be examined concurrently. Many participants agreed that it is increasingly important that issues of the environment not be studied in isolation. Rather, environmental change influences the economic, social and cultural underpinnings of any society. As a result, new multidisciplinary strategies for poverty and the environment need to be developed. Furthermore, involving partners at home and in the field at all planning stages would ensure greater project success.

- One participant suggested that projects should be focused at the micro-level and should consider the needs of each region where impacts occur. Others encouraged small-scale community projects with affordable solutions and sustainable results.

- Globalization has cost the environment. The expanding world population is drawn to a Western middle-class lifestyle. Urbanization is a universal phenomenon, but surely the earth's carrying capacity can not sustain the speed of this expansion. Rapid rates of urban migration have led to ad hoc planning. Given the fact that in a few short years, 50% of the world population will be urban, one participant suggested that perhaps CIDA's role should be geared towards the facilitation and the management of rural to urban migration. Participants agreed that, in order for this to occur, a close examination of the needs of communities is essential and that the focus of change should be the empowerment of local communities. Another participant suggested that urban environmental issues may be a luxury, and that a greater causal link is present between rural environmental issues and poverty.

- It is clear that many environment-related factors contribute to poverty. We must recognize that Canada can not address all

needs. One participant suggested that maybe Canadians should understand environmental issues at home before trying to solve the world's problems.

---

## Key Messages from the Participants

### The Environment Component

#### NGO's and Institutions:

- multidisciplinary approach to environmental issues
- foster south to south partnerships
- empower local communities
- address the root causes of poverty, rather than the symptoms
- listen to what the partners are saying
- a strong gender perspective in programming

#### Private Sector:

- manage urban migration
- examine the needs of developing countries on a country to country bases
- creative and innovative approaches to the environment
- empower rural communities to challenge negative power structures
- experiment with new ideas
- examine cheap, simple solutions
- examine peri-urban zones

#### Southern Partners:

- holistic approach to environment
- examine social, economic and cultural perspectives of environment
- projects should be small scaled
- encourage South to South dialogue

#### CIDA:

- promote ideas that go beyond rural
  - explore creative ways of linking poverty with environment
  - collaboration with Partners
-

## Tradition, Values and the Process of Change

Co-hosted by the Somerset West Community Health Centre and CIDA on June 28, 1999  
Co-chairs: Janet Dunnett, CIDA , and Jack McCarthy, SWCHC

"We decided this would be a fitting way to end our face-to-face dialogues — by talking to elders in the Vietnamese and Cambodian communities about the concept of change . Who better to tell us than those who have experienced some of the most traumatic changes faced in our world over the last 50 years.?"

Poverty Reduction Project Team

**T**his dialogue focused more on the 'how' than on the 'what' — How do you make change? With the assistance of cultural interpreters, elders from the Vietnamese and Cambodian communities shared their thoughts and stories with us over lunch. Participants were asked three particular questions designed to help us learn how change happens in certain Asian communities and how 'change for the better' is defined. Most of the Vietnamese elders, have been in Canada for over 20 years; the Cambodian elders for approximately 10 to 15 years.

### What we heard

#### **Group #1**

The Cambodians at this table were from both rural and urban Cambodia. Each one had lost close family members during the upheaval in Cambodia. All four women had lost their husbands; more than one had lost a child.

They said that Cambodian society before the tumultuous times was peaceful, people earned

a good living, had adequate housing, nutrition and health care and the education system worked. In their opinion, Cambodia is worse off now than in the days before Pol Pot. Social problems such as crime, prostitution, the sale of female children and begging are all rampant. The lack of social cohesion, trust and sense of security — destroyed by the years of strife — are all cited as factors making the rebuilding of Cambodian society much more complex. Many children have been orphaned, and are not, as in the past, being taken care of by the community.

They identified three priority areas for development in Cambodia — education, a social safety system and business/jobs. They believe that compulsory education, particularly for the young is one way to solve current abuse of children and is critical for the future of the country. They also believe that, given the right tools, young Cambodians can go a long way towards rebuilding a newer, stronger country.

They said that creating a social safety system would help to alleviate poverty, particularly in the rural areas. Today, farmers are unable to earn sufficient revenues to meet even their basic needs, never mind better equipment or any medical needs.

They feel it is important to encourage a national banking system that will support small private sector initiatives and contribute to the development of a strong national economy. As well, a business environment which encourages both small entrepreneurs and larger investors to establish businesses in Cambodia must be cultivated — this will in turn create jobs.

Extreme poverty in Cambodia, especially the rural areas, is leading people to adopt survival behaviours such as selling their children for prostitution, begging, thievery, etc. But they see hope in rebuilding the country through stable social, education and economic policies.

### **Group #2**

The elders at this table were from rural Cambodia. One came from a relatively well-off family — they owned a thresher and a motorcycle. The other two lived in smaller villages and their families were small farmers. One said that while Cambodia had been a poor country, no-one had lived in extreme poverty. They had produced almost everything they needed.

One woman stressed that in the past, individuals in communities depended on and helped one another considerably. When she was five years old, her mother had died. Her task had been to take her baby sister around to the various households in the community in which women were breast-feeding to ask for their assistance in wetnursing the baby.

Before the 1970s, most education, pastoral, social, and health services had been provided through a community's Buddhist temple. Education through the temples, however, focused on basic literacy skills and was provided only to boys. With modernization, cultural practices had been changing. For example, the temples had started to become less influential in personal decisions.

In terms of development in Cambodia today, they said there is a significant level of corruption and aid should go directly to the communities. If it were received by the government or even by a temple, it might not reach the people it was intended to assist. They reminded us that temples have boards of governors from the communities. They advised us that if money were given to a community or a temple, more than one person should be aware of the agreement.

### **Group #3**

The two Cambodian women at this table recommended that CIDA provide fertilizers, assistance to control pests which ravage crops, and assistance to counter the effects of land deterioration (all of which affect the quality of the rice being produced). They also recommended support to health services and

provision of medicine. They spoke about the wholesale disappearance of fish.

Before the Khmer Rouge, sizeable and economic parcels of land were inherited and passed down through families. The Communists broke up this system by dividing the land into uneconomic micro-sized lots which made people poorer. One woman talked about how her family's once very profitable rubber-growing enterprise (with many employees) had been taken away. As a result of the current disorganization and the dislocation of war, everyone was much poorer. They felt that it was difficult to see how the lives of the poor without land could be improved. There is a small class of rich people in the cities, who are accumulating more than ever before.

One indication of the extreme level of poverty faced by Cambodians is the selling of daughters by families into prostitution. The women pointed out that only daughters are sold into prostitution, the boys are sent to be monks. The "purchasers" of the daughters are from the urban area prostitution rings/businesses who go out to solicit girls and women from the families. They also mentioned that daughters are often kidnapped.

While education is free in theory, in reality it is not — children are pressured to supplement their teachers income, through for example buying candy from the teacher. This was said to be a great source stress for the children.

Participants were quite emphatic that assistance should not be offered to the Cambodian government because of its disorganization, corruption and the low wages it pays. They said it was important to focus aid to the rural areas.

### **Group #4**

The two elderly Vietnamese women at this table said their lives were very similar to their grandparents lives, except that women were not as able to go to school in their grandparents generation and in fact didn't

appear to 'need' an education to do 'housework'. There had been a gradual increase in education levels between generations.

They felt their own lives were much more peaceful than what their children had faced — three wars. The big changes happened after 1975. They also said that life was much simpler during their youth — they had good health and didn't need money. They felt that in their own generation they were treated in the same manner as their brothers, there were no differences.

When asked about how they defined poverty during their youth, one elder said it meant not having enough money to pay for an education, eating meat only once a week, mixing rice with yams. Another said it meant you had to borrow money from the rich, or send girls out to work as maids for rich families.

When asked what CIDA should do, they said that the people who live in the cities have jobs and can cope, but those who live in the rural areas only have agricultural work — they have to pay taxes and receive very low payment for their crops from the government. Their children have to help with the harvest. CIDA should work in the rural areas and make sure children have the books they need for schooling. But CIDA should go directly through the countryside to help people, not work through any levels of government, because there is too much corruption.

One woman said her grandchildren's lives were 100 times better than hers — they own many more material possessions and can go to work for any money they need. But they have different values — often young people would rather spend money on themselves first, then consider their parents needs. Another woman said that today peer pressure is very strong, children don't value 'family' as much as they used to and there is minimum respect for Vietnamese customs.

.....

## Notes from a Participant: Ania Wasilewski

"I was a little uncertain about this dialogue — why did we need to hear from Asian elders? But the session proved to be a fascinating and deeply moving experience. We heard from individuals who had lived through poverty in both Asia and Canada and had triumphed. It reminded me that every person has their own story — in this case, many stories of great courage and grace, of living through terror and tragedy, of moving through changing cycles of poverty and wealth, and of becoming proud Canadians. Often, those of us who work in development have the luxury of theorizing about these issues, or of visiting poor communities for brief periods of time, but these elders 'lived' and survived these issues. Their commitment to giving something back to their communities, in Vietnam, Cambodia and in Canada, was inspiring. When I think about poverty and change now, I think about the faces of the elders we met."

.....

### **Group #5**

The participants at this table were all elderly gentlemen from Vietnam. They had all been to school. Two of them felt that education was the highest priority CIDA should have in helping Vietnam, but that it should be free (there are currently fees) and that politics should be kept out of the schools. The problem of hungry children at school might have to be dealt with through school feeding.

The group felt it was important that CIDA realize that Vietnamese people are not lazy — they want to work and they are very smart. They consider health to be the most important factor in getting out of poverty. They placed great store on herbal and traditional medicine, which was the main way of delivering health services before the arrival of the French.

They remembered a time when people were very poor. After 1945, they said people were better off, but now poverty has set in again. They felt this was because taxes are too high and there are no incentives to work hard. One man said that in order to get out of poverty you have to be able to keep your money. They felt that communism was not working because no one can retain their wealth in present circumstances.

They mentioned that in the country all water had to be boiled, although this did not seem to be as big an issue in the city. The infrastructure is declining and “no one looks after these things”. One of the major problems in agriculture is the existence of snails in the water (up to 30 per square metre, an increase from one per square metre earlier).

When asked about target groups, they were unanimous in saying that “the old are finished” and that investments must now be made in the young. But one person noted that this was a complicated issue, asking “When parents are poor, how can children have a better future?”.

They were insistent that CIDA not give anything to the government, but work through local charities. They said assistance should be people-to-people and advised CIDA to never provide just money. “If you have medicine to give, send the medicine.”

The oldest participant at this table, who is 85 years old, said that he hoped to live to be 100 so he “could see the success of CIDA and see the success of his own country.

### **Group #6**

The two Vietnamese women at this table said that before the war, people in the community would help other families with clothes, food, child care — but this doesn’t happen now. “It used to be that the door to every house was open in the daytime. If something happened you would yell help and everyone would come running to help you.”

In the past, even poor people in remote villages had access to education. Sometimes the school wasn’t finished, just a blackboard and some tables. Both of the women went to school (up to Grade 7 or 8), just like their brothers. One said the custom was to go to school until one could do math and calculate, and then open a store — a corner store, a fabric store, a hardware store.

They said boys and girls were treated differently while they were growing up. “A boy is a boy, he does what he wants.” Girls were raised to be shy and submissive, and to help their parents with housework. One elder said when she was young she listened to her parents and didn’t go out without permission. She married at age 17. Usually the two families knew each other, sometimes a matchmaker helped.

One of the participants talked about the many changes in Vietnam — a bigger airport, skyscrapers, shopping malls; but also more pickpockets and more crime. She said: “The poor get poorer, the rich get richer.” Although people were poor in the past, they are much poorer now. Conditions are worsening. Even the water is not potable. Some villages don’t have electricity. In fact, “those back home depend on those abroad”.

The other elder said she would like to return, but feels it is better to save her money and send it ‘home’ instead. “When you do something good, it comes back to you”. She does volunteer work in a number of hospitals around Ottawa to ‘repay’ Canada. What surprised her the most when she came to Canada was the extent of the Canadian government’s assistance — it helped them find work, put food on the table, sent them to school and continues to support a daughter who had polio as a child. The women are very appreciative of this. Nevertheless they still believe that it is better for the community to help, rather than the government, “because you can’t be certain about the government, it changes every 5 years”.

They added that children in Vietnam respect their parents in a different way than they do in Canada. Children here have more freedom than 'back home' in Vietnam. But they felt that in this case, the situation was better in Vietnam. "Canada spoils kids, there are no rules and you can't even spank children."

One of the elder's daughters is she didn't have enough money to send her children for higher education, but "here everyone can be an engineer".

When asked what they would do if they were the Prime Minister/President of Vietnam: the women said they would open more schools and hospitals for pregnant women and the elderly.

They will advise their grandchildren to :  
"Respect their parents, be independent, pursue a career, help your community and be good Canadian citizens."

---

## Key Messages from the Dialogue Tradition, Values and the Process of Change

- How aware are people of the changes occurring and of the agents of change? Some of the women said that their parents were open to the idea of further education for them because of the influence of friends, indicating a pre-war class which was able to adjust to change.

- The elders felt that the war and resulting changes in government did not bring any positive changes to the poorest in Vietnam and Cambodia. Many noted more poverty and disparities in wealth now than before the violent upheavals. They also talked about the enormous personal and societal trauma of war — the loss of trust, of a sense of security and of hope that the future would bring improvement — still being experienced today.

