

Media Development

3/2013

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IN THE NEXT ISSUE

The current issue is the third to be exclusively digital. The journal is no longer available in print.

Members and Subscribers can download and print a complete PDF or individual articles.

The theme of the 4/2013 issue will be "Gender equality and communication". Focusing on preparations for the next Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) 2015, it will explore gender-aware journalism and the value of citizen engagement in media monitoring.



What gives democracy validity? Only if it offers a political system in which citizens – and others marginalized by inequalities – are not subordinated to but exert real influence over the forces that impact their lives.

The notion of citizenship is contested, so it is important to emphasize that only a rights-based approach can provide the normative framework for social transformation and participatory development.

ACT Alliance has underlined the point:

“Inequalities are the key cause of extreme poverty. In order to eradicate poverty we must work on the systematic and structural factors that deprive women and men of their dignity, rights and entitlements. By empowering vulnerable rights holders and holding duty bearers accountable, a rights-based approach aims at transforming the structures with the aim of granting entitlements and thus sustainable livelihoods for all.”¹

In this respect communication for development, also known as communication for social change, has a respected history. Critical approaches to the field have focused on participation, empowerment, gender equality, the role of social movements, technological interventions, and dialogue-based approaches to strategic communication.

Faced with such broad-

based – some might say vague – outcomes, aid agencies and funding partners demanded ways of demonstrating results so that development aid could be quantified and proof given that funds had been well spent. At the national and global levels this was often done by studying statistics and producing economic indicators of advances in meeting basic human needs.

In the mid-1970s economic indicators of development or improvement gave way to social indicators that were felt to better reflect real progress: average life expectancy, maternal healthcare, child nutrition, schooling and literacy. Yet even here there is evidence that the politically powerless, the socially disregarded, the geographically isolated, and the ethnically or culturally discriminated against are often excluded.

As author and researcher Peter Adamson wisely suggests, “In the years to come, progress should be measured not by statistics that capture national averages but by data that capture what is happening to the poorest 20 per cent – in any country and for any indicator that is meant to measure human well-being.”²

One of the key obstacles to eradicating poverty is to be found in the current global economic order. Discussions are currently taking place around what is being referred to as a New International Financial and Economic Architecture. When its foundations are laid, it will be of fundamental importance to incorporate the role that communication and media

can play in restoring voice and visibility to vulnerable, disadvantaged and excluded people.

UN backs freedoms but needs a broader vision of communication

In 2006 the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, published “Principles and Guidelines for a Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies”. It is an informative and highly motivated document that addresses the urgent need for actions that are underpinned by human rights.

It affirms that if people living in poverty are to participate meaningfully and effectively in the different stages of decision-making, “they must be free to organize without restriction (right of association), to meet without impediment (right of assembly), to say what they want to without intimidation (freedom of expression) and to know the relevant facts (right to information). Furthermore, they must be allowed to receive support from sympathetic civil society organizations (including the media) that might be able to champion their cause.”

The references to communication rights – freedom of expression, right to information, independent media – underline the expectation that people living in poverty must be heard. In this regard considerable hope has been laid on citizens’ media as forms of more democratic communication that both bring diverse voices into play and

challenge dominant power relationships.

At the end of May 2013 the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda published its report “A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development”.³

The report highlights five big transformative shifts: Leave no one behind; Put sustainable development at the core; Transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth; Build peace and effective, open and accountable institutions for all; and Forge a new global partnership. Taken together, the Panel believes “that these five fundamental shifts can remove the barriers that hold people back, and end the inequality of opportunity that blights the lives of so many people on our planet.”

Tucked away on page 11 is the admission that:

“Civil society organisations can play a vital role in giving a voice to people living in poverty... They have important parts to play in designing, realising, and monitoring this new agenda. They are also important providers of basic services, often able to reach the neediest and most vulnerable, for example in slums and remote areas.”

And then on page 12 the sole reference to the role of communication and the media:

“People must be central to a new global partnership. To do this they need the freedom to voice their views and participate in the decisions that affect their lives without fear. They need access to information and to an independent media. And new forms of participation such as social media and crowd-sourcing can enable governments, businesses, CSOs and academia to interact with, understand and respond to citizens’ needs in new ways.”

So let’s underline the point: Communication rights have a unique role to play in creating enabling environments in which people can challenge the status quo and bring about change. As ACT Alliance points out, and the contributors to this issue of *Media Development* affirm:

“Rights-based strategies hold great potential as a powerful tool for empowerment aimed at political, social and economic transformation. However, unless we adapt our current policies and practices to its principles and challenge the unequal power relationships that underlie poverty, we will fall short of addressing the issue of institutionalized poverty and social exclusion confronting the world.”⁴ ■

Notes

1. Discussion Paper on “The Changing Development Paradigm” (January 2013, p. 13).

2. “A Measure of Progress”. *New Internationalist* 460, March 2013, p. 15.

3. <http://www.post2015hlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/UN-Report.pdf>

4. Discussion Paper on “The Changing Development Paradigm” (January 2013, p. 17).

Media Development

An international quarterly journal dedicated to the theory and practice of communication around the world. *Media Development* articulates shared concerns in the search for equality, justice and human dignity in mass and community communications.

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Communication for development and sustainability

Patchanee Malikhao

When I was a child in Thailand in the 1970s, our family often went from Bangkok to visit our uncle who lived upcountry. Year after year, we heard that the village where our uncle had a pig farm and a paddy field became more and more “developed”. That meant that he had a better road to his house; he did not need to generate electricity anymore, as electricity poles came to every household in the village; and he had tap water instead of having to pump water from the irrigation canal to his home. Is that the meaning of development?

Later, I learned that my country, Thailand, was a “developing country” as the improvements needed in order to be called “developed” had been clustered in the capital city, Bangkok. Moreover, our GDP was so low. In 2009, 8.1 percent of Thais, or about 5.6 million people, still lived below the poverty line. That is people who earn at most \$1.25 dollars a day.¹ A friend said, “You should be happy that they eulogize our status a bit. We are not underdeveloped. We are developing.” Well, the term “developed” was meant to mean “material growth and how much money you make”.

In 2003-07, I lived in Australia, one of the seven richest countries in the world. “You need to survive financially for the first two years because Australia is a developed country; the cost of living is expensive.” That’s what we read in a leaflet advising people about how to migrate to the country. When we were there, we saw pictures in newspapers of aborigines living faraway in the outback on “reser-

vations”. They had no electricity, no tap water, and they had to go to school on foot.

It came as a shock that we lived in a nice neighbourhood with electricity, tap water, regular public transportation, internet and cable TV access, gas lines etc. This contrast made me rethink the term “development”. In my view, the natives (the “original” inhabitants of the land) had the right to get a fair share of the development we were enjoying. That is what scholars call “social justice”. Income distribution and a fair share of infrastructure and services should be one of the indicators to measure “development” too.

I am writing this article in Amherst, Massachusetts, in the USA, where I have observed shattered, run-down, and deserted factories in many towns. The centres of mass production have shifted to other parts of the world where labour is cheap and the regulations are lax or non-existent. I am witnessing how both African Americans and Caucasian Americans have become homeless and unemployed during the current economic crisis. I see them begging for dollars at a few crossroads in our town.