- The indicators of poverty mentioned by the elders included: no potable water, no medicine or adequate health care, no schools or books, the need to borrow money, more street children and beggars, families not willing or able to help each other (even when forced to sell their children into prostitution), sense of breakdown of the community. There was little or no mention of lack of money or material goods.

- The key development priorities identified by all groups appeared to be health and education for people in rural areas, not in the city. The Vietnamese men said “We’re a lost generation, look to the children”. The Vietnamese women focused on an equal health care system accessible to pregnant women and elderly people, as well as to old soldiers from the South who were denied medical treatment (even dressings for their wounds) by the new government. The Cambodian groups focused on job creation, agricultural

assistance (fertilizers, pesticides and land rehabilitation) and providing services for the most vulnerable (those who are physically or mentally disabled). Freedom of speech was also mentioned.

- Both the Cambodian and Vietnamese participants insisted that assistance should go directly to community groups (even though the tradition of working together had broken down) and not through the governments which in their opinion were corrupt and ineffective in channelling aid to those who needed it most.

- It is worth noting the central position of the Buddhist temple in Cambodian communities and the services it offered — a tradition of local non-governmental assistance.

- Although the men said there were no differences between their upbringing and that of their sisters, the women felt that there were distinct gender differences in what was expected of girls and boys, how they were raised and their obligations to their families. They also felt there were differences in the opportunities available to girls and boys, for example, access to education.

- After living through a lot of forced change, imposed by governments and armies, this group of elders believes that positive change can only happen through community or local level groups and not through current governments.

Participants were very appreciative of certain Western or Canadian values and systems such as freedom of speech, equal access to education and services and assistance from the government (especially for those most marginalized). But they also made a point of emphasizing certain Cambodian or Vietnamese values such as the key role of the family and community in providing social security (rather than the government). This suggests a need for development agencies to explore rebuilding or working within systems that

still exist such as the family, community and temple, rather than replacing them with a new dependency on foreign aid and foreign structures of social assistance. One would need to understand how these systems work in order to avoid inadvertently undermining them through projects.

---

## Conclusion

As we listened to representatives of Canadian civil society speak to us about poverty certain themes appeared time and again, in almost every dialogue.

### ***Talk to the poor***

First and foremost was the need to pay real attention to the poor — to know who they are, how and why they make their decisions, and to listen to their analyses and needs before beginning a project or program. Participants told us over and over again that it was equally important to make room for constant readjustments in current projects and programs based on what we hear from the poor.

### ***Definitions of poverty***

Second, it was apparent that a more complex definition of poverty is required than simply \$1/day or caloric intake. Levels of powerlessness and isolation must also be taken into account.

### ***Poverty is global***

Third, there was widespread recognition that poverty is a global issue — touching Asians and Canadians, albeit in different ways. Deteriorating family and social support networks, the challenge of dealing with diversified funding sources, the tensions of developing partnerships with government, the difficulties faced by survivors of sexual violence, the need for access to credit by women, the importance of building children's self-esteem through education — these were all common issues faced by individuals in both Asia and Canada.

### ***Designing projects/programs***

Fourth, we were told time and again that projects to change structures need longer time frames — sometimes the entire first year must be dedicated to simply getting the right people on board and the right processes in place. The first prerequisite in designing a poverty reduction project is an extremely detailed understanding of the local context. At the same

time, links must be made between macro level impacts and micro-level impacts; between those who make policy and those who work at the grassroots. Participants said that one of CIDA's key roles should be to develop and cultivate people who can journey up and down the ladder between these two realities, bringing the learning from one realm to the other. Finally, there was a push from both the NGO sector and the private sector to build in legally binding components within project contracts that would specify how the project would benefit the poor.

### ***Local leadership***

Fifth, there was a recognition that development organizations should work only with communities and governments that have the willingness to change and are committed to decreasing poverty. Communities must 'own' the project/process if it is to succeed. The first step in strengthening civil society is ensuring that people are aware of their rights and opportunities. Policy-makers must hear the voices of local people.

### ***New development mindset***

Finally, we need a new development mindset. Participants encouraged CIDA to have the courage to let people make their own mistakes and learn from them and to share these lessons and mistakes with others. There was much talk about the 'interconnections of interventions' and the fact that the 'photocopy approach' doesn't work. Those who favour a 'rights-based' approach talked about how multiple prongs are necessary to ensure social rights — creating public awareness of existing international instruments, changing legislation when appropriate, and enforcing international covenants if not through the courts then through public opinion. It is not enough to create regulatory mechanisms, we must also help to create the institutions that can enforce them. We need increased transparency in governance and we need to build collective power between government and communities.

## Chapter 3

# What Happened During the Project

Although the consultations with the poor in Asia, the 'face-to-face' dialogues in Canada and the structured research process led by Asia Branch Chief Economist, Brian Hunter, were three major components of our enquiry, there were several other planned and unplanned elements in the Poverty Reduction Project. This chapter summarizes these elements and their impact in an effort to provide some understanding of the kinds of seeds that can be planted and the unexpected spin-offs that can occur from a participatory process such as this one.

### **The Wall**

The 'Wall' made its debut in January 1999. This huge whiteboard, posted prominently near our mailboxes and coffee machines on the seventh floor at CIDA headquarters in Hull, became a place where staff could identify and prioritize the factors they believe are critical to reducing poverty.

We began by exploring the 'roots of poverty' and with staff participation ended up with a list of more than 30 factors. We then asked staff to prioritize those factors in an informal yet effective vote, and discovered that based on their experience, acquiring and using basic education is of the highest importance in reducing poverty in the long-term. Beginning in May, we explored these factors in more detail — asking for and receiving suggestions about opportunities, barriers, information resources and best practices related to each factor.

In terms of basic education, staff felt that the key opportunities were: supporting improvements inside the classroom; changing the attitudes of children, parents and other stakeholders toward the value of basic education for children and adults marginalized by income, gender, socioeconomic status or

disabilities. The key barriers included: the possibility that private education would usurp government's role in providing an education for its citizens and thus let governments off the hook; project timelines that are too short; and long-neglected basic education infrastructures that are often barely functioning.

According to staff, the second most important factor was jobs. Opportunities that were identified included: emphasizing curriculum development for vocational training and skills upgrading for the working poor. Health was considered the third most important factor and one participant said that Canada's health care system is "one of our greatest undersold assets. The five principles of the *Canada Health Act* are at the core of development work — universality, public administration, accessibility, portability and comprehensiveness. What wonderful principles to share! Why, but why, are we not doing more?"

### **A Comment from the Virtual Dialogue on the Asian Crisis**

"The Asian crisis has revealed that considerable efforts need to be directed at the further development of social safety nets throughout the region, especially given the weakening in the traditional family systems of support, as a by-product of decades of rapid socioeconomic change and development."

Other factors identified and discussed, included, in order of priority: credit and support to small enterprise; food first; basic human needs; family planning; environment; redistribution of wealth; quality of leadership; gender equity; political systems; political will; youth; energy; water resources; participation (a 'voice' for the poor); human rights; wealth creation; social capital; land reform; social responsibility of business and faith.

### ***Involvement of field posts in Vietnam and India***

As part of our efforts to reach out to the poor and hear what they had to say, we asked our Asia Branch field offices to consider ways in which they might contribute to our enquiry. Two posts in particular provided us with some excellent food for thought.

#### **A Comment from the Virtual Dialogue on Health**

"Canada needs to make a clear commitment: help communities organize themselves."

#### ***Teachers' kit***

Field staff in Vietnam brought to our attention the fact that a strong connection had developed between Vietnam and the province of New Brunswick. After the La Francophonie summit was held in Hanoi, Vietnam in 1997, some New Brunswick representatives to the summit were so impressed by what they had seen in Vietnam, they returned home determined, as private citizens (not government representatives) to help rebuild a school in the village of Ngai Hung in the South of Vietnam which had been destroyed by a recent devastating typhoon. They raised \$10,000 to help finance the construction of a new school, toilets (rare in the village) and a water pump.

Since the next La Francophonie Summit was to be held in Moncton, New Brunswick in 1999, Peter Hoffman, CIDA's Head of Aid in Vietnam, thought that one way to strengthen this connection was to provide some learning materials for New Brunswick schoolchildren about Vietnam and the challenges of living in a poor country. In fact, four New Brunswick schools had already been twinned with Vietnam and were studying the country in detail, in preparation for the La Francophonie Summit.

The schools were enthusiastic about the project. A young Canadian intern in Vietnam, Elizabeth Cooper, worked with a number of young teachers of different nationalities and non-governmental organizations, consulted with the poor and prepared a resource kit for use by schools in New Brunswick. The kit covers nine lessons: Vietnam in general; the village of Ngai Hung; the typhoon and the new school; life at school; life at home; the importance of the coconut palm tree in the village; food; art and culture (focusing on the art of water puppets); and culture and society (focusing on Vietnamese New Year). Aimed at children aged 5 to 11, it includes photos and slides, a video, maps, cultural artifacts such as flags, chopsticks, miniature water puppets, information sheets for teachers and questions and activities for the students. The kit has been distributed to a number of schools in New Brunswick.

#### **A Comment from the Virtual Dialogue on NGO Views on Poverty**

"People are poor if they think they are poor and it doesn't matter how much or how little money they have."

#### ***The PROBE Report***

CIDA staff in India, passed on to us a report they had supported entitled the *Public Report on Basic Education in India* or PROBE as it has come to be called. Published by Oxford University Press, the report is written from the point of view of the millions of children who are excluded from the public school system in India and their parents. Based on extensive surveys in five Indian states, the report argues that basic education is a fundamental right but that in reality the low quality of the available schooling, the lack of appropriate physical infrastructure, the demotivating work environment for teachers, the lack of accountability of teachers, the overloaded curriculum, unfriendly textbooks, oppressive teaching methods and exacting examinations make education for all impossible. They highlight the example of the education

'revolution' in Himachal Pradesh which is moving towards achieving universal elementary education and conclude that government cannot and must not be allowed to abdicate from its obligation to provide basic education to all of its citizens.

We were astounded that the report had not been distributed widely, given that it deals with such current issues in the basic education debate. This report, combined with our discovery that so many people in the Branch thought that basic education was the key factor in reducing poverty, helped us decide to become co-leaders in the development of an education strategy for CIDA currently under way.

#### **A Comment from the Virtual Dialogue on Tomorrow's Jobs**

"We can't just think of this topic and get stuck in the paradigm that supporting jobs means supporting technical and vocational institutions, universities and colleges. There is too big a lump of people coming forward, in too small a space, with too many expectations, and still no money for tuition. If it is poverty reduction we are talking about, it should be the poor first. And the poor are those in the informal sector."

#### ***Spin-offs from the face-to-face dialogues***

Participants in the face-to-face dialogues had no difficulties telling us that we hadn't allocated enough time to discuss certain issues, or that we had missed certain key factors. As a result, several of the initial dialogues spawned others over the year. For example, when Shiv Kumar, author of the PROBE report, visited Canada, we invited him to speak to us at a special session. Participants in the agriculture dialogue told us that we had missed the ecological component and so when two Bangladeshi experts visited Canada in June we asked them to share their views with us on

ecological agriculture, sparking a very interesting further face-to-face dialogue.

One of the participants in our Jobs dialogue, Susan Winch, then with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, felt that we hadn't paid enough attention to the role of universities in reducing poverty and that, once again, we weren't seeing the whole picture. As a result, AUCC produced a paper to contribute to our discussions — both face-to-face and virtual, which can be found on the AUCC's website ([www.aucc.ca](http://www.aucc.ca)). This paper, demonstrates the impact of nine university projects in Asia, which improved indigenous capacities to reduce poverty over the medium and longterm by training trainers who work with poor farmers to increase their productive capacity; using distance education to train nurses in poor remote communities; analysing the complex realities of impoverished people to develop solutions designed to balance the range of factors contributing to poverty; and promoting policy change by building awareness of sustainable development and gender equity among education administrators and local, district and provincial government leaders.

#### **A Comment from the Virtual Dialogue on Social Capital**

"Social capital refers to the accumulated trust, norms and sense of shared values that exist among various actors in a given community. But what are we supposed to do in societies where there is little trust among the relevant actors? And what is the difference between social capital and cronyism? Is this social capital gone bad?"

#### ***New productive relationships***

Finally, the Poverty Reduction Project connected us with other people doing similar types of research around the world, including the World Bank, Robert Chambers at Sussex University, the researchers in India who produced the PROBE report and a wide

variety of Canadian activists. Through our consultations with the poor, carried out by the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute and South Asia Partnership, we were able to bring these voices to the World Bank table and to produce reports that they could use in their study. As a result, we have contributed in a substantive way to the upcoming World Bank Development Report 2000/2001.

focus and impact of their interventions in the field), which is currently being tested.

At the same time, as a result of the dialogues process we have strengthened our relationships with the Canadian Council of International Cooperation and its Asia Working Group, as well as with the International Development Research Centre and now consult on a regular basis on other initiatives.

### **The President's Award of Excellence**

In the summer of 1999, we were honoured to discover that we had been nominated for the President's Award of Excellence for the innovative and participatory nature of our project. In its nomination, Policy Branch cited our 'contributions to the agency as a whole'. They said that the Asia Branch Poverty Reduction Project inspired CIDA's Policy Branch to create an agency-wide Poverty Reduction Web Site to be launched in early 2000; reinvigorated CIDA's Poverty Reduction Working Group to continue advancing the poverty agenda; was featured in CIDA's inaugural annual Roundtable on Poverty Reduction as an example of how the CIDA Poverty Policy was being put into practice at the branch level; and through the structured research process led by Brian Hunter, Chief Economist in Asia Branch, produced a poverty reduction design and measurement tool (a concrete set of questions and indicators that CIDA staff can rely on to gauge the poverty

## Chapter 4

### Looking Ahead

*“We are part of a world in which the potential to narrow the gap between the rich nations and the poor has never been more possible — and the need more compelling. There are 2.8 billion people — nearly half of humanity — living on less than \$2 a day. Our mandate at CIDA is to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development. This means improving the lives of individual people by investing in them and helping them to become full, productive participants in their community and their economy.”*

**Maria Minna**  
**Minister of International Cooperation**

As our year of participatory enquiry draws to a close, it is clear that Asia Branch has not been alone in trying to deepen its understanding of poverty in Asia. Many other international institutions have also undertaken this kind of work. In fact, the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee has called the 1990s “a period of heightened commitment to poverty reduction” and itself set new global targets for poverty reduction.

Over the past year, the World Bank has developed significant new approaches to fighting poverty. It is encouraging developing countries to elaborate their own Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) as key ingredients of Comprehensive Development Frameworks. These will identify the poverty outcomes each national government wishes to achieve and the key public actions (policy changes, institutional reforms, programs, projects) required to achieve those outcomes. The underlying idea is that these PRSPs should be developed in a participatory manner with partners in civil society, as well as with the donor community. They should be comprehensive in looking at cross-sectoral determinants of poverty outcomes and they should provide the context for action by various partners. We hope for a new beginning where “together we will be better.”

Even more recently, the Asian Development Bank has also approved a new poverty reduction strategy to help eradicate extreme poverty in the region. ADB President Tadao Chino has said that 900 million extremely poor people is ‘unacceptable’. The ADB has re-oriented its strategic objectives to focus entirely on poverty reduction. The three pillars of the new strategy are pro-poor, sustainable economic growth; social development and good governance. Future projects will have to show that they directly or indirectly benefit large numbers of very poor people. As the major institutions of multinational action in Asia take up the challenge of poverty reduction, it becomes more effective for us all.

Within CIDA, other parts of the Agency have explored ways in which to emphasize our commitment to poverty reduction as our *raison d’être*. Building on CIDA’s mandate and the Agency-wide Poverty Reduction Policy, Policy Branch has inaugurated an annual Roundtable on Poverty Reduction and, in collaboration with Asia Branch, is working on developing practical tools to help planners develop comprehensive approaches to designing and measuring poverty reduction projects that focus on root causes. To guide planning and reporting on poverty reduction efforts, the Americas Branch has produced results statements linking CIDA’s six priorities and poverty reduction. In Africa Branch, the Ghana program has led the way in reviewing its programming through a poverty reduction lens; other country programs are now undertaking the same task. Other parts of the Agency are developing a wide range of poverty reduction case studies, from basic needs to urban poverty, that will help planners make better choices for pro-poor projects.

Asia Branch’s approach has been unique within the Agency in that it has involved hundreds of Canadians and Asians through ‘face-to-face’ and virtual meetings and dialogues. Our whole premise has been that even after 30 years, there is much to share with and learn from our partners in Canada

and Asia, including civil society actors working to eradicate poverty in Canada and, of course, the poor themselves in Asia. The participatory nature of the dialogues has allowed everyone involved to share their unique perspectives. In turn, this has created new awareness and enthusiasm both within the Branch, in CIDA and beyond. We have held up a mirror, and see in ourselves a reflection that we can be what we will to be, a knowledge-based organization. The dialogue process has perhaps been one of the major contributions of this exploration — an opening of new doors and new ways of working with and learning from a wide range of partners not necessarily associated with ‘international development’ but still offering valuable lessons and insights. We have seen the value of shared knowledge.

#### ***What have we learned or re-discovered?***

This volume can be a tool for those planning projects to check for best practices, caveats, and niche ideas that can be reapplied. Beyond this general treasure trove there are specific ‘learnings’. First, that economic growth is necessary but not sufficient to reduce poverty. The financial crisis in Asia clearly demonstrated this principle as hundreds of thousands of Asians slipped back into poverty, while millions of others never managed to escape.

Second, poverty is not related simply to income or basic needs — it reaches far beyond these concepts and is fundamentally linked to the ability to participate in the decisions that affect one’s life. As we listened to Canadian and Asian experts, the idea of ‘well-being’ kept coming up. It reflects more accurately the dynamic that poverty is not static, it moves about and changes shape and can grow and recede in response to opportunities or vulnerabilities. We have learned that in our policy work and program/project planning we need to look at the multiple elements of poverty; to dig deeper and examine the root causes of poverty and how they interact; and to find out what leads to ‘prosperity production’ in particular local situations. Robert Chambers, a leader in the

battle to eliminate poverty, has suggested that development is simply ‘good’ change that takes place along a continuum from ill-being to well-being.

Third, it is clear that the poor can define what well-being means in their own communities and regions. Our role is to ensure that we ask the right questions. In the dialogue on legislating social justice, Mike Farrell from the National Anti-Poverty Organization distinguished between three types of ‘social actors’:

*Darwinists* who feel that individuals are entirely responsible for their own problems and should be left alone to deal with them. They believe that poor people need incentives so they will try harder.

*Sympathizers* who feel sympathy for those suffering and want to do something to ease their pain. They view social and economic rights as desired policy objectives but not as human rights. This often leads to a patronizing approach towards people living in poverty, an emphasis on welfare and charity, and the application of ‘band-aid’ solutions which are highly visible and may deal with some of the symptoms but do little to change the root causes of poverty.

*Justice-seekers* who believe that poverty is result of decisions made by societies and in particular, governments. They believe that political and economic systems must be changed before people can escape poverty permanently.

Development that is sustainable, must go beyond the band-aid solutions. We need to develop strategies that address the root causes of poverty. This can only be done by involving the poor — the men and women who actually live, work and endure poverty on a daily basis — in the selection, design and evaluation of the projects we undertake.

The consultations organized by the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute and South Asia Partnership as part of our year-long enquiry demonstrated that poor people have a very clear understanding of the factors that are contributing to their continuing poverty and know exactly what type of assistance they

need and want. As participants in India said: “Being poor means not having personal, economic or political independence. Well-being implies a life of personal dignity with social and political equality and the ability to make economic choices.”

They believe the state should provide them with basic services and infrastructure. They see education and health care as the basic building blocks for a higher quality of life. They expect governments to provide sound, responsive and consistent policies that respect their rights and treat them equally. They have dreams and aspirations that transcend their dire circumstances and day-to-day struggles. They speak about dignity and self-reliance and tell stories about successful sons and daughters, relatives and friends, real people who have made their lives better and shown that the energy and will to escape from poverty is as abundant as its causes. Their hope for a better life focuses on their children.

It is our job to listen to what the poor say and to make room in our projects, programs and policies for what we hear. There is no one solution, no silver bullet, no single strategy that will eradicate poverty. Every situation poses different challenges and opportunities; a different set of contributing factors.

Poverty reduction efforts can be direct or indirect, focused on improving the situation of small groups of people at the micro-level to improve their situation, on institutional change at the meso-level or on policy change at the macro-level. These efforts can fall into any one or any combination of CIDA’s six priority categories — basic human needs; gender equality; infrastructure services; human rights, democracy and good governance; private sector, and environment. All of these efforts will lead to poverty reduction if we can identify and articulate the root causes of poverty, make the links between what we are doing to ameliorate the situation and who will benefit, understand how and why poor people make decisions and ensure that stakeholders are

involved in local planning processes. In short, communities must ‘own’ the project and the process.

### ***What will Asia Branch do now?***

Throughout the past year, a structured research process has paralleled our participatory enquiry. This research process has resulted in the development of a new framework or lens for looking at poverty, which has been informed by the dialogues. This framework provides a way to deal with the multiple, competing or interacting factors that define poverty in any particular situation, and thus produce the holistic analysis needed to address root causes, not just symptoms of poverty. It will help us make more pro poor project choices. As we use the framework over the coming year, it will be adapted and strengthened based on comments from staff and emerging research from all corners of the globe. It will be a key tool for the branch in its poverty analysis. The framework will soon be available on the Asia Branch website at [www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/Asia](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/Asia).

All of the knowledge that has been captured through the participatory enquiry and the structured research process is helping Asia Branch to review its strategies and work processes. It is expected that **a major goal of all our work will be increasing the well-being of Asians living in poverty — through project, program and policy level interventions that will systematically reduce poverty and eliminate the root causes of poverty.** An updated Bilateral Strategy in Asia, and a new Poverty Reduction Operational Framework will help turn this learning into action. These too can be found on the Asia Branch website.

We will take to heart what we heard from the poor and begin to learn how participatory approaches, properly applied, can increase our understanding at all stages of our work. We are mindful of the lessons learned from our dialogues — that it takes time to build long-term effective relationships that will sustain the impacts of a project beyond its

funding, that poverty is a global issue, touching both Canadians and Asians and that learning should travel in both directions. We have been enriched by our contact with so many organizations and people, and will build, we hope, from those relationships.

To help us move forward from talk to walk, we will develop and adapt tools that will lead to better choices and to higher impact pro-poor projects. Some tools have already been developed, others are being prepared. Some we may borrow from other organizations, others may be suggested by staff over the next year. These could include: support to assist development of country program frameworks and poverty analyses, a set of poverty indicators at the national and international level, case studies demonstrating successes and failures, examples of best practices, criteria and checklists to guide research and decisions, examples of results that focus on outcomes, lessons learned, and key contacts.

This book is itself a tool which is dense with ideas, insights, caveats and 'connections'. Our web page remains active, and will focus now on sharing knowledge and experience with those who do care for Asia's poor.

Whether we succeed or fail is up to all of us. We know that the challenge is immense but we now have a better understanding of the complexity of poverty. We are confident that the process was, and is, worthwhile.

## Appendix 1

# Net Learning: Report on the Process of the Internet Dialogues

One of the mechanisms chosen by the Poverty Reduction Project to utilize and test new methods and modes of gathering information was to establish an interactive web page. The Poverty Reduction Team saw the potential of Internet technology to reach beyond the participants it had engaged in Canada, not only to a larger array of colleagues in the NGO, academic and donor communities, but also from anywhere around the world. The goal of the web page was to continue and expand the process of dialoguing, in the hopes that an even wider audience would engage and share their views.

### Development of the site and learning from others

Previous experience with using web sites for consultation was tapped from within CIDA before a decision was made to proceed.

The team was supported in its conceptualization and design efforts by Bellanet, a project dedicated to spreading Internet use in support of development and housed in the International Development Research Centre.

### Building the virtual team

Dialogues, whether virtual or face-to-face need to be moderated. In this project there were two key questions: how would this be done, and who would do it?

Thirty volunteer moderators were identified from within Asia Branch. Two officers were assigned to each dialogue, thereby ensuring the dialogue would be looked after despite

travel and busy schedules. This was seen as an effective way not only to engage Asia Branch staff in the Poverty Reduction Project, but to provide them with a way to become familiar with, and more comfortable using, the Internet. They were supported by an intern and a consultant. All but one team member were generalists in the technology.

A training session emphasized not the technology but the principles and process of moderating. The analogy of hosting a party helped focus discussion on the social requirements of moderating.

Conscious of the time constraints faced by all staff, efforts were made to minimize the time requirements of moderating. A Moderator's Handbook was designed as a quick reference, and all incoming messages were printed and archived in the Handbook, providing moderators with the option of reading their dialogue comments "on-line" or in text form. This portable reference guide was also designed to maintain continuity should the moderator of a dialogue change for any reason during the life of the project. Moderators were encouraged to be proactive — adding comments and questions to their dialogues to attract and maintain participation and summarizing as we went along.

### Web Site Implementation

#### **Lessons Learned**

- Allocate the time and money needed to develop a web page as a separate entity.
- Use an experienced web page designer from the beginning.
- Develop a clear vision of the web page with your project team.
- Always keep your user in mind.
- Keep graphics low in 'calories'.
- Keep the navigation lean.
- There are still formidable obstacles of access and cost which limit the use of the Internet even within Asia which is arguably the most connected continent in the world.

- Establish a clear and well managed line of communication between the web page content developer and the designer.

Through the life of the project the use of the site was far lower than expected (see graph). As of October 1999 there have been 505 hits, of which 24 appear to have been from Asia, and 116 comments were actually posted. The Social Capital topic had the highest number of postings and Jobs the lowest. The most active moderation was in the health and devolution sites where 11 and 12 messages were posted. Some moderators did extensive personal marketing as well.

In assessing the reasons for low turnout, the general consensus was that users, faced with 15 different dialogue topics to choose from, suffered from 'option paralysis': too many options preventing them from engaging in anything; the web page was not particularly easy to navigate; and too many steps to take before they could make a comment. Second, the mandatory sign-in required to post a message was perceived as a serious impediment to participation. In addition, South Asian users informed the team that the graphic-based gateway required significant time to download and given the high cost of 'on-line' time, prevented them from participating.

Adaptations included:

- graphic-based front page ⇒ non-graphic front page
- mandatory registration with e-mail address etc. before comment ⇒ no registration
- relocation of interactive buttons for ease of use
- a considerable effort to market the web to e-mail platform technology to allow e-mail users to use the net

### **Lessons Learned**

- Users prefer anonymity when asked to express personal opinions, therefore avoid 'sign-ins'.
- The Internet empowers some and intimidates many (some people are hesitant because it is so public).
- Many organizations and individuals in Canada are not yet Internet or Web savvy.

### **Technical support**

Relying on 'in house' support proved far costlier than expected in terms of need for service and getting the changes made in a timely way. A key element of success was out of our control.