Sad news breaks daily: massacres from shooting sprees in many places; foreclosures of homes; huge deficits as a consequence of launching wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; and severe budget cuts that will affect the education system, airlines, social welfare services and more. Of course, we have electricity, tap water, water closets, internet access, a central heating system, and a phone. However it is alarming that 46 million Americans still live below the poverty line.

In 2012, a single person under 65 years old who earns less than \$11,945 per year is considered poor.² On average, a poor American earns about 33 dollars a day, which is almost 30 times more than a poor Thai. Development is quite relative, isn’t it? The level of satisfaction and the quality of life (or lack thereof) may be more or less the same, but the amount of money one earns is so different.

What is the underlying meaning of development?

Does development mean safety of life, a safety net for the underserved, and income distribution? Can the people in those almost deserted towns get organized and revitalize their own communities? You see, development is a discourse. It has many different meanings and definitions. As Wolfgang Sachs

(2013: 5), a German scholar in development economics, puts it:

“On the one hand there are those who implicitly identify development with economic growth, calling for more relative equity in GDP. Their use of the word ‘development’ reinforces the hegemony of the economic world view... On the other hand, there are those who identify development with more rights and resources for the poor and powerless. Their use of the word calls for de-emphasizing growth in favour of greater autonomy of communities.”

Regarding development theories, the modernization paradigm, which endorses economic growth, has been popular since the 1950s. It emphasizes development as a path that traditional countries should follow and climb the ladder to get to the holy grail of living like Western people. That assumption has proven to be inadequate. The slump of the European and US economy; the busting of the inflated housing market in Japan and the US; the droughts and strong UV levels that cause skin cancer in Australia; the suicidal cases in Japan and Korea, etc. should not be dream goals for any developing country.

Now, it has become clear that development does not mean that a Thai farmer should aim to earn and spend like an American farmer. Westernization should not be the ultimate goal of development, said Jan Servaes in his famous *One World, Multiple Cultures* book. Booming economies that lead to environmental disasters or global climate change should not be considered a desirable development goal.

The People’s Republic of China is a case in point. Recently, the Chinese government admitted that there are a number of cancer villages where water is no longer drinkable due to chemical waste dumps in waterways. Smog from factory smoke stacks cause respiratory problems.³ At present, citizens in Beijing and other major cities in China and in other developing countries are suffering from more than threshold-levels of pollution in the name of modernization and growth. Instead of battling poverty, diseases and ignorance, the governments of many developing countries are implementing economic and environmental policies that aggravate the

poverty-stricken grassroots and induce new sorts of cancer and respiratory diseases out of ignorance, negligence or corruption.

In the 1970s, the so-called Latin American *dependistas* proposed a new paradigm, called “Dependency Paradigm”, criticizing multi-national corporations and neo-colonialism that moved natural and human resources around the globe in the name of “globalization.” The *dependistas* were criticized as well because they blamed outside actors and factors too much and were less concerned about their own problems of internal colonization in which the wealthier exploited the poor in their own countries.

To address this, an alternative paradigm – the multiplicity paradigm – was proposed by Jan Servaes in the 1990s. This paradigm emphasizes participatory communication and planning strategies to achieve the desired goal of development. Development goes hand in hand with social change, preferably social change which is sustainable. If it is not sustainable development, our natural resources will be exhausted and environmental impacts, such as the green house effects, climate change, the dislocation of plates due to the melting of the ice in the North Pole, the big holes in the ozone layer in the Southern hemisphere, etc. will drive us to extinction.

Only sustainable development counts

Development cannot be achieved without sustainable social change! That is why the Bhutanese government announced in 2010 that Bhutan is not going to consider just the growth of GDP to be the only indicator for development. The Bhutanese use the term GNH or “gross national happiness” instead. Though it is difficult to fathom the level of happiness, it is obvious from the examples given above that having more money does not necessarily lead to more happiness.

The Bhutanese GNH implies good governance, sustainable socio-economic development, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation. They are applying the multiplicity paradigm in their framework of sustainable development, it seems.

This is more congruent to the kind of development we want. We don’t want to have cancer. We don’t want epidemics. We want a clean and green environment, clean water and food, good education for our children, good and affordable health care,



Photo credit: WACC Photo Competition 2010.

good elderly care and childcare. In sum, we all want peace and happiness. But why do we want others to get what we don't want?

I am talking about dumping waste in waterways by any factory or any individual in one's own country; dumping chemical waste by any corporation from the first world in developing countries; selling medicines that do not meet the safety standards of the First World to people in the Third World, repacking hormone or chemically tainted meat to sell in developing countries; using toxic chemicals to prolong the shelf life of fresh produce and meat for profits; mixing substances inadequate for human consumption in food to reduce manufacturing costs; feeding cattle or poultry with contaminated food or unconsumable substances for humans or genetically modified food to gain more profits; using genetically modified produce in food and not informing the consumers, etc.

It is now proven that the world is related and interrelated. What we don't want may come to us inevitably. For example, toxins emerged from the incineration of plastics in vegetables and milk, mercury and lead or even radioactive substances in seafood and fresh water fish, antibiotic and chemicals in farm-raised fish and prawns, radioactive clouds that can move across the continents, radioactive substances in fresh produce, GMO substances hidden in consumable products, contaminated fresh produce that cause food-borne diseases, and new forms of viruses, and more. Who is to blame? That leads to the highlight of my argument.

Economy, ecology, and evolvability

The renowned Thai Buddhist monk, P.A. Payutto, proposes that sustainable development in a Thai Buddhist perspective is comprised of three components: economy, ecology, and evolvability. In his

view, the middle way or the balance of demands and resources has to be integrated (Payutto 1996: 168-173). His new term, “evolvability”, means the ability of humans to develop themselves to live in harmony with nature, not to conquer nature, nor destroy it. In his view, *human development* has to come first.

Humans need to be trained to have the right attitude toward the natural environment and to conserve their own natural resources. That is what we called “being educated”. Educated citizens of the world do not need to hold a Ph.D. They need to have, first, the right occupation, meaning not exploiting other humans or the environment; second, a moral conduct to maintain self-contentment; and, third, the wisdom to accept differences among mankind and understand that there are different paths to development with the aim of conserving the environment (Payutto 1996: 183-184). Payutto’s view strongly advocates the cultural perspective of development: putting people at the centre of development should be at the top of our development agenda.

There is a saying in Chinese that the reverberating energy of picking a flower can be felt among the stars. That means that we should see and foresee the relationships of beings and nature in a holistic way. Being uneducated, in my view, means seeing things in fragments, aiming at exploiting other humans and nature at an individual level or at a national level, considering only monetary profits, having a fixed mindset/worldview/beliefs, and not being able to appreciate others who are different in culture, social status, education, race, and ethnicity.

Therefore, we urgently need to re-educate ourselves and plan to educate the new generations. *Development from within* is needed as part of a curriculum of moral ethics to uplift national pride. This should be passed from one generation to the next.

Towards good communication

It falls to communication to enable social change for the better. Good governance, civic society, participatory communication and all cannot be achieved without good communication, both mass and interpersonal. Servaes (2013: 371) proposes three streams of action: first, the media must be activated to build up advocacy for policy decisions; second, networking among interest groups and al-

liances, individuals, political forces, academic and non-academic organizations, business, industry, religious groups etc. is needed; and public demand and movements of citizens to push development issues and agendas are needed.

Participation and power in its nature and kinds are analyzed in detail in Jan Servaes’ new book, *Sustainability, Participation and Culture in Communication* (Intellect, Bristol: 2013). What I would like to add here is that, as we are dealing with different groups and different subcultures, intercultural communication is needed as a pre-requisite to advocate participatory communication.

Martin and Nakayama (2004: 62) recommend a dialectical approach to intercultural communication: first, it is important to remember that cultures change and so do individuals; second, one should view various aspects of culture in a holistic perspective; and third, holding contradictory ideas simultaneously is not uncommon. They came up with six dialectics that characterize intercultural communication:

A cultural-individual dialectic. It is important to know that communication is sharing and it concerns both group members and the culture of the group.

- * A personal-contextual dialectic. While communicating with a person, never neglect the context to which that person belongs.
- * A differences-similarities dialectic. We must keep in mind that dealing with people from different cultures requires the realization of their differences to reduce prejudice and predisposition. There must be some similarities in the way humans communicate and build up experiences, though.
- * A static-dynamic dialectic. One should notice that some cultural patterns of ethnic relations remain constant while others are dynamic.
- * A history/past-present/future dialectic. One needs to focus on the past and the present while doing intercultural communication.
- * A privilege-disadvantage dialectic. People may be simultaneously privileged in some respects and disadvantaged in others. This includes the ability to speak foreign languages.

We need to realize that participation is not just a fad. Actors who are competent in intercultural communication and have evolvability will certain-

ly participate effectively under the framework of *multiplicity* that recognizes felt needs, environmental concerns, self-reliance, respect for culture, and conservation of natural resources. Self-evaluation of a community for social usefulness should be considered to complete the circle of acting, observing/measuring, reflecting, improving, and learning (Servaes 2013: 376).

I have come to the conclusion that although development has many dimensions – socio-cultural, political, economic, and environmental – human development should come first. Communication for sustainable social change should be culturally sensitive. Participatory communication and advocacy for sustainable development and its evaluation therefore require participants who possess evolvability and who are inter-culturally competent. ■

Notes

1. http://www.indexmundi.com/thailand/population_below_poverty_line.html (accessed March 7, 2013).
2. <https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/data/threshld/index.html> (accessed March 7, 2013).
3. <http://www.the-scientist.com/?articles.view/articleNo/34500/title/China-Admits-to--Cancer-Villages/> (accessed March 7, 2013).

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Looking beyond neo-liberal communication approaches

Murali Shanmugavelan

Three years ago, I went to Rudraprayag (a small town in the Himalayas) after participating in an international meeting on ICT and telecom policy that discussed ways to improve access to affordable ICTs services and relevant content to reduce poverty. Rudrapryag is a pilgrimage site for Hindus with a scenic natural setting. I befriended a local man (Mr A) who volunteered to show me around.

Mr A had two mobile phones and was receiving frequent calls. His tone, whenever answering those calls, was both anxious and angry. When asked if everything was alright, he said that his wife had gone to the government-owned “ration shop” to buy food and essentials, where she was asked to pay more than the subsidised price. His wife refused to pay and she was practically kicked out and staff at the ration shop called her names and made references to her Dalit (ex-untouchable) caste.

Scared and humiliated, the wife returned home and had been calling her husband to go and buy food. Mr A refused to go alone but came up with a solution. He said he had told his wife that he would later send a friendly upper-caste person to the shop to calm the situation and ask the friend to buy food. I asked if he could lodge a formal complaint to the police or seek help from a local NGO (working on access to information related services) to fight against such discrimination. Mr A said, “The local NGO will help me how to write a complaint letter on computer; teach how to email that letter to whom but that is it. People who work there often

intimidate me with those gadgets and they all work very closely with government.”

This anecdote is not an exception in India and the example above highlights that everyday communication practices are shaped by social structures. They are not just determined by access to communication technologies and relevant information or the proliferation of free media as development agencies or the western media thinkers often want us to believe. I do not underestimate the effects of media and communication technologies in developing societies, but, in today's media proliferated society, a critical evaluation of the effects of media is vital for researchers in the field of media and communication studies and development studies.

In this article, I argue that approaches and interventions by development practitioners to use media and communication are mostly instrumentalist in nature and such approaches do not inherently bring about changes in society. They may often have clear processes to deliver the intended project outcomes but not broader social change. Further, I argue that media and communication practices by individuals, groups and institutions are largely influenced by everyday social and cultural practices – something media and/or communication for development approaches are unable to address on their own.

This more narrow, interventionist approach to applied media research is based on the communication model developed by Lasswell (1927) which considers: who says what, in which channel, to whom, and with what effect. This led to a rise of various types of analysis of content, control (by media), audience, mass media (structures and economy) and media's impact on society. These important research tools and analysis are used to understand media influence, channels, systems and structures.

It is now impossible to think of any modern society (including totalitarian societies) without the presence of mass media. However, users' personal encounters with media and the effects of media consumption can only be located in everyday communicative practices. The use of development communication and ICTs as rolled out by external agencies in order to “empower” communities with relevant information is often limited as these agencies are often limited in their understanding of the communication ecology in which the medium is deployed.

In the example above, Mr. A is still disconnected from society despite his two mobile phones and the presence of a local NGO. With two mobile phones, Mr A may be an example of an individual who is sufficiently saturated with media technology, but still constrained by social practices that prevented him from using these communications tools to hold discriminators to account.

According to Hobart, “It is far from the case that the mass media necessarily determine social practices (Hobart, 2010).” The ever increasing corporatisation of media and the continued gender, class and (upper) caste bias in coverage and representation in the media only highlight that media structures and outputs reflect and reinforce social practices. On the other hand, development agencies including philanthropist institutions continue to place enormous faith in improved (or democratised, if you prefer) access to media structures, technologies, services and content to bring about changes in developing societies or to support popular uprising in totalitarian societies.

A critical evaluation of the current media landscape is an important task and it needs to happen in an open ended way – beyond texts and images – by looking at every day practices. The purpose is to interrogate key assumptions held by development practitioners and this article is a mere critique and does not intend to provide alternative solutions. In particular I believe it is important to revisit following assumptions.

(i) Information ≠ communication ≠ knowledge

It is striking that development agencies, government and philanthropic institutions interchangeably use terms such as information, communication and knowledge (sometimes in just one sentence) in relation to development, democracy and empowerment. Public access to knowledge and information (Opensocietyfoundations.org:2013), mobilising knowledge through Information and Communication Technologies (IDS: 2013), various access to knowledge programmes under the Communication and Information department of UNESCO are a few examples. Such interchangeable uses often emphasise the use of ICTs and suggest a linear progression from information to communication and knowledge. In the real world, each notion is different and they are subject to power and social practices.