Given that the Poverty Reduction Project was a short-term project it was not seen as a priority for the programmers and other technical people who were under pressure to produce in a number of areas. Yet as a short term project, even short delays had a high negative impact.

### **Getting the word out**

Marketing and communications are key to the launch of any new product or service and requires significant research to develop an appropriate and effective strategy. The marketing strategy for the Poverty Reduction web page focused primarily on informing individuals and organizations who had already participated in one of the face-to-face dialogues.

Doing this involved:

- A form e-mail letter inviting all dialogue participants to engage in the virtual discussions and requesting them to pass on the attached Internet link (the url of the Poverty Reduction Project's web page and logo) to their web master for posing on their respective web sites.
- Specific contact was made by mail and/or phone with organizations which had hosted dialogues.

- The CIDA missions in Asia were encouraged to pass the word among their executing agencies in the field.
- An official launch attracted a large number of CIDA staff and introduced them to the site.
- The web page was registered with various search engines to which a fee is not attached and efforts were made to identify topic specific list-serves.
- Personal contact was made with individuals responsible for maintaining the web pages of partner organizations and other interesting sites.
- Follow-up with search engine administrators was undertaken.

### ***Lessons Learned***

- Develop a well-researched comprehensive marketing strategy well in advance of launching your web page.
- Personal contact is critical in getting your site posted on partner web pages.
- Registration on Internet search engines often requires up to four months to become active.
- Launching a web page during the summer months hinders participation.
- Continual efforts to market within CIDA are needed.

### **Participation**

The Internet is a vast, intangible and very unpredictable medium. When the web page component of the Poverty Reduction Project was first launched, the team was nervous that moderators might be swamped with messages as people took advantage of the opportunity to dialogue about poverty in Asia.

A lower level of participation than anticipated was attributed to several factors: the summer holidays; an incomplete marketing campaign; an awkward site to move through smoothly; a

site offering too many options confusing to those with a single comment.

An important lesson that the Poverty Reduction Team learned was that it is not only large bureaucratic organizations like CIDA for which the Internet is both a (relatively) new technology and a new form of social interaction. NGOs and other institutions are also in the process of learning how to take advantage of the opportunities it provides. We believe that changing this perspective is just a matter of time.

Perhaps the most important thing to remember is that for large public organizations such as CIDA who are often seen by NGOs as self-contained and unaccustomed to engaging in dialogue and knowledge-sharing with the outside world, **the mere fact of trying should be seen as an important step.**

#### From a Participant:

“Many comments are made, but often there are no direct responses. In a live group, there would inevitably be some commentary, rebuttal or support for a point of view, but in this electronic format — for whatever reason — comments are not addressed at all by further debate. There is the feeling of a multitude of soliloquies, rather than that of a group discussion.”

## Conclusion

The Internet technology now available in virtually all parts of the world holds tremendous potential for sharing perspectives and thus better policy development and project performance. But it is not an 'easy' technology to use well. At least as much attention must be paid to a web site as to any other formal communication medium. And the reality of inaccessibility of the web in Asia, where a month's connection costs can exceed the annual income of most Asians, has to be taken into account. In addition, there is still an exclusivity of the internet, with access often in the locked office of the boss. The explosive growth of internet cafes is a reaction of civil society saying, "us too!"

With all the 'glitches' and frustrations, the Poverty Reduction Team is satisfied with the effort, and web-based comments have been drawn into the analysis as have the inputs received from all other sources.

## Appendix 2

# Messages from Participants

Participants in many of the Dialogues were asked to write down what CIDA should keep in mind when designing a new strategy for poverty reduction — the key obstacles and opportunities in their minds. Their unedited comments follow in no particular order.

### Tomorrow's Jobs: Preparing Asian workers for the millennium

- CIDA must learn to learn (a full exchange of ideas among all parties from other projects, and use the lessons)
- Ensure sufficient needs analysis/research prior to project design.
- Target multiple levels/sectors to maximize sustainability.
- Raise interest in benefits of training and education - start with practical, applied training - once people see clear benefits they will be more likely to forgo work for training (incl. Less practical/more academic learning)
- Strategy must be developed and owned by partner country.
- CIDA: please remember - importance of preparatory stages; "poor" has gradations (abject poor - working poor etc.); learn from previous experience.
- Gender issues should not be last on the list of priorities.
- Public sector reform will be required.
- Canadian experience: most labour market programs have modest success at best. (but even modest success may be cost effective)
- It's difficult to know what tomorrow's jobs will be. Education/training is only one piece of the

puzzle. Poverty reduction also requires capital investment and markets for what workers will produce.

- Needs to emphasize technical training in addition to academic focus -must work to change attitudes that minimize prestige and skilled/semi-skilled training -only valued academic - societies need both in order to be productive and wealthy.
- Important to define the skills needed for tomorrow's jobs from the perspective of the workers themselves and not only from the employers' short-term needs.

### Obstacles to Consider

- Obstacles (or challenge): Finding the balance in meeting employers' needs and workers' needs.
  - Bottom line need skills for future jobs and to escape poverty or not fall back into poverty.
  - Obstacles: CIDA has to come to terms with the project iceberg: i.e.. Most of the bulk may be underpinning, not so visible. How to make those into results.
  - Obstacles: Social mindset, donor mentality.
  - Obstacles: partner consultations among numerous and different states in Asia.
  - 3 key obstacles in poverty reduction:
    1. Inadequate investments in skill development esp. Private sector.
    2. Accessibility to education, especially for low income students, esp. Girls.
    3. Job scarcity - too few jobs (demand side)
  - Obstacles: Initial time and research investment; results may be slow.
  - Obstacles: micromanagement -enough lead time and resources to fully develop/research interventions and establish baseline data.
- ### Opportunities to Consider
- Opportunity: In the "getting ready" phase is: Who is involved? How? How do groups link?

How do decisions get made? Disputes resolved? Connections to the outside? etc. (Called “admin” or “planning” just does not link to concept of participation.)

- Opportunity to demonstrate the value of partnership development in early stages of project so it is recognized as something worth funding.
- Education and training must be relevant to specific communities.
- Opportunity: Life long learning problem solving, working together, skills: how do we get those too?
- Opps: Link savings/loans to education/training; Linked/training to sustainability of educational institutions; link education/training to income generation. (Canadian Co-operative Association)
- Opportunities: through regular consultation a strategy can be flexible and expansive enough to accommodate training and education at all levels of project intervention.
- Opportunities: iterative planning that allow projects to incorporate lessons learned.
- Opportunity: Buy-in and ownership of the program; increase productivity, self-esteem, possible promotion, mobile skills
- 3 key opportunities for poverty reduction strategy:
  1. Effective joint ventures or partnerships with like-minded local agencies/organizations.
  2. Learning from previous projects, or experience through independent, ex-post (?) evaluations.
  3. Investing in skill development, esp. for young boys and girls, + credit.
- Opportunity: 50% women’s participation rate as a criteria for OBS-funded projects.
  - complimentary with other donors /IFI projects
  - synergy among other CEAs in the country/sector.
- Opportunities: Investment (pre-project)

## Social Partnerships: Do They Serve the Poor?

- Gender, including girls education
- Anti-corruption, free press, Canadian legislation, transparency of CIDA transactions in host countries
- The poor, the context in the country, the repercussions for different actors
- Wealth creation -- at the small and medium enterprise level as well as the community level include in the provision of services (water, education etc.)
- Poorest, isolated, rural, unorganized
- 1) need for Southern-led aid strategies; 2) address capacity of poor to organize for pursuit of own interests/development -- women are key; 3) re-think support for private sector objectives in light of 1 and 2
- Capacity-building of Southern institutions and organizations
- Terms of engagement with partners', especially Southern civil society
- To ensure participation, (people, local groups, etc.) in design, implementation and review of interventions'
- Three most important things: 1) the poor -- consult them directly, go in the field for dialogues; 2) thickening civil society, invest in social capital, not in financial capital; 3) poverty alleviation needs to be based on building accountable, democratic and participatory political institutions
- The strategy should be context-specific and must therefore be flexible and responsive to different circumstances ie who are key players in each case
- What are the root causes of poverty and how to address them?

- How will local communities and diversity of interests within them be involved?
- The root causes of poverty are complex: 1) need a broad approach -- target all levels not just direct services to the poor; 2) need multidisciplinary in approach and research -- crucial to address the complex and inter-related causes of poverty; 3) need a long-term view with a focus on the sustainability of programs and linkages. Poverty reduction strategies should include the following: public education, research, policy development, institutional strengthening. Universities and university linkages with overseas partners have key role to play in this.

### The Link Between Health and Poverty in

Asia:

What makes the difference?

- Constraint -- working within an international economic climate that encourages systemic poverty
- Reiterate frequently the elements of health as well as the elements of illness; establish priorities relevant to the social philosophy of the culture; determine the problems associated with categorical programming
- Constraint -- acceptance of the economic model as the driving force
- Opportunity -- consider resource generating as opposed to income generating activities; a global orientation is slowly developing
- Different approaches may be needed for urban and rural populations
- The links between health and poverty must be clearly articulated and approaches must be integrated/cross-sectoral
- Acquiring sustaining grassroots commitment and participation
- Administrative co-operation
- The local situation

- Programs at the micro level can facilitate change only if there is parallel discussion occurring at the policy level
- Women continue to be extremely important to be targeting for both poverty and health initiatives
- Need to recognize what other activities are occurring within a country and to develop project which are complementary. This creates a win/win situation -- the projects will each have greater impact and the country gets work which is taking it forward in the same direction.
- Opportunity: As a result of the economic situation there is a great deal of focus by IMF and World Bank on social (health) as well as straight more traditional economic programming.
- Constraint: the people in these countries, probably due to their economic situation, are very distracted with daily living priorities. Any project is going to need permissive or longer than normal timelines to help them begin to think in an action, longer-term orientation.
- We need to agree on the most important determinants of health status; recognize the importance of building in the sustainability of health through hand-off to local organisations / governments; and ensure that policy and strategy development is complementary to other sectors ie microfinance and health
- The economic context is important: a) how will the intervention fit into the economy five years from now? How to benefit from recovery if that comes? (The rising tide may not lift all boats); b) health/poverty interventions can be public or private or mixed. If the public sector is not well-developed, health can be an enterprise, but a community enterprise!
- International co-operation which involves local government is more likely to be sustainable.
- Convince 10 major international corporations to sign and promulgate a pledge to ensure that health and poverty conditions are

- improved in the communities and regions where they invest.
- Individuals/communities have rights to be respected as having the primary responsibility for his/her own health
  - Use the three wrap-around principles -- listen, build on strengths, never give up
  - Opportunity: consider requiring all partners (NGOs, private sector organizations, etc ) to build clean water into any and all interventions ie improving availability, access to clean H2O as integral feature of every project --health, education, technical transfer, etc. -- Jubilee year in Christian context -- forgiveness of debt, etc.
  - Constraints: resistance to being results-based, the message or perceived message seems to be that CIDA is imposing the requirement to be results-based instead of seeing it as an essential feature in the design, planning and evaluation of any initiative that seeks to improve its effectiveness over time; scarcity model in which NGOs compete for \$, turf ...
  - Constraints: thinking there has to be a health sector and having to program, count/measure it; forgetting empowerment / collective organizing dimension of poverty reduction/ health
  - Opportunities: learning from Thai poverty indicators/data collection and management system and its link to funding and program priorities; look at BRAC poverty/vulnerability indicators and impact assessment; look at local/cross-sectoral/ health systems programming links; look at service delivery/systems/policy links; break down the 'stovepipes' or 'silos'; building/sharing learning and knowledge networks that include practitioners/academics/ policy makers and clients
  - Keep in mind that looking at the health sector program given the complex interdependence of poverty determinants is not likely to have an impact
  - Barriers: political/economic instability; systemic discrimination against women (education, control of their own reproductive health etc.)
  - Lessons: health is a determinant of poverty (micro); poverty is a determinant of health (micro and macro); we cannot expect people to take sole responsibility for their health -- health systems must be in place (a macro-poverty issue); health and poverty affect other determinants of health and poverty ie education
  - Opportunities: existing activities at the grassroots level which can influence policy (with appropriate inputs); male participation in health issues
  - Keep in mind the long-term timelines required for change; the need to document the experience/process of poverty reduction across sectors; the range of potential effective interventions given CIDA resources
  - Opportunities: CIDA is already working in many sectors and has long-term experience in many countries at the grassroots and policy levels; Canadian experience in health care restructuring and social programs
  - Constraints: global economic policies/structure; limited resources and the magnitude of problem
  - The link between health and other sectoral programs should be constantly highlighted in CIDA's program planning; CIDA should link its activities to national (host country) policies and use disaggregated information to illustrate its points (advocacy); CIDA's programs should be interconnected with other donor plans for health and poverty reduction
  - Opportunities: Canada's own health act and healthy system merit international scrutiny as a model (or models) for evaluation and adaptation to the international cultural and social context in : 1) regulation and policy work 2) health information 3) decentralization 4) single tier system 5) social participation and principles of equity and universality