It is important not to undermine the complexities of every day communicative practices which are multi-layered and should be understood beyond the consumption of media or information by people. This over-simplification exposes the market development of information. Such practice indicates that institutions and agencies have framed access to information and the dissemination of information on digital platforms in market and economic terms without placing the media in the broader context of sociology of action (Couldry, 2010).

(ii) The rendering of the imagined new media technology

Technology is used in all forms of media other than face-to-face communication. Media technologies do and can have a profound impact on people's lives but technologies, are never neutral. Their use is shaped by social practices and adaptability. In her study on how technology has been adopted and institutionalised, Sreberny shows that different kinds of social groups and different kinds of authorities have maintained themselves using different forms of communication (Sreberny, 1995).

The term "new media" (referring to "digital" media) has gained more recognition in policy, technology, market and regulatory circuits. Efforts have focused on creating an environment that is conducive for the digital media market to flourish. The focus has therefore generally been on the diffusion capacity of whereas "rural communities tend to adapt these tools in relation to communication functions rather than information access" (Slater, 2005).

The use of so called "new" media is embedded in pre-existing social and "old" media settings. Therefore, it is not useful to make the distinction between new and old media in order to understand communication practices.

However, recently, new media such as the internet and social media have been seen in political and development circles as an important tool for upholding human rights, bringing down governments, improving pro-poor public policies and ending discriminations of all kinds. This has been articulated by both international agencies and western democracies. For instance, in 2011, the United Kingdom's then Secretary for State called for protecting the internet freedom as an urgent task. She said, "The first challenge is for the private sector

to embrace its role in protecting internet freedom, because whether you like it or not, the choices that private companies make have an impact on how information flows or doesn't flow on the internet and mobile networks" (State.gov, 2011).

This doesn't necessarily mean new technologies cannot influence social practices. In my current field work in Tamil Nadu, I noticed upper caste men in the village detest receiving texts from Dalits because these text messages are often short and direct. The mobile text platform doesn't render the space to recreate the obedient conversations expected when they meet in person. This is because the sender wants to save money by sending short texts and their capacity to do an elaborate reply is limited.

Another example of the impact of cultural norms on the use of new technologies in India is that mobile phones are widely perceived as a cultural threat by traditional upper caste men in rural villages and in some cities (*Guardian*, 2010 and *The Times of India*, 2013). These two examples show practice-oriented changes tend to push existing social boundaries and negotiate public spaces for the oppressed communities. Such cultural nuances, in my view, can have more influence on people's lives than global policies which often propose universal solutions that appear to be rationale but are distant from local social and political practices.

These examples show some of the effects of social practices and traditional hierarchies on who can have access to mobile phones and how they are used. *The Guardian* newspaper in the UK reported that an Indian village "decided unmarried boys could use mobile phones, but only under parental supervision..." (Guardian, 2010) and "banned unmarried women from using mobile phones" (ibid) to prevent them from eloping and inter-caste marriages.

In another story reported by the *Times of India* (2013), a village panchayat has banned mobile phones for youngsters and ordered girls not to wear jeans and T-shirts. If telegrams in India were associated with bereavement, then mobile phones are associated with modernity and inter-caste romance.

These are practices adapted by local communities, which are not part of any development communication agenda. Such independent practices have the potential to alter power-hierarchies in local societies than any depoliticised access to information programmes.

(iii) Voices as a neo-liberal discourse

International agencies and NGOs have increasingly placed their faith in the power of voices of the marginalised communities for social change. In principle this is a welcome step, but this discourse operates as if governments have been waiting to listen to the voices of the poor to improve their lives. This discourse came to prominence when the World Bank in 2000 consulted with 60,000 poor people and recorded their opinions to influence the Bank's poverty reduction strategy.

Since then, the concept of voices has been a very influential and it is now elevated to the internet and digital media platforms. A former prime minister of the UK declared that the Internet has changed foreign policy forever as it provides spaces for common people's voices (Brown, 2009). Media and communication experts cautioned not to over-exaggerate the power and roles of social media in the context of recent people's uprisings (Weaver, 2010).

There is no question that creating spaces for and listening to marginalised communities can be very useful in providing opportunities for subaltern communities. But the problem is not just about making voices heard but in negotiating with power-holders such as state and corporations to engage with these subaltern voices. As a result, development agencies and/or NGOs focus on creating spaces through multimedia channels and formats to make voices heard on the assumption that the power holders have absolute willingness to engage with the subaltern communities.

This neo liberal voice discourse focuses more on amplifying voices than on finding ways to negotiate with governments and corporations. This assumption has two problems: making or amplifying voices to hold states to account shifts the responsibility for accountable governance from states to powerless citizens. Agencies tend to reduce voices into bites and anecdotes to support their development narratives rather than laying out strategies for governments to engage with powerless citizens.

Secondly, the voice discourse tends to believe that "limited interaction between government and citizens translates into few opportunities for officials to understand public expectations" (Makingallvoicescount.org: 2013). Here again, there is an implicit understanding that power holders are willing to listen to marginalised communities and

the present problem is just about lack of channels.

This does not reflect the real situation: the famous public protest in London against Tony Blair's decision to support the US in the war against Iraq is a telling example of how matured (western) democracies such as the UK tend to dismiss citizens' protest and dissent. This is where Occupy protests assume greater importance as it creates alternate spaces for voices which are outside structures and mediated agencies. ■

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Development is resource justice

Bruno Stöckli

Development calls for natural resources – or to use ecological footprint terminology, global hectares. The world’s wealthier citizens need ten or more such hectares, the poor, barely one. Is this a problem because, as we know, global hectares are limited? Yes, because what this means is that development is a matter of distributing limited resources and, therefore, ultimately of global justice as well. Regrettably, the official Rio Summit of June 2012 only began thinking about this linkage in a peripheral manner.

We are slowly growing conscious that development is not tantamount to the catch-up development pursued by so-called underdeveloped regions. In the crisis-ridden global village, development is increasingly taking place everywhere. There is a link between consumption patterns and production models in rich regions and the development (or not) of the global South.

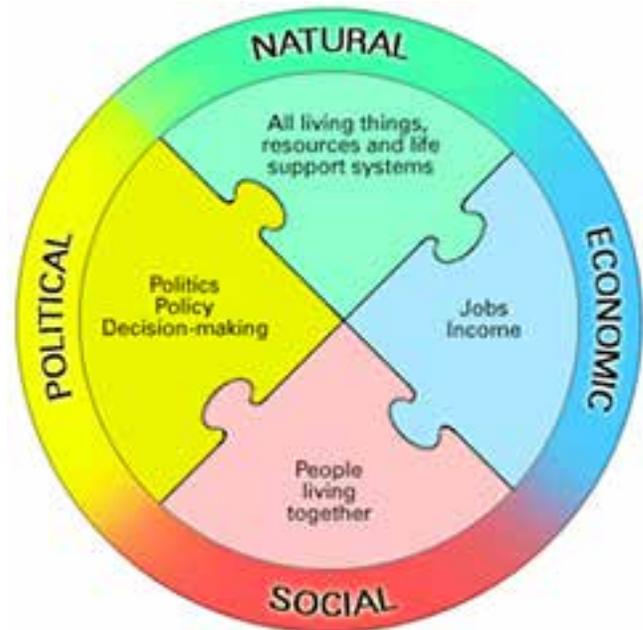
This is so because economic development and growth cannot be dissociated from resource consumption. The latter is limited and by extension, so is growth. This is all the more true if what we want is sustainable growth or sustainable development. In this case the world has only a finite amount of growth and development available and for distribution.

The economist Herman E. Daly coined the famous phrase: “We have many problems ... but only one solution: economic growth.” If we follow this thought through, all it means is that we are meeting our global challenges with limited means. Despite the march of technological progress, we are really far from de-linking growth and resource consumption. And we are solving our current problems to the detriment of future generations and of those

who are still in “development”. Was this insight taken on board in the official Rio negotiations?

First the good news. Despite the misgivings of civil society organizations, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities did find a place in the final outcome document at Rio. This signifies indirect acknowledgement of a link between resource availability and development opportunities.

Yet the document says very little about who is to shoulder these responsibilities and how. It is easier



to focus on green energy and technological progress than to strive for a more just global or regional redistribution of development and growth opportunities.

We must therefore await Rio+30 for the major transformation towards a just and sustainable world to materialize – or seek other paths. ■

Bruno Stöckli is coordinator of [Dialogue4change](#), a joint initiative of Bread For All and the Swiss Lenten Fund, two faith based organizations committed to building in solidarity a more equitable world, respectful of all creation. Dialogue4change is a hub meant to facilitate the debate and exchange of ideas and experiences related with development issues.

Talking points

“Development came to mean the formation of a global middle class alongside the spread of the transnational economic complex, rather than a national middle class alongside the integration of a national economy.”

“Despite decolonization in the political sense – which has led to independent states – and despite decolonization in the economic sense – which has made some countries into economic powers – a decolonization of the imagination has not occurred.”

“On the one hand there are those who implicitly identify development with economic growth, calling for more relative equity in GDP. Their use of the word ‘development’ reinforces the hegemony of the economic world view...”

“...On the other hand, there are those who identify development with more rights and resources for the poor and powerless. Their use of the word calls for de-emphasizing growth in favour of greater autonomy of communities.”

“Looking at the multitude of post-development initiatives, two themes emerge. First, a transition from economies based on fossil-fuel resources to economies based on biodiversity is paramount...”

“...Second, post-development initiatives attempt to push back the predominance of the economic worldview. They oppose the secular trend to functionalize work, education and the land in order to boost economic efficiency, insisting on the right to act according to values of culture, democracy and justice.”

“The quest for fairness in a finite world means in the first place changing the rich, not the poor. Poverty alleviation, in other words, cannot be separated from wealth alleviation.”

All quotes from “Liberating the world from development” by Wolfgang Sachs, Associate Professor of the Wuppertal Institute, Germany, and editor of The Development Dictionary. The complete essay was first published in New Internationalist 460, March 2013 www.newint.org

The Nairobi Declaration for Development Effectiveness

We, fifty civil society leaders and representatives of all the different regions of the world – Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, and the Middle East and North Africa, and their sub- regions – from faith-based, feminist, labour, rural sectors, and international civil society organizations, meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, 8-9 December 2012, have launched the CSO Platform for Development Effectiveness.

Unchecked globalization and profit driven economic growth are failing people living in poverty and the planet. They have exacerbated inequalities at all levels – between and within regions, countries and communities, between men and women – and have sparked multiple crises of food, fuel, finance and climate that still remain unresolved. 1.4 billion people – 70 per cent of them women and girls – still live in extreme poverty.

The inequality gap between the world's richest and the world's poorest people continues to grow wider – thirty (30) per cent of the world's wealth and resources are in the hands of 0.5 per cent of its population. The “geography of poverty” is also changing, with the majority of the world's poorest people living in middle income countries.

The internationally agreed development goals (IADGs)¹ which promised to address these disparities, will not be met through a continued focus on economic growth as the engine of development. There is now strong consensus that economic growth does not necessarily lead to improved human development and sustainability. What is needed is global and national political leadership and

commitment to adopt and implement sustainable and alternative approaches to development.

However, aid budgets are in decline. In many places, the voices of civil society are being silenced. Political declarations remain empty promises, free of concrete commitments or accountability to the rights and needs of the majority of the world's population. Multilateralism is being redefined and regionalism is an emerging phenomenon.

Civil society organizations (CSOs), as independent development actors in their own right, have been engaged for many years in promoting these sustainable alternatives and a human rights-based approach to development.

Since 2007, even before the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-3) and the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA), CSOs have demanded that human rights, women's rights and gender equality, decent work, environmental sustainability and democratic ownership, be at the heart of the conclusions of any future High Level Forum. We came with this vision to HLF-4 in Busan, South Korea, where CSOs participated formally, including at the negotiation table.

We recognize that the HLF-4 and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (BPd) ushered in a new era in the global effort to advance people's development needs and rights. New actors, including key emerging economies and the private sector, participated for the first time in this process. Likewise, discussions moved beyond traditional modalities of development cooperation.

It has incorporated South-South and Triangular cooperation, the role of the private sector, parliamentarians and local government in development, the issue of climate financing and the endorsement of the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness (Istanbul Principles).

The BPd signaled an inspiration to shift from a northern donor-driven arrangement to a new international framework that is more inclusive of the breadth of development actors and the depth of new issues on the global development cooperation agenda.

We also acknowledge the enhanced and formalized space that civil society secured at HLF-4 and in subsequent processes related to effective development co-operation. We recognize that changes to the scope and membership of the Global Partnership