- Constraint: CIDA is too process-oriented and gets bogged down in its own procedures
- Develop advocacy strategies at local, provincial, national levels in partnership with women's groups and other NGOs to effect long-term systemic change
- Reduce the debt burden
- Analyse the effect of SAP on health sector reform and determinants of health (especially women and younger people)
- Approach health and poverty in a human rights context and use health and poverty performance indicators to develop a report card approach to progress. Use treaty monitoring bodies and other reporting mechanisms especially effective for sexual and reproductive health
- Additional money must be found for advocacy; do not fund programs that isolate women ie microenterprise programs
- From an NGO perspective: service delivery people in developing countries are burned out from shrinking resources, adding the advocacy lobby to their activities is often too much; we must not hold programs hostage to political action (although this is already happening)
- At the macrolevel: identify principles by which to develop, guide, implement, evaluate projects etc. ie build on existing strengths, increase resiliency, build on life experiences and skills; identify how these link to specific health aspects or projects
- At the micro-level: start from where community is at; issues of their priority -- find solutions -- go to next step; enhance 'empowerment'/control' of project etc in all components by individual/community
- Basic needs = home --job -- a friend. How do projects meet aspects of these needs in the broad sense and in the specific sense (to group or community)?
- Restraints: money, time, people, political will; strongly agree with identification of opportunity when all resources are limited; need to get maximum impact, then share with others through multimedia approach
- The most important thing is the impact of global climate change. We need to increase priorities in programming to reduce the impacts of global climate change.
- Opportunity: assistance to poverty sectors to adapt to the effects of climate change
- Constraints: Money is limited; acceptance of the reality that climate change is happening
- If health is not necessarily income poverty-related a future challenge is in community based organisational strengthening with a view towards advocacy and creating accountability-- how do you evaluate using RBM?
- A future challenge is urban poverty
- Planning for health and poverty impacts of globalization/structural adjustment -- ie increasing importance of private sector in health, reduced access, increase in conflict
- The three most important items to keep in mind: cross-sectoral approach (education/ water); income generation for women; leverage -- communication, policy- dialogue
- Opportunities: work with other donors, IFIs, NGOs locally; help where the needs are; untied aid; governance issues; budget is low, partners need more
- Education for women is essential for health; local economic development is crucial to promoting economic independence; literacy is a primary health/poverty reduction strategy
- Obstacles/barriers: cultural barriers that prevent education for women; negative attitudes toward persons/children with disabilities
- Barrier: overcoming the problems that arrive or are created by government agencies not working together or whose policies conflict

- Opportunity: there are several important examples of collaborative government work that can be used as a model
- Those with disabilities are most vulnerable to poverty -- provide support/resource emotionally or physically
- Equality -- every one should have the same opportunity to access information; to basic human rights -- freedom to speak
- Engage the poor in addressing manageable problems to give confidence to tackle the less manageable --to give the poor ownership of the solutions
- Obstacle: conflicting ideologies that use the poor as cannon fodder
- Opportunity: youthful desire the change the unacceptable
- CIDA should look at its 'reporting' expectations ie RBM, complicated budgets etc.
- CIDA should focus less energy on bringing over Canadian 'experts' to train and teach and more emphasis on projects directly working with local communities which strengthen local expertise
- CIDA should re-evaluate its stance on SAP
- CIDA should encourage groups to bridge the gap between the various sectors -- health/ education/social
- CIDA should re-evaluate the expectations that projects include for local community members - particularly re: volunteering and finances
- CIDA should make sure Canadian consultants have not only expertise in the thematic areas but also have cultural sensitivity to the local realities
- CIDA should recognize and incorporate qualitative, and participatory evaluation methodologies

How do we educate for the millennium when few know how to read?

These comments formed part of a session in this dialogue and can be found in the summary report on page 41.

A Just Society:

Can social rights be legislated?

- Focus on empowerment
- Make space, time, money towards participation of the poor, poor groups, poor community organizations
- Eliminate the we/they syndrome, there is a Third World in Canada. The Third World shares similar problems in advocacy/social rights
- Locally-generated solutions will have a better chance of success than top-down approach.
- Basic education is an absolute bottom line right.
- Acknowledge different cultural context (ie do not simply transferring Western modalities)
- Information/communication revolution will help shift perceptions over time
- Involve civil society (not only NGOs but also people's movements)
- Be aware of differences in Northern and Southern interpretations to rights
- Combine a legalistic (legislation) with an activist (advocacy) approach
- Walk the talk
- Define poverty, it's not just economic; identify the target group and work with them; the Convention on the Rights of the Child is ratified by every Asian community -- use it and advocate for its implementation

- The relation of the poverty strategy to a government's over-all foreign policy and trade and investment strategy
- Identify groups and communities that potentially will become agents of poverty reduction and find ways to support and strengthen them; listen to the people
- Culture and basic human rights; World Trade Organization's inhibitions on foreign policy; reconciliation as a tool
- Small grassroots initiatives are as legitimate as big picture initiatives
- Adequately assess cultural/legal environment (enabling/disabling)
- Support for legislation cannot be a stand alone but part of an overall package
- Poor people must be involved from beginning to end of any process; governments must be accountable for the social outcomes of their policies; increase awareness about causes of poverty and link to loss of rights
- Continue to engage in dialogue with Canadians -- ensure that poverty reduction goals are explicitly built into all projects; avoid working with those who do harm -- social justice criteria parallel to environmental criteria for project or partner selection

#### The Agriculture Connection: Making it work for Asia's poor

- In terms of process, CIDA needs some kind of conceptual framework, a structured approach which outlines what is important and what is feasible.
- Learning by doing is valuable and should include a light monitoring system which measures impact at the household level, and mechanisms to adjust interventions when required.
- Take an integrated approach to policy and practice. Take the priority areas seriously and force partners and executing agencies to do

the same. Don't throw out last year's priorities.

- Involve the Canadian private sector (there are multiplier effect of successful food-producing activities in developing countries), but not just the private sector. Choose partners based on who is the most competent to provide specific services.
- Integrate horizontally (credi, women, technology, market, policy) and vertically (macro/meso/micro and government/private sector, NGOs, institutions).
- In terms of targeting -- use a self-selection approach when possible. Targeting only a woman might not work best, since men often direct women's resources.
- The poor need a dynamic economic environment in which to succeed, providing support only to the poor won't allow for that environment to develop.
- Micro-finance shouldn't be targeted only to the poor -- we need diversification, creating rungs on a ladder, the spreading out of risks. Gender programming in agriculture doesn't mean targeting just women.
- In the 1960s the belief was that technological innovation would induce institutional change. Now there is a realization that institutional structures should be in place first. Otherwise only the rich and powerful will benefit
- Look at local successes in value-added products. For example, the coconut -- the entire product from trunk to fruit is being used.
- Canada has genuine expertise and experience in water-basin management, road development, seed production, producing value and feeding it back to the producers.
- Focus on children, the next generation who won't be able to sustain development if they are permanently damaged.
- In Asia, land tenure is not an issue in poverty reduction -- the issue is land access. The only way to implement land reform without a revolution is compensation. When a large

landowner retires the state should have the first right to buy, at market price. The state can then redistribute the land.

- For land reform to succeed you need a package of technology, institutions, so that the poor can seize the opportunity.
- Ensuring equitable access to resources and some security so that poor can retain these resources is a very important element in poverty reduction.
- If CIDA is serious about poverty reduction, then it needs to move away from traditional five-year programs with point x as goal to developing a structure or a system for the coming ten years. This is a long-term multi-generational program with agricultural production as a base. It must be able to deal with what communities have to face in the future since life does not remain static
- The best people to decide on priorities are the poor themselves. CIDA should meet key actors representing the poor at each level of commodity chain and ask them what their problems are and what should funding agencies support?

From Striving to Thriving:

Building on the assets and opportunities of Asia's women

- Support innovation but not at the expense of supporting ongoing solid successful institutional activity.
- Develop more sophisticated collaboration tools and strategies to enable government and local organizations to develop 'collective power' and trust.
- Facilitate the building of critical linkages among women's organizations.
- More personal human support and reinforcement for people working on their own in rural communities. For example, we need enough staff so they can go out and meet people in their own settings and not have to

draw them into meetings in central locations and drag them away from their daily work.

- Develop alternative ways of valuing non-paid labour, a method of showing how much support there is in the community and the opportunity cost of other work not done.
- Link Canadian advocacy organizations with Southern partners. Involve Canadian capacity more, increase public support, find ways for these people to be in touch with each other.
- Broaden the concept of health to one which moves away strictly from medical terms and includes well-being. Health is one of the roots of poverty -- violence, rape, food security all impact on health. Without a basic level of energy people won't come together to organize.
- Take a long-term view and appreciate how long it takes to make change. Work with youth -- this is the element of sustainability.

Dialogues with the Canadian NGO Community and the Canadian Private Sector

#### 1. The NGO View

### ***What Factors Contribute to Poverty and How Are They Linked?***

#### ***Web Diagram***

- ☺ factors that contribute to issue
- ☹ factors that relieve issue

#### 1. EDUCATION

- ☹ debt
- ☹ food security
- ☹ status of women (gender equity)
- ☹ caste system
- ☹ environment (degradation)
- ☹ loss of hope
- ☹ employment opportunities
- ☺ dictatorship/corruption/governance (human rights)
- ☺ migration of labour
- ☺ religion
- ☺ health (nutrition + physical / mental)
- ☺ globalization - trade investment liberalization; who makes economic decisions; international system (money,

trade); uncontrolled flow of \$; global interdependence

2. ACCESS TO LAND / LAND REFORM

- ➔ food security
- ➔ caste systems
- ➔ loss of hope
- ➔ environment (degradation)
- ➔ food security
- ☒ people organizing
- ☒ ➔conflict/war

3. NATURAL DISASTER

- ➔ environment (degradation)

4. MICRO CREDIT / ACCESS TO CREDIT

- ☒ ➔ status of women (gender equity)
- ☒ ➔ access to land/land reform

5. CASTE SYSTEMS

- ➔ status of women (gender equity)
- ☒ access to land/land reform
- ☒ ➔education

6. RELIGION

- ☒ access to land/land reform
- ☒ ➔education
- ☒ ➔conflict/war
- ☒ ➔status of women (gender equity)

7. LOSS OF HOPE

- ➔ employment opportunities
- ➔ globalization (who makes economic decisions)

8. ENVIRONMENT (DEGRADATION)

- ➔ malnutrition (health)
- ☒ good government (accountability)
- ☒ education
- ☒ natural disasters
- ☒ people organizing
- ☒ corporate greed

9. ANIMALISM/FATALISM

- ☒ education (lack of)

10. CONFLICT / WAR

- ☒ urban vs. rural
- ☒ ➔corruption

- ☒ ➔access to land/land reform
- ☒ ➔ food security

11. PEOPLE ORGANIZING

- ➔ good government (accountability)
- ➔ democracy
- ➔ conflict/war
- ➔ corruption
- ➔ dictatorship
- ☒ ➔governance (human rights)

12. DICTATORSHIP /CORRUPTION /GOVERNANCE

- ☒ food security
- ☒ education
- ☒ ➔people organizing
- ☒ ➔conflict/war
- ☒ ➔loss of hope

13. DEMOCRACY (LACK OF)

- ☒ people organizing
- ☒ status of women (gender equity)

14. POOR INFRASTRUCTURE / LACK OF BASIC SERVICES

- ☒ conflict/war
- ☒ globalization (economic model - trade liberalization and export-oriented growth)

15. RURAL VS. URBAN

- ➔ conflict/war
- ➔ globalization (economic model - trade)
- ➔ education

16. GOOD GOVERNMENT

- ➔ health/malnutrition
- ➔ food security
- ➔ globalization (economic model - trade liberalization and export oriented growth)
- ☒ ➔corporate greed

17. FOOD SECURITY

- ➔ family instability
- ☒ political priorities
- ☒ globalization (global interdependence)
- ☒ corporate greed
- ☒ age (youth)
- ☒ ➔status of women

18. AGE (YOUTH)

- food security
  - status of women/gender equity
  - education
19. PHYSICAL/MENTAL "ABILITIES"
- ☒ ➤education
  - ☒ ➤health/malnutrition
20. CORPORATE GREED
- ☒ ➤globalization (interdependence)
  - ☒ globalization (economic model/trade liberalization)
  - food security
  - access to land/land reform
  - ☒ ➤good government (accountability)
  - environment (degradation)
21. CONCENTRATION OF POWER
- ☒ status of women (gender equity)
22. CONCENTRATION OF POWER, RESOURCES, OPPORTUNITIES
- ☒ status of women (gender equity)
23. POLITICAL PRIORITIES
- food security
24. FAMILY INSTABILITY
- ☒ food security
25. DEBT
- education
  - ☒ globalization
    - uncontrolled flow of investment
    - IFI/IMF Policies
    - international system (money, trade)
26. STATUS OF WOMEN/GENDER EQUITY
- ☒ ➤population control
  - ☒ population growth
  - concentration of power, resources, opportunities
  - ☒ ➤micro-credit/access to credit
  - ☒ ➤health/malnutrition
  - ☒ ➤education
  - ☒ ➤religion
  - ☒ caste systems
  - ☒ age
  - democracy
  - good governance
27. POPULATION GROWTH
- status of women
  - population control
28. CONSUMERISM
- ☒ globalization (global interdependence)
29. LACK OF CO-ORDINATION GO/NGO
- development aid
30. LACK OF AWARENESS (CANADA)
- globalization (growth model of development)
31. DEVELOPMENT AID
- ☒ lack of coordination GO/NGO
  - dependency
32. CULTURE CLASH / VALUES DISSOLUTION
- ☒ globalization (economic model - trade liberalization and export-oriented growth)
33. POPULATION CONTROL
- ☒ population growth
  - ☒ ➤status of women (gender equity)
34. TRADE/INVESTMENT LIBERALIZATION (GLOBALIZATION)
- ☒ growth model of development
35. WHO MAKES ECONOMIC DECISIONS (IMF POLICIES, CAPITAL FLOWS)
- loss of hope
  - ☒ ➤democracy
36. DEPENDENCY
- ☒ development aid
37. GROWTH MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT (GLOBALIZATION)
- ☒ lack of awareness (in Canada)
38. GLOBAL INTERDEPENDENCE (GLOBALIZATION)
- international system - money, trade (globalization)
  - food security
  - trade/investment liberalization (globalization)
  - uncontrolled flow of \$ (globalization)

- ☐ ☐ corporate greed

39. ECONOMIC MODEL = TRADE LIBERALIZATION, EXPORT-ORIENTED GROWTH (GLOBALIZATION)

- ☐ culture clash (values desolation)
- ☐ access to credit (micro-credit)
- ☐ corporate greed

40. INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM ( MONEY, TRADE) (GLOBALIZATION)

- ☐ global interdependence (globalization)
- ☐ growth model of development

41. UNCONTROLLED FLOW OF \$ (GLOBALIZATION)

- ☐ global interdependence (globalization)
- ☐ growth model of development

2. The Private Sector View

The first listing consists of the factors presented to the full group session, after the small group discussions. The second listing, (unedited and in no significant order), consists of the factors raised by individuals but not brought to the full group session.