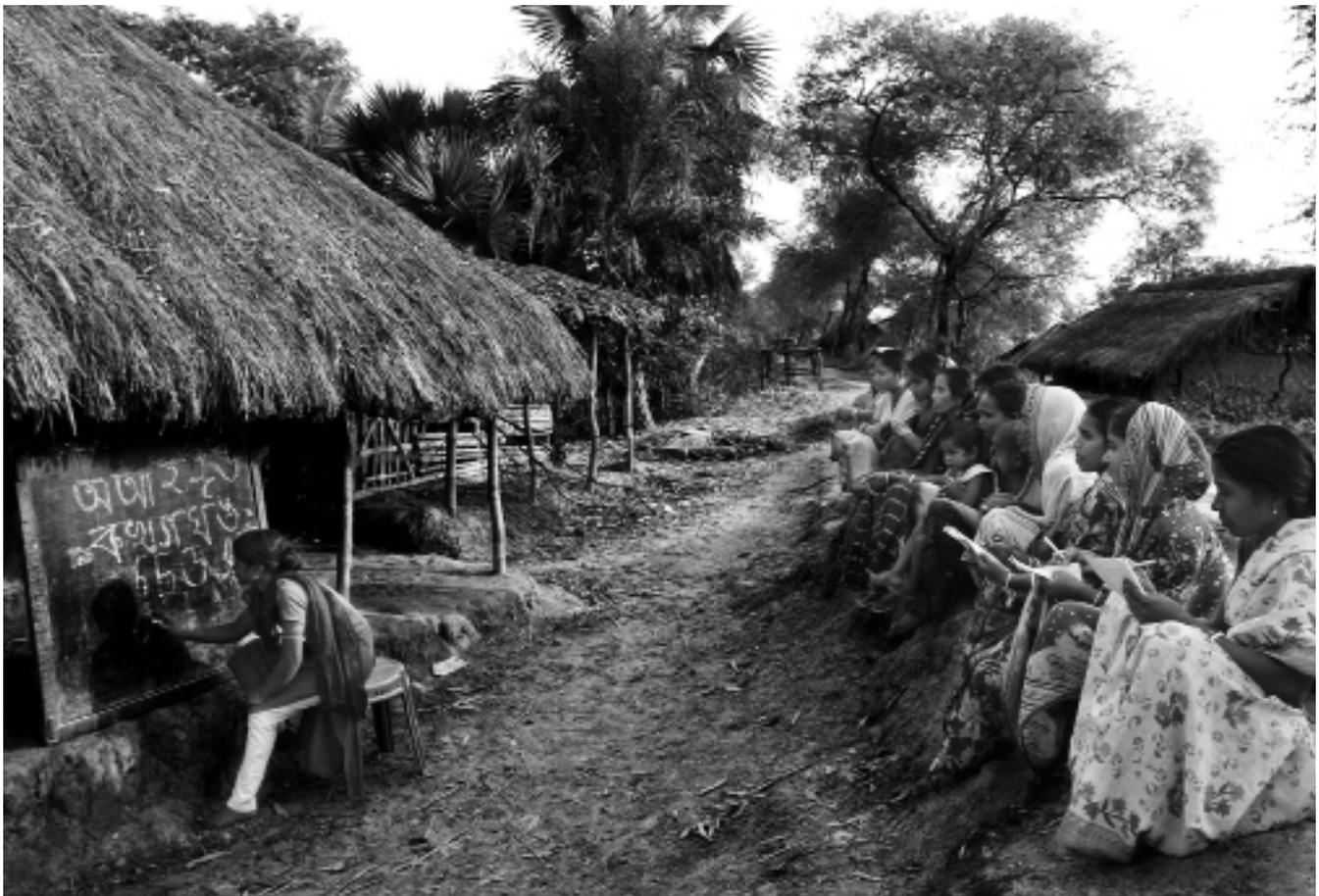


Photo credit: WACC Photo Competition 2010.

for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) come with its opportunities.

But civil society is also critical of several aspects of the BpD. We are concerned that the GPEDC envisages the private sector and growth as the driver of development. The BpD makes only token reference to human rights as the basis of development, and its treatment of women's rights, environmental sustainability and the decent work agenda is weak and instrumental.

We also believe that the BpD does not adequately respond to the failure of donors to fully implement their commitments under the Paris Declaration (PD) and the AAA.

We are also deeply concerned that the commitment on an enabling environment for civil society does not provide an accountability framework to counter the current government backlash against CSOs, democracy and our fundamental freedoms and rights.

Finally, we remain concerned about the lack of southern partner country engagement in the partnership as the process has evolved.

The need for a new global and country-focused CSO structure

The CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE)² is an open platform that unites CSOs from around the world on the issue of development effectiveness, in particular in the context of the BpD and GPEDC.

The CPDE is open to the participation of any CSO that endorses its vision, goals, and the CSO Key Asks on the Road to Busan,³ that believes in its objectives, and that adheres to the Istanbul Principles. The CPDE is a platform open to the richness and the diversity of the world's CSOs.

We envisage a world where respect for human rights, participatory democracy, social and environmental justice and sustainability, gender equality

and equity, and decent work and sustainable change are achieved.

Our mission

To promote development effectiveness in all areas of work, both our own and the work of others, including through active engagement with the GPEDC, we will be guided by a human rights based approach.

In order to develop a strong basis for CSO participation in the creation and realization of our vision, mission and goals for development, the CPDE will work with a strong focus to support country, sub-regional and regional, and sectoral civil society, combining this with the coordinated regional and global work on development effectiveness.

To achieve this vision, we need to also address exclusion, oppression and removing structures of power that perpetuate injustice.

Therefore, we are committed to social justice approaches and mechanisms, to challenge unequal power structures, especially for women (such as by working towards a feminist approach), in order to achieve emancipation of excluded communities and people.

Our values and principles

To achieve this, in our work together we will adhere to the following values: mutual respect, equity and gender equality; accountability to our members and peers; and transparency in all our decision-making and actions.

We will adhere to the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness and our CSO Key Asks on the Road to Busan.

Our goals – what we hope to achieve and why

To realise our shared vision, we commit to work together in partnership on a global-scale in relation to development effectiveness and the GPEDC to realize the following goals:

- * to pursue and advocate for a transformative agenda for development and development cooperation, informed by our guiding principles and a human rights-based approach to development that prioritizes gender equality, decent work, environmental sustainability as well as dignity, justice and improved livelihoods for all people living in poverty,

including the most marginalized, victims of violence, and those with disabilities, and the full realisation of human rights for all;

- * to protect and deepen policy gains made in Paris, Accra and Busan, and reverse any of the harmful provisions that continue to guide those three agendas;
- * to continue to advocate for development effectiveness in development cooperation policy and practice, in particular as it relates to the accountability of governments to the broader development effectiveness agenda, the IADGs and to people;
- * to continuously work to improve our own effectiveness and the realisation of an enabling environment for civil society as independent development actors in our own right.

These goals are informed by our CSO Key Asks on the Road to Busan, including those raised ahead of Busan by women's organizations⁴ and the trade unions,⁵ and faith-based organisations,⁶ the Istanbul Principles and Siem Reap International Framework, and prior assessments of the Paris, Accra and Busan commitments.

Beyond agreeing on the above shared vision, mission, principles and goals, we met as the first Global Council, basing our inputs on a wide range of consultations in all regions and sectors, and agreed on structures and ways of working that will guide us:

- * We elected the four Co-Chairs of the Global Council: Emele Duituturaga (Pacific Islands Association of Non-Governmental Organisations), Mayra Moro-Coco (Association for Women's Rights in Development), Richard Ssewakiryanga (Uganda NGO Forum), and Tony Tujan (IBON). The Global Council represents the ultimate decision-making body of the CSO Platform for Development Effectiveness;
- * We agreed on those who would represent the various constituencies in the Coordination Committee. The Coordination Committee, in collaboration with the Global Council, oversees the work of the CPDE and is composed of members of the Global Council.
- * We agreed that IBON should be the host agent of the secretariat.