**Key factors as decided by full group**

The factors listed below were presented to the plenary session as a result of the small group discussions and grouped by participants into theme areas. Each participant then cast three votes to determine the most important factor. The factors are listed in descending order, beginning with the most important.

**1) equitable access**

- limited access to microcredit -- especially for women
- access to capital, knowledge (integrated, sustainable, useability)
- access to infrastructure services (land, water, roads)
- access to financial capital
- isolation and lack of access to information/ technology

**2) training**

- lack of employment, job training, skills training, Community Futures model
- lack of access to practical/useful education -- especially by women
- development of private sector -- autonomously, help from Canadian private sector in order to create jobs

**3) governance**

- participation (empowerment)
- transparency/governance
- bottom-up knowledge based on grassroots governance
- work with countries/communities that have shown commitment to reduce poverty

**4) population**

- population and health (education)
- demographic control (birth control, overpopulation, family planning projects)

**5) gender**

- take a gender perspective on poverty and implement it

**6) basic education**

**Factors raised by individuals but not brought to full group session**

- attend to gender differentiation with respect to poverty
- mainstream women into all development activities
- grassroots governance -- people in communities need to understand their rights and be able to articulate their needs (CIDA)
- understand the issue of poverty in specific localized, socio/cultural context
- growth of communications networks
- promotion of good governance and tax reform
- what is poverty and who says so? what is wealth?
- address population control

- food -- the very first thing people need is “3 squares a day”. How do we settle that problem?
- illiteracy (intern)
- basic education/literacy for girl child
- basic education -- ultimately education is the key. Basic education comes first. (CIDA)
- lack of educational training for locals -- in regards to educational training I mean train the locals in a craft/workshop that can help them to be productive people. In the Dominican Republic we had Japanese volunteers teach locals to make bamboo baskets which they now sell to tourists. (intern)
- access to education and health
- educate women
- education projects -- technical, to improve job prospects
- family planning projects to reduce children
- finance job creation projects to reduce unemployment/underemployment
- attitude of the ‘upper class’ in many countries towards their country people who live in poverty -- indifference, not caring, not wanting to share project benefits, role of women
- lack of clear objectives by country governments to budget resources to improve poverty situations, for example clean water infrastructure
- education and ability to assimilate and make beneficial use of improved technology
- market access -- marketable, competitive product; marketing channel (to end consumer); appropriate processing, storage and transportation infrastructure; enabling marketing institutions and regulating environment; reliable market information
- skills development -- marketing; production; management; organizational skills for local implementation, management of associations, business, govt etc, ‘civil society’ work
- financing -- micro-credit, credit scheme management
- environmental degradation (intern)
- lack of access to capital/business financing (intern)
- isolation -- social, geographical and informational (intern)
- participation (poorest groups excluded from development process)
- knowledge requirement (training, education)
- lack of access to a sustainable source of income
- women’s access to credit and education
- sustainable development policies
- free trade zone policies
- private sector development can be promoted by removing restrictive legislation in developing countries
- improve the access to modern technology and management practices to small and medium enterprises in developing countries
- educate Canadian business to the positive influence they can have in developing countries through technology exchange, executive exchange. Small contributions to social infrastructure can change a whole community.
- increase investment in natural resources conservation
- concentrate resources in countries willing to actively promote family planning
- finance alternative employment in rural industry or agroindustry
- lack of access to land, goods and essential services ie potable water, electricity, roads

- non-availability of education
- poor health
- employment opportunities
- population and health (CIDA)
- basic infrastructure (CIDA)
- basic education (CIDA)
- overpopulation (CIDA)
- access to health and education (CIDA)
- unemployment/employment conditions -- lack of opportunities for women to be self-sufficient (CIDA)
- level of education -- type of education is not practical (intern)
- lack of opportunity -- limited access to Internet and new technology (intern)
- remote areas do not have access to ways of bettering their quality of life -- no education, no way to break the circle of poverty (intern)
- education of youth -- in my experiences the youth understand that the world is moving around them. However, the school system is not capable of training them effectively. As a result, the country falls behind because it cannot supply the services/materials locally. (intern)
- environmental awareness -- countries are destroying their natural beauty trying to catch-up ie fishing versus over-fishing (intern)
- corruption -- government, political (intern)
- standard communications systems such as GIS -- geographic information systems (intern)
- including those who live in poverty in dialogues like this -- the process of addressing poverty (intern)
- ensure that initiatives that aim to reduce poverty are integrated and sustainable -- give someone a fish or teach someone to fish (intern)
- malnutrition -- lack of food supply (intern)
- disease -- lack of inoculations (intern)
- lack of birth control (intern)
- CIDA can contribute to the evolution of a more participatory civil society in developing countries, focusing on the most disadvantaged and disenfranchised, using Canadian models and expertise from both private, public and NGO sectors (CIDA)
- CIDA can provide leadership in the introduction of transparent regulatory legal frameworks to stimulate growth that is pro-poor. Provide environments that are socially responsible, yet attract investment. (CIDA)
- CIDA can provide leadership in challenging the segmented government, NGO, private sector view of development to provide a more focussed, pro-poor development paradigm that brings the strength of disparate partners (CIDA)
- work with countries that have shown a commitment to reduce poverty -- help these countries in their programming -- support their own initiatives -- do not impose CIDA initiatives not planned with local communities
- lack of government or community will or commitment to reduce poverty (CIDA's role -- design a poverty profile that is area-based and with individual communities develop solutions) -- need to work with communities that have willingness to change
- women's access to credit without requiring collateral from son/husband etc.
- universal education for women for at least 9 year
- strengthen economic/banking systems to avoid another Asian crisis



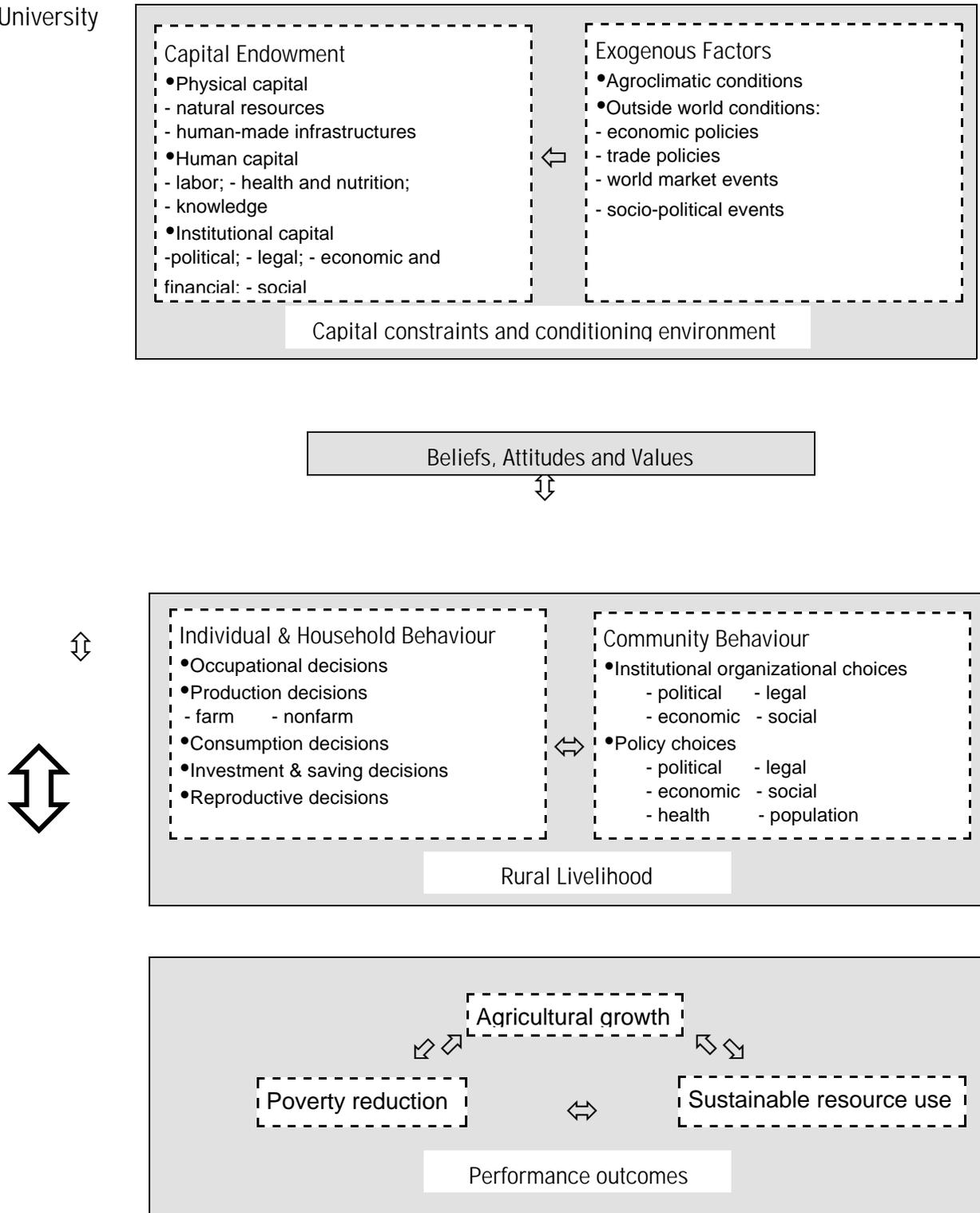
Appendix 3

# Conceptual framework of Rural Livelihood and Poverty

Prepared by Sylvain Larivière and Frederic Martin, Chair in International Development

Laval

University





## Appendix 4 List of Participating Organizations

Acres International  
 Action Canada for Population and  
 Development  
 Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada  
 Agriteam Canada  
 Agrodev Canada Inc  
 Agropaix  
 Alliance of Manufacturers and Exporters of  
 Canada  
 Alternatives  
 Antigonish Women's Resource Centre  
 Apnalaya Community Centre  
 ARA Consulting  
 Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada  
 Asia-Pacific Food Analysis Network  
 Association of Canadian Community Colleges  
 Association of Universities and Colleges of  
 Canada  
 ATD Fourth World Movement  
 Atlantic Canada Opportunity Agency  
 BC Council for International Development  
 BIOS Agriculture, McGill University  
 C.A.C. International  
 Calacan Bay Villagers Support Coalition  
 Caledon Institute of Social Policy  
 Canadian Catholic Organization for  
 Development and Peace  
 Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives  
 (CCPA)  
 Canadian Child Care Federation  
 Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops  
 Canadian Cooperatives Association  
 Canadian Council on Social Development  
 Canadian Federation of Agriculture  
 Canadian Feed the Children  
 Canadian Food for the Hungry  
 Canadian Friends of Burma  
 Canadian Institute for Law and Policy  
 Canadian Labour Force Development Board  
 Canadian Nurses Association  
 Canadian Policy Research Networks  
 Canadian Public Health Association  
 Canadian Teachers Federation  
 Canadian Feed the Children  
 CARE Canada  
 Carleton University  
 CCIC-BC  
 Centennial Public School  
 Centre for Social Justice  
 Centretown Community Health Centre  
 Charles H. Hulse Public School  
 Charter Committee on Poverty Issues  
 Child Poverty Action Group  
 Christian Blind Mission International  
 Coady International Institute  
 CODE  
 Confédération des caisses populaires  
 Congress of Aboriginal Peoples  
 Cowater International  
 CUSO  
 David See-Chai Lam Centre for International  
 Communication  
 Développement International Desjardins  
 End Child Prostitution and Pornography  
 Network, International Young People's  
 Participation Project  
 EVS Environmental Consultants  
 Family Service Canada  
 Far East Asian Institute  
 Gashan Public School  
 GTA Consulting  
 Human Resources Development Canada  
 Human Rights Internet (HRI)  
 Industry Canada  
 InterPares  
 Inter-Church Fund for International  
 Development (ICFID)  
 Federation of Canadian Municipalities  
 McGill University  
 Memorial University of Newfoundland  
 Mennonite Central Committee Canada  
 Mosaic Vancouver  
 National Association of Friendship Centres  
 National Organization of Immigrant and Visible  
 Minority Women of Canada  
 National Round Table on the Environment and  
 the Economy Canada  
 North-South Institute  
 Nunavut Planning Commission  
 OC Transpo  
 OMF International  
 Ottawa Carleton District School Board  
 Ottawa-Carleton Health Department

Ottawa-Carleton Immigrant Services  
Organization  
Oxfam Canada  
Partners in Rural Development  
PATH Canada  
Placerdome  
Planned Parenthood Federation of Canada  
Results Canada  
Rooftops Canada  
Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute  
Simon Fraser University  
Sir Wilfrid Laurier Secondary School  
Sisters of St. Martha  
SNC-Lavalin Agriculture Inc  
Somerset West Community Health Centre  
SOPAR - Limbour  
South Asia Partnership  
St. Francis Xavier University  
St. John's Women's Centre  
St. Mary's University  
Steelworkers Humanity Fund  
Street Kids International  
Task Force on Poverty  
Tecsult International Ltd  
The Advocate Institute of Human Resources  
The Canadian Teachers Federation  
Tianjin Medical University  
United Steelworkers of America-Humanities  
Fund  
Université Laval  
University of British Columbia  
University of Ottawa  
USC Canada  
Women's Community Economic Development  
Network  
Women's World Banking  
Women's World Finance  
World University Services of Canada  
World Vision Canada

## Appendix 5

# List of Dialogue Participants

For Whose Benefit?