- * We agreed to mandate the Coordination Committee to finalize the Foundational Paper of the CPDE, which includes elements related to our outcome statements, the foundations of our approach and ways of working at the national, sub-regional, regional, sectoral and international level, and our By Laws.
- * We began to develop a strategy that brings coherence to these streams of working terms of our engagement on development effectiveness and with the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.
- * We acknowledged and appreciated the work of BetterAid and the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness over the past four years, and agreed that the CPDE would act as their collective successors.
- * We agreed to reach out to more organizations and sectors.
- * Finally, we agreed to reconvene as the Global Council one year from now.

Through this partnership civil society from around the world commits to effective development for a more just and equal world. ■

The Global Council of the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness, 9 December 2012, Nairobi, Kenya. Source: http://www.cso-effectiveness.org/IMG/pdf/the_nairobi_declaration_for_development_effectiveness.pdf

Notes

1. The IADGs are a set of specific goals, many with concrete time-bound targets, which form the United Nations Development Agenda. They summarize the major commitments of the UN global summits held since 1990 on different aspects of global development challenges. Some of these commitments were combined in the *Millennium Declaration* adopted by all governments at the Millennium UN Summit in 2000. The IADGs include the eight specific Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but are a much broader set of objectives. The IADGs include challenges of economic growth at country level, equitable social progress, decent work, sustainable development, human rights (including women's rights, children's rights, indigenous peoples rights), equitable global economic governance, fair trade, debt cancellation and migration rights. Taken from *Synthesis of Findings and Recommendations*, Advisory Group on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness, August 2008, p. 3 and *A Draft International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness*, Version 2, November 2010.

2. Development effectiveness promotes sustainable change, within a democratic framework, that addresses the causes as well as the symptoms of poverty, inequality and marginalization, through the diversity and complementarity of instruments, policies and actors. Development effectiveness in relation to aid is understood as policies and practices by development actors that deepen the impact of aid and development cooperation on the capacities of poor and marginalized people to realize their rights and achieve the Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IADGs). Conditions for realizing development effectiveness goals must include measureable commitments to improve the effectiveness of aid.
3. CSO Key Asks on the Road to Busan, April 2011, http://betteraid.org/en/member-downloads/doc_download/275-csoasks.html
4. <http://www.awid.org/Library/Key-Demands-from-Women-s-Rights-Organizations-and-Gender-Equality-Advocates-To-the-Fourth-High-Level-Forum-on-Aid-Effectiveness-Busan-Korea-2011-and-the-Development-Cooperation-Forum-2012>
5. *Towards a Comprehensive Paradigm for Decent Work and Development Effectiveness* http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Trade_union_positions_Busan_Executive_summary_FINAL.pdf
6. The enabling environment for Civil Society is shrinking: http://www.actalliance.org/resources/publications/Policy-Brief_March2011_Enabling-environment-in-Aid-Effectiveness

Post-2015 Development Framework: Conflict and fragility

Act Alliance

At least one fifth of the population of the world lives in countries experiencing significant instability, violence, political conflict, insecurity and societal fragility. Violence and fragility have become the largest obstacle to the MDGs.¹ No poor, fragile or conflict-affected state is on track to achieve a single MDG² and these states generally lag 40%-60% behind other low income countries in terms of MDG achievement.³ For the first time in history, the majority of the world's poorest now live in a small group of conflict-affected and fragile states. This share is projected to increase from 30% in 2000 to 70% by 2025.⁴

There is clear interdependence between peace and development which proposes a strong relationship between development policies and peace building processes. The gap between peace and development is shrinking, but without prioritization and appropriate mechanisms operational benefits of understanding this nexus can remain limited and inconsistent. Situations of conflict and fragility have not received enough attention in the MDGs and there is a need to ensure that addressing conflict and fragility are in the heart of the post-2015 development policy.

For ACT Alliance the post-2015 development

policy framework would need to enable people to live in freedom, without fear or injustice, with full human rights and in planetary boundaries. The implementation of this vision would require political will with profound changes in the political, economic and social policies. The implementation of this human-rights based vision suggests recognition and ability to address the underlying issues leading to conflict. This would need to happen taking account of the views and aspirations of the affected vulnerable populations with special attention to the most marginalized and groups at risk.

Post-2015 development policy framework should be formulated in a manner that pays attention to varying contexts and the multitude of factors. The international community should define operational and flexible measures and procedures preventing fragile situations from emerging and addressing conflict and fragility with better outcomes and faster but more inclusive implementation.

In the post-2015 development agenda there should be stronger focus on peace building and conflict sensitive approaches with a recognition that supporting peace and addressing fragility need to be key dimensions of any holistic development policies. In order to do so, there needs to be an increased ability to address the global factors that boost conflict and maintain fragility at different levels of society. These issues include migration between fragile states, organized crime, licit and illicit networks, conditions for post-conflict sustained economic development, international markets on military goods and many more.⁵

Key questions that should be tackled in the further elaboration of tools within the post-2015 development framework include:

- * How to fully address the peace-development nexus?
- * How to support weak and nearly non-existent state institutions towards functioning existence?
- * What roles are given to different actors in the process of state and peace-building, including civil society?
- * How to ensure that the global framework allows for responses that are adequately contextualized and locally rooted?

The process leading up to the conclusions on the post-2015 development agenda gives the inter-

national community and state actors an opportunity to gain a commonly shared understanding on how to promote state building and support peace building processes. Key recommendations follow.

1. Recognize and address the root causes of conflict and fragility

The Post-2015 framework needs to recognize and be designed in a manner capable of addressing the underlying drivers of conflict and fragility, from global factors to grass-root level power dynamics, which serve to perpetuate poverty and inequality and fuel continuous cycles of conflict.

At the same time, the framework needs to be flexible enough to be able to respond to the multiple levels and diverse forms of conflict that affect states, as well as its different manifestations and impacts on civilian populations. This requires a holistic approach which recognizes the inter-relations between peace, stability, human rights, gender equality and sustainable development and also short-term and longer-term responses.

2. Build on the interdependence between development and peace-building goals

Achieving the internationally agreed development commitments is often not the first priority in a conflict and fragile context where security takes precedence and where the state may view the development goals as distracting attention and diverting limited resources from more crucial priorities.

In conflict-affected and fragile contexts, where often the state and entire society is overwhelmed, it is essential that the post-2015 framework is designed in a way that it is more easily integrated into the “general” work of the state and in a way that reinforces its capacity to respond to immediate concerns of security, endemic violence and erosion of the state.

3. Address the global dimensions of conflict and fragility

Conflict-affected and fragile states are increasingly affected by regional and transnational dynamics, such as illicit trade and trafficking, fragile borders and conflict spill-over, illicit financial flows and powerful multi-national economic interests which flagrantly disrespect human rights in the countries wherein they operate. These dynamics severely

undermine the ability of states to transition out of fragility.

The post-2015 framework ought to include measures to tackle the transnational drivers of conflict and fragility and to bolster global governance mechanisms to assist states to hold such non-state actors to account.