Targeting the Poor in a time of change

November 4, 1998

**Amihan Abueva**, Project Director, End Child Prostitution and Pornography Network (ECPAT) - International Young People's Participation Project (IYPPP)

**Zakaria Ahmed**, Programme Officer, CARE Canada  
**Maurice Alarie**, Program Manager (Asia), Partners in Rural Development

**Dale Albertson**, Grants Coordination/Project Management, Canadian Food for the Hungry

**Jess Augustin**, Program Manager, Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace

**Debby Côté**, Program Development Officer  
CUSO

**Sian Fitzgerald**, Executive Director, PATH Canada

**Jon Fuller**, Advocate, South East Asia OMF International

**Angel Gingras**, Program Director, SOPAR - Limbour

**Kate Green**, Program Officer, USC Canada

**Faziah Hamid**, Program Officer, Canadian Feed the Children

**Richard Harmston**, Executive Director, South Asia Partnership

**Jill Heyde**, Program Manager, Indonesia, Philippines and South Pacific Program, CIDA

**Leena Joshi**, Director, Apnalaya Community Centre

**Dave McComiskey**, Assistant Director, Christian Blind Mission International (Canada)

**Feroz Mehdi**, South Asia Program Coordinator, Alternatives

**Lilly Nicholls**, Economist, CIDA

**Rita Parikh**, Program Officer, Inter Pares

**Elaine Peters**, Resource Manager, Mennonite Central Committee Canada

**Jason Phillips**, Development Officer, Bangladesh Division, CIDA

**Barry Pinsky**, Director, Rooftops Canada

**Julia Robinson**, Development Officer, China Division, CIDA

**Eileen Stewart**, Development Officer, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka Division, CIDA

**Joan Summers**, Manager of Programmes, Oxfam-Canada

**Ann Sutherland**, Program Officer, Street Kids International

**Ania Wasilewski**, CIDA Communications Consultant

## Tomorrow's Jobs: Preparing Asian Workers for the Millennium

Co-hosted by CIDA and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC)

February 15, 1999

**Hussein Amery**, Regional Manager, Asia, Middle East and Europe Programs  
ACCC

**Emmanuelle Beaudoin**, CIDA Consultant

**Smitha Bharadia**, Ottawa Carleton District School Board Workplace Education Facilitator, OC Transpo

**Fredrico Carillo**, Senior Program Officer, Asia, Middle East and Europe Programs, Association of Community Colleges of Canada (ACCC)

**Janet Dunnett**, Senior Policy Advisor, Strategic Planning And Policy Division at CIDA

**Bess Estrella**, Senior Program Officer, Asia, Middle East and Europe Programs, Association of Community Colleges of Canada (ACCC)

**Faruq Faisel**, Canadian Programs Manager  
South Asia Partnership

**Dean Frank**, Program Analyst, Asia Branch, CIDA

**Claude Goulet**, Development Officer, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia Division, CIDA

**Richard Harmston**, Executive Director, South Asia Partnership

**Jill Heyde**, Program Manager, Indonesia, Philippines and South Pacific Program, CIDA

**Brian Hunter**, Chief Economist, Strategic Planning and Policy Division, CIDA

**Alan Leber**, Development Officer, CIDA

**Fabien Leboeuf**, Executive Director, Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace

**Richard Marquardt**, Human Resources, Development Canada Youth at Risk in APEC countries

**Ozay Mehmet**, Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University

**Lesley Ouimet**, Program Officer, World University Services of Canada

**Ted Paterson**, Director of Finance and Special Projects, North-South Institute

**Angela Patterson**, Social Development Specialist, Pakistan and Afghanistan Division, CIDA

**Michael Rosberg**, Director, Program Management Canadian Co-operatives Association

**Aliza Rudner**, Development Officer, Southeast Regional Program Division, CIDA

**John Saxby**, Senior Analyst, Canadian Partnership Branch, CIDA

**Tom Schatzky**, Senior Development Officer, Nepal, Sri Lanka Division, CIDA

**Bonnie Shiell**, Senior Associate, Canadian Labour Force Development Board

**Elizabeth Smith**, CIDA Consultant

**Eileen Stewart**, Development Officer, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka Division, CIDA

**Ania Wasilewski**, CIDA Communications Consultant  
**Susan Winch**, Manager, Partnership Programs,  
Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada

Devolution: Does it Serve The Poor?

Co-Hosted by CIDA and the Asia Pacific Working Group of  
the Canadian Council for International Cooperation  
February 23, 1999

**Jess Augustine**, Canadian Catholic Organization for  
Development and Peace

**Gerry Barr**, United Steelworkers of  
America-Humanities Fund

**Emmanuelle Beaudoin**, CIDA Consultant

**Donald E. Brownell**, Director, International Office  
Federation of Canadian Municipalities

**Dominique Caouette**, Program Officer, Inter Pares

**Donna Chiarelli**, Research Assistant (LEAD),  
National Round Table on the Environment and the  
Economy

**Laurie Clifford**, CIDA Consultant

**Debby Cote**, CUSO

**Catherine Coumans**, Calacan Bay Villagers Support  
Coalition

**Julie Delahanty**, Researcher, North-South Institute

**Alan Etherington**, Vice-President, Social Development  
Group, Cowater International

**Faruq Faisal**, Canadian Program Manager,  
South Asia Partnership

**Peter Gillespie**, Project Officer, Inter Pares

**David Gillies**, Senior Government Specialist, CIDA

**Pari Johnston**, International Relations Officer,  
Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada

**Carrie MacAfee**, CIDA Consultant

**Kerry Max**, North-South Institute

**Claude Michaud**, CIDA Communications Advisor

**Pamela Mollica**, Coordinator of Social Partnerships  
Project, Caledon Institute of Social Policy

**Elizabeth Smith**, CIDA Consultant

**Gauri Sreenivasan**, Policy Coordinator, Canadian  
Council for International Co-operation

**Shawna Stonehouse**, CIDA Consultant

**Gord Walker**, Issues Group Member, Results Canada

**Ania Wasilewski**, CIDA Communications Consultant

The Link Between Health and Poverty in Asia:

What Makes the Difference?

Co-Hosted By CIDA and the Canadian Public Health  
Association (CPHA)

February 24, 1999

**Mr. James Chauvin**, Assistant Director, International  
Programs, Canadian Public Health Association

**Laurie Clifford**, CIDA Consultant

**Jacinthe Desmarais**, CIDA Consultant

**Kate Dickson**, International Health Programs  
Consultant

**Janet Dunnett**, Senior Policy Advisor, Strategic  
Planning And Policy Division, CIDA

**Dr. Nancy Edwards**, Director, The Community Health  
Research Unit, University of Ottawa

**Sian Fitzgerald**, Director, PATH Canada

**Ellyn Floyd**, Program Officer, Asia Department,  
Canadian Co-operative Association

**Cliff Gazee**, Co-Chair, Task Force on Poverty

**Jennifer Haney**, Health Education Consultant

**Terry Hunsley**, President, The Advocate Institute of  
Human Resources

**Margaret Jaques**, Board Member, Centretown  
Community Health Centre

**Bonnie Johnson**, Executive Director, Planned  
Parenthood Federation of Canada

**Sarada Leclerc**, Health and Population Specialist,  
CIDA

**Andrés Leon**, Program Officer International Programs,  
Canadian Public Health Association

**Song Li-Xin**, School of Nursing, Tianjin Medical  
University

**Karen Luong**, Social Worker, Somerset West  
Community Health Centre

**Jane MacDonald**, Health Educator, Centretown  
Community Health Center

**Sandra Macdonald**, Director, Policy, Regulation, and  
Research Division, Canadian Nurses Association

**Katherine McDonald**, Action Canada for Population and  
Development

**Dr. Marian McGee**, University of Ottawa

**Syed Sajjadur Rahman**, Director General, Strategic  
Planning And Policy Division, CIDA

**Dr. Liz Roberts**, Senior Program Officer, National  
Programs, Canadian Public Health Association

**Katherine Robertson-Palmer**, Ottawa-Carleton Health  
Dept.

**Julia Robinson**, Development Officer, China Division,  
CIDA

**Rieky Stuart**, Executive Director, OXFAM Canada  
**Kathleen Stephenson**, Consultant, Family Service  
Canada

**Peggy Thorpe**, Health and Population Specialist,  
Indonesia, Philippines and South Pacific Program,  
CIDA

**Sherri Torjman**, Caledon Institute of Social Policy

**Hong Won Yu**, National Director, CARE Canada

**Anne Woodbridge**, Senior Development Officer,  
Pakistan and Afghanistan Division, CIDA

Educating for the Millennium When Few Know How to  
Read

Co-hosted by CIDA and the Canadian Teachers Federation  
February 25, 1999

**Marilyn Blaeser**, Senior Education Advisor, Policy  
Branch, CIDA

**Melanie Boyd**, Development Officer, India, Nepal, Sri  
Lanka division, CIDA

**Joanne Cook**, Social Worker  
Sir Wilfrid Laurier Secondary School

**Peggy Cumming**, Glashan Public School

**Shelly Das**, Executive Director, National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada (NOVIM)

**Janet Dunnett**, Senior Policy Advisor, Strategic Planning And Policy Division, CIDA

**Jan Eastman**, President, The Canadian Teachers Federation

**Michael Emblem**, Director of Development CODE

**Ian Fall**, Program Officer, The Canadian Teachers Federation

**Xania Gordon**, Project Coordinator, Canadian Child Care Federation

**Ellen Hagerman**, Consultant, Continuous Learning Division, CIDA

**Richard Harmston**, Executive Director South Asia Partnership

**Ron Hughes**, Consultant

**Keith Lansdell**, Consultant

**Lesya Lashuk**, Teacher, Nepal Project Overseas Canadian Teachers Federation

**Barbara MacDonald**, Director, International Programs, The Canadian Teachers Federation

**Claudia Mitchell**, Provincial Director, Gender Equity Coordinator, Faculty of Education, McGill University

**Denis Monnin**, Teacher, Sir Wilfrid Laurier Secondary School

**Geeta Narayan**, Consultant, Political and Social Policies Division, CIDA

**Angela Patterson**, Social Development Specialist, Pakistan and Afghanistan Division, CIDA

**Heather-Jane Robertson**, Director, Professional Development Services, The Canadian Teachers Federation

**Aliza Rudner**, Development Officer, Southeast Asia Regional Program, CIDA

**Jeea Saraswati**, CIDA Consultant

**Carol Scott**, Teacher, Charles H. Hulse P.S.

**Jeanne Shields**, Teacher, Centennial Public School

**Damian Solomon**, Assistant Director, Professional Development Services, The Canadian Teachers Federation

**John Staple**, Director, Economic Services, The Canadian Teachers Federation

**France Thibault**, Teacher, Sir Wilfrid Laurier Secondary School

**Nick Workman**, Student, Grade 12, Sir Wilfrid Laurier Secondary School

#### A Just Society:

##### Can Social Rights be Legislated?

Hosted by CIDA and the National Anti-poverty Organization  
February 26, 1999

**Nick Adams-Aston**

Senior Development Officer, CIDA

**Bruce Campbell**, Executive Director, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA)

**John Crump**, Senior Policy Analyst, Nunavut Planning Commission

**Janet Dunnett**, Senior Policy Advisor, Strategic Planning And Policy Division, CIDA

**David Gillies**, Senior Government Specialist, CIDA

**Anil Gupta**, Environment Specialist /Spécialiste en environnement, CIDA/ACDI

**Angela Keller-Herzog**, Economist, China Division, CIDA

**Carrie MacAfee**, CIDA Consultant

**Marc Maracle**, National Association of Friendship Centres

**Lynn McGuire**, Development Officer, CIDA

**Ardith Molson**, Senior Program Manager, CIDA

**Lilly Nicholls**, Economist, CIDA

**Frank Palmater**, Vice-President, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples

**Bruce Porter**, Charter Committee on Poverty Issues

**Penny Sanger**, Canadian Friends of Burma

**Elizabeth Smith**, CIDA Consultant

**Eileen Stewart**, Development Officer, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka division, CIDA

**Anne-Marie Traeholt**, China Program Coordinator, University of Ottawa, Human Rights Research and Education Centre

**Ania Wasilewski**, CIDA Communications Consultant

**Laurie Weisberg**, Human Rights Internet (HRI)

**Nancy Worsfold**, Executive Director, Ottawa-Carleton Immigrant Services Organization

The Agriculture Connection:

Making it Work for Asia's poor

Co-hosted by CIDA and McGill University

March 25, 1999

**Bill Anderson**, Senior Development Officer, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka Division, CIDA

**Claude Beaudry**, Vice President, Regional Development, Asia, Tecstart International Ltd

**Laura Breuer**, International Programs Manager, USC Canada

**Roger Buckland**, Professor, Animal Science, Chair in International Development  
McGill University

**Ian Callum**, Graduate Student, Agriculture and Biosystems Engineering, McGill University

**Francois Carrier**, Office of International Research Grants & Contracts, McGill University

**Charles Charron**, Deputy Director, Asia Pacific Division, International Markets Bureau, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada

**Janet Dunnett**, Senior Policy Advisor, Strategic Planning And Policy Division, CIDA

**Pat Duxbury**, Graduate Student, Agriculture and Biosystems Engineering, McGill University

**Sonny Enriquez**, Program Officer, Asia, World Vision Canada  
**Judith Gama**, Agricultural Economist, International Programs Division, World Vision Canada  
**Manuel Garcia**, International Consultant, Asia-Pacific Food Analysis Network  
**Jamie Graves**, Senior Development Officer, CIDA  
**Christopher Johnston**, Manager, Research & Development, Canadian Co-operative Association  
**David King**, Senior Project Manager, Agrodev Canada Inc  
**Paul Langlier**, Directeur de Communications & Formation, Agropaix  
**Sylvain Lariviere**, Projects Coordinator, Chair in International Development, FSAA, CREA, Université Laval  
**Ian MacGillivray**, Senior Agriculture Specialist, CIDA  
**Gus MacKenzie**, Professor, McGill University  
**Frédéric Martin**, Professor, Chair in International Development, FSAA, CREA, Université Laval  
**John Metzger**, Project Director, SNC-Lavalin Agriculture Inc  
**Vijaya Raghavan**, Professor, Agriculture & Biosystems Engineering, McGill University  
**Sally Rutherford**, Executive Director, Canadian Federation of Agriculture  
**Gisele Seck**, Officer, Programs and Multilateral Affairs Division, Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada  
**Don Smith**, Professor, Plant Science, Vice President, BIOS Agriculture, McGill University  
**Shawna Stonehouse**, CIDA Consultant  
**Simon Thiboutot**, CIDA Consultant  
**Ann Thompson**, Project Manager, Agriteam Canada  
**Cliff Trowell**, Program Manager, Partners in Rural Development  
**Ania Wasilewski**, CIDA Communications Consultant  
**Xin Zhao**, Associate Professor, Dept. of Animal Science, McGill University

**From Striving to Thriving:  
 Building on the assets and opportunities of  
 Asia's women**

Co-hosted by the Coady International Institute (St Francis Xavier University) and CIDA

March 29, 1999

**Chantal Abord-Hugon**, Coordinator, Oxfam Canada/Projet Acadie  
**Bronwyn Best**, CIDA Consultant  
**Colleen Cameron**, Lecturer, Nursing Department, Gender & Development, St. Francis Xavier University  
**Mary Coyle**, Director, Coady International Institute  
**Donna Crozier**, Associate, GTA Consulting  
**Gord Cunningham**, Lecturer, Coady International Institute  
**Janet Dunnnett**, Senior Policy Advisor, Strategic Planning And Policy Division, CIDA

**Claire Fawcett**, Department of Sociology & Anthropology, St. Francis Xavier University  
**Mary Beth Gillis**, Coordinator, Youth Internship Program, Coady International Institute  
**Jamie Graves**, Senior Development Officer, CIDA  
**Jill Heyde**, Program Manager, Indonesia, Philippines & South Pacific, CIDA  
**Catherine Irving**, Library Assistant, Coady International Institute  
**Elaine Jeffery**, Atlantic Canada Opportunity Agency  
**Oona Landry**, Coordinator, Women's Community Economic Development Network  
**Christina Lok**, Banking Innovation Council Coordinator, Women's World Banking  
**James MacDonnell**, Chair, Partnership Committee, CCODP & AADC-Mindanao, Development and Peace  
**Sister Mary Eileen MacEachern**, Sisters of St. Martha  
**Peggy Mahon**, Field Worker, Extension Department, St. Francis Xavier University  
**Alison Mathie**, Lecturer, Coady International Institute  
**Sharon McInnes**, Partnership Committee, CCODP & AADC-Mindanao, Development and Peace  
**Marilyn Porter**, Professor, Sociology Memorial University of Newfoundland  
**Katherine Reed**, Women's Program Co-ordinator, Antigonish Women's Resource Centre  
**Jane Robinson**, Coordinator, St. John's Women's Centre  
**Tamara Sequeira**, Policy Analyst, Gender Equity Division, CIDA  
**Najma Sharif**, Professor of Economics, St. Mary's University  
**Shawna Stonehouse**, CIDA Consultant  
**Jason Storm**, Contracts Officer, Bangladesh Division, CIDA  
**Helen Thomas**, Gender Equity Specialist, Asia Branch, CIDA  
**Colleen Tobin**, Executive Director, Women's World Finance  
**Ania Wasilewski**, CIDA Communications Consultant  
**Anne Webb**, CUSO Atlantic

The Good Governance Link:

Practical approaches to improving governance in Asia  
 Hosted by Simon Fraser University and the Canadian International Development Agency

April 12, 1999

**Bob Anderson**, Professor, School of Communications, Simon Fraser University  
**Margaret Argue**, BC Council for International Development  
**Tony Beck**, Independent Researcher  
**John Brohman**, Professor, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University  
**Ron Compton**, Partner, ARA Consulting  
**Jim Cooney**, Director, Sustainable Development

Placerdome

**Janet Dunnnett**, Senior Policy Analyst, Strategic Planning & Policy Division, CIDA

**David Gillies**, Senior Government Specialist, CIDA

**Rob Harmer**, Stothard Group Engineering

**Sue Hooper**, Director, Business Programs

Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada

**Patricia Howard**, Professor, School of Communication, Simon Fraser University

**Kevin Kelpin**, Graduate Student, Anthropology & Sociology, University of British Columbia

**Joe Knockaert**, Director, Office of International Cooperation, Simon Fraser University

**Duncan Knowler**, Professor, School of Resource & Environmental Mgmt., Simon Fraser University

**Helen Lansdowne**, Assistant Director, Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives, University of Victoria

**Alan Leber**, Development Officer, Indochina, Thailand & Malaysia Division, CIDA

**John Lobsinger**, Senior Policy Advisor, Political and Social Policies Division, CIDA

**Terry Mc Gee**, Professor of Geography, Institute of Asian Research, University of British Columbia

**Eyob Naizighi**, Manager, Mosaic Vancouver

**Shawna Stonehouse**, CIDA Consultant

**Jan Walls**, Director, David Lam Centre for International Communication, Simon Fraser University

**Ania Wasilewski**, CIDA Communications Consultant

**Tarah Wilson**, Co-Development, Latin America CCIC-BC

**Stuart Salter**, Director, Scientific, Technical and Specialist Resources, Policy Branch, CIDA

**Alex Schumacher**, Vice President, Agriteam Canada Consulting Limited

**Shawna Stonehouse**, CIDA Consultant

**Deborah Turnbull**, Director, International Business Development, Alliance of Manufacturers & Exporters Canada

**Ania Wasilewski**, CIDA Communications Consultant

**Tony Zeitoun**, Director, Technology Development, Strategic Planning and Policy Division, CIDA

### Engaging Canadian business in developing a poverty reduction strategy for sustainable development in Asia

Wednesday, April 14, 1999

**Ron Berlet**, Project Director, PEARL Project in the Philippines

**Bronwyn Best**, CIDA Consultant

**Andre Carrel**, Administrator, City of Rossland

**Gail Cockburn**, Graduate Student, School of Communication, Simon Fraser University

**Rosalind Coleman**, Director, International Operations, EVS Environmental Consultants

**Janet Dunnnett**, Senior Policy Analyst, Strategic Planning & Policy Division, CIDA

**Jeff Fenwick**, Business Development Officer, Canadian Alliance for Business in Southern Africa

**Nancy Higginson**, Project Director, Agriteam Canada Consulting

**Greg Jardine**, Trade Director, Eurasia/Africa/Emerging Markets, Alberta Economic Development

**Ross Milne**, Division Manager, Environment, Acres International Limited

**Lavinia Mohr**, Executive Director, Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute

**Deb Rasmussen**, Agricultural Economist, Project Manager, Agriteam Canada Consulting Limited

## Tradition, Values and the Process of Change

Co-hosted by the Somerset West Community Health Centre and CIDA

June 28, 1999

**Dang Bui**, Somerset West Community Centre  
**Janet Dunnett**, Senior Policy Advisor, Strategic Planning And Policy Division, CIDA  
**My-Hoa Duong**, Cultural Interpreter from SWCHC  
**Karina Griffith**, CIDA Summer Intern  
**Brian Gilligan**, Somerset West Community Centre  
**Bob Hamilton**, Chief of Operations, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka Division, CIDA  
**Rod Haney**, Senior Development Officer, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos Division, CIDA  
**Sharon Harper**, IDRC  
**Colleen Hoey**, CIDA Consultant  
**Lam Sok Houn**, Somerset West Community Centre  
**Cuc Phuong Huynh**, Somerset West Community Centre

**Sent Say Im**, Somerset West Community Centre  
**Nguyen Kim-Lien**, Somerset West Community Centre  
**Richard Lariviere**, Senior Development Officer, China Division, CIDA  
**Riveau Lay**, Cultural Interpreter from SWCHC  
**Karen Luong**, Cultural Interpreter from SWCHC  
**Keo Mann**, Somerset West Community Centre  
**Meas Moung**, Somerset West Community Centre  
**Choey Ngeth**, Somerset West Community Centre  
**Ky Nguyen**, Somerset West Community Centre  
**Nguyen Thi Nhu**, Somerset West Community Centre  
**Liêm On**, Somerset West Community Centre  
**Im Pha**, Somerset West Community Centre  
**Marie Powell**, WID Gender Specialist, Strategic Planning and Policy, CIDA  
**Sanith Prak**, Cultural Interpreter from SWCHC  
**Thi Nga Quach**, Somerset West Community Centre  
**Syed Sajjadur Rahman**, Director General, Strategic Planning And Policy Division, CIDA  
**Moeug Set**, Somerset West Community Centre  
**Chris Smart**, International Development Research Centre  
**So Soeun**, Somerset West Community Centre  
**Agnes Tran**, Cultural Interpreter from SWCHC  
**Do Tran**, Somerset West Community Centre  
**Jackie Tran**, Cultural Interpreter from SWCHC  
**Sophal Tuok**, Cultural Interpreter from SWCHC  
**Young Tuy**, Somerset West Community Centre  
**Ania Wasilewski**, CIDA Communications Consultant  
**Anne Woodbridge**, Senior Development Officer, CIDA

The Environment Component

Hosted by CIDA on the Internet

July 23 to August 4, 1999

\* active participants

**Grant Anderson**, Gartner Lee Limited

**Lisa Armstrong**, Development Consultant  
**Jean Arnold\***, Falls Brook Centre  
**Tina Artini**, BAPEDAL  
**Dr. K. Balasubramanian**, Tata Ecotechnology Centre, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation  
**Geetesh Bhardwaj\***, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy  
**Peter Boothroyd**, Centre for Human Settlement  
**Tony Breuer**, Partners in Rural Development  
**Nancy Coulas\***, Alliance of Manufacturers and Exporters Canada  
**David Dungate**, International Centre for Sustainable Cities  
**Janet Dunnett**, Senior Policy Analyst, Strategic Planning & Policy Division/analyste principal des politiques, Planification stratégique et politiques, CIDA/ACDI  
**Faruq Faisel**, South Asia  
**Joan Freeman\***, Resource Futures International  
**Anil Gupta\***, Environment Specialist /Spécialiste en environnement, CIDA/ACDI  
**Sujata Gupta**, TERI  
**Gayatri Hazarika\***, TERI  
**Carla Hogan-Rufelds**, Senior Forestry and Conservation Specialist, CIDA  
**Tanya Imola**, International Council For Local Environmental Initiatives  
**Colin F.W. Isaacs**, Contemporary Information Analysis Ltd.  
**Azzah Jeena**, Federation of Canadian Municipalities  
**Berna Lysa John**, YUVA - State Campaign on Urban Governance/City Project-Mumbai  
**Victoria Kellett**, International Institute for Sustainable Development  
**Kate Kroeger**, Prasad-Chikisa  
**Mary Ellen MacCallum\***, ESSA Technologies Ltd.  
**Anar Mamdani**, Aga Khan Foundation  
**John Martin\***, AGRA Inc.  
**Don McAllister\***, Ocean Voice International  
**Sally McIntyre\***, RV Anderson  
**Beatrice Olivastri**, Friends of the Earth  
**Dean Pallen\***, Environment Consultant  
**Dr. Rita Pandey\***, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy  
**Nalini Perera**, Partnership Branch, CIDA  
**Angela Rickman**, Sierra Club  
**Deborah Turnbull**, Alliance of Manufacturers and Exporters Canada  
**Gary Vigers\***, EVS Environment Consultants  
**Nola Kate Semour**, International Centre for Sustainable Cities  
**Dr. Ranil Senanayake\***, Neo-Synthesis Research Centre, Sri Lanka  
**Cliff Wallis\***, Friends of Oldman River  
**Brian Weller**, Environment Specialist/Specialiste en environnement, CIDA/ACDI  
**Georgina Wigley**, Policy Branch, CIDA

**Gisele Yasmeen\***, Sustainable Development Research  
Institute