4. Include the most vulnerable to participate in the development and implementation of the post-2015 framework

It is important to understand the need to for a stronger focus on the process in itself and to create mechanisms that allow for dialogue between different stakeholders. This will require mechanisms for a participatory and inclusive process where the most vulnerable groups in conflict-affected and fragile states have political voice and the space to influence decision-making around the development of the post-2015 framework, implementation and monitoring.

The focus should not be limited to state-ownership but should be broadened to include the ownership of citizens as these are the people who best understand the causes, impacts and solutions to endemic violence, conflict and fragility. The participation of the most vulnerable groups, often represented by the civil society, needs to be secured.

5. Ensure enabling environment for civil society

Accountable, responsive, inclusive and transparent governance and rule of law, are pre-requisites to dealing with the underlying human rights violations that often drive conflict and fragility. Addressing conflict requires addressing fragility.

However, a sole focus on building ‘strong’ states is not adequate; the post-2015 framework must take into account that in many fragile and conflict-affected countries the state is absent and is unwilling and or incapable of responding. In the vacuum of the state, non-state actors, such as NGOs and CSOs, faith-based organizations, social movements, assume many of its responsibilities.

Therefore, enabling environments for civil society needs to be supported. Civil society organizations can play an important role in peace building processes, dialogue and in supporting the societies recovering from conflict and fragility.



6. A human rights based approach is a must

It is crucial that the post-2015 framework explicitly endorse international standards of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. A human rights based approach would contribute to developing a more robust system wherein rights-holders would be better equipped to hold duty-bearers to account. In fragile situations a careful participatory analysis is required to be able to determine duty bearers and rights holders.

The Universal Periodic Review process, the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council as well as the human rights treaty body mechanisms have a great potential in assessing policies at the national and international levels and therefore in supporting a culture of accountability in the post-2015 development policies.

7. Build on the agreements of the International Dialogue on Peace Building and State Building (IDPS)

As an example of ongoing attempts to provide effective tools for situations of conflict and fragility, the New Deal and the IDPS represent a promising opportunity to strengthen peace building and state building in conflict-affected and fragile states and societies. The New Deal is an opportunity to take a new approach to dialogue with conflict-affected states and through its emphasis on the promotion of genuine state-ownership it has the potential to develop more realistic goals and implementation frameworks.

The Post-2015 framework should serve as an umbrella under which the IDPS and other recognized frameworks⁶ can be integrated and built on, so as to ensure effective and coherent approaches to addressing development in conflict-affected and fragile states.

The IDPS tends to focus on pathways out of fragility and less so on why states have descended into fragility. What is more, the Dialogue has failed to unpack “fragility” and treats it fundamentally as the same across different countries. But in relation

to peace-building and state-building, we need to acknowledge that the nature, scope and reasons for persistent fragility and violence will be different in each context. The post-2015 framework, therefore, is an opportunity to further advance what has already been achieved with the IDPS.

The IDPS has also failed to examine the relationship between peace building and state building. There seems to be an underlying assumption that the two are mutually complementary and reinforcing, and that a “more capable” (or “stronger”) state will lead to a more peaceful society. Historical record and more recent country experiences do not support such a simple assumption.

Some lessons learned by ACT Alliance

By presenting lessons-learned experiences from past experience on state building and peace building initiatives from ACT Alliance members, ACT Alliance wants to concretize how it is possible to build trust between different stakeholders during the peace-building process. In this paper ACT Alliance shares some experiences from the Great Lakes region and from Somalia.

The Great Lakes region

The Great Lakes Region’s history shows us that events in one country can spill over and affect neighbouring states, given porous borders and cross-border dynamics. Various crises in neighbouring countries (Rwanda and Burundi in particular), brought about an influx of refugees to the DRC. These refugee flows have affected the demographics, economics, politics and security in the Great Lakes region. Originally, these civil wars were isolated conflicts in countries, but as many groups entered into alliances the wars achieved a regional dimension.

All three countries have a long way to go in improving state-citizen relations and increasing the voice of citizens. A move from a country specific approach to a more coherent regional approach allows for effectively addressing regional drivers of conflict. A coherent regional approach to state building must include more support to civil society and not mainly to state institutions

International actors concerned with interventions in conflict affected or fragile states have increasingly acknowledged the importance of includ-

ing non-state actors in dialogues and in programme implementation with regard to state-building. While actors are (rightly) still cautious about the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs), this participatory approach should also be applied to developing a post-2015 framework.

Many major CSOs in Burundi originate from 1992, when they started to work on promoting human rights and fighting poverty. Many CSOs had been formed to fill the gap left by the weaknesses of government institutions in providing social services and their inability to manage the situation in which Burundi found itself.

Although civil society is still very young, it has gained a lot of strength over the last years. CSOs are seen more as representing the population (contrary to initially being seen as elite) and are well informed about challenges and needs in the country. The ability of CSOs to raise issues of concern has increased, the outreach to target groups has improved, and they have put a lot of effort in closer coordination amongst themselves.

Civil society and local organizations have challenged the government and national institutions, engaged in constructive dialogues with the government on key issues. Sometimes at risk of their own lives, they hold their government accountable for human rights violations and power abuse.

Despite the fact that many civil society organizations in Burundi suffer from a narrowing political space, they are the actors that often best understand the dynamics and needs of their country. In addition to the national government, they can add and highlight obstacles, gaps and solutions for working in a country and context specific to a post-2015 framework in fragile and conflict-affected states. Attention has, however, to be paid into reinforcing CSO capacities, recognizing their diversity and screening the representativeness of CSOs with regard to the people they represent.

Since its independence, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has gone through a long history of conflict, struggle, exploitation and oppression. As the Congolese conflict continues in the East, many Congolese citizens are still struggling for survival and peace on a daily basis.

The DRC is a country that is characterized by weak and geographically limited governance. The state is unable to control its territory and ties

with a large part of the population are almost absent. Governance in the DRC can be mainly characterized by corruption, self-enrichment and power consolidation, instead of by an effective and representative form of governance that serves the population. There is a lot of distrust towards the government and little faith in democratic governance at all by the Congolese population.

This has created a situation which leaves most of the inhabitants struggling for their own survival. Even crucial sectors of national sovereignty, such as the tax system and the security sector, are now in the hands of private organizations and rebel groups.

The gap left by the Congolese state is also filled by different non-state actors such as civil society, faith-based organizations and social movements. These actors have assumed many of the state's responsibilities in the field of healthcare, education, shelter, but also play a key role in demanding transparency and more accountable governance.

It is in fragile states, such as the DRC where non-state actors take over many responsibilities of the state, where a sole focus on building strong states jumps over realities on the ground. State willingness and capacity to respond to its population's needs is essential but should come along with recognizing and working with those that currently undertake these responsibilities.

This also allows for a more durable process to start in which ties between the government and the population are reinforced and the population is able to hold its government to account.

Somalia

Somalia has been plagued by continuous conflicts since 1991 and counts as perhaps the most fragile state in the world. The MDGs have however hardly changed the lives of Somalis. Why? Largely because the MDGs and related processes have failed to address the root causes behind fragility and conflicts, namely human rights violations, lack of accountability between the federal authorities and the rights-holders (good governance) and failure to include non-state actors into processes of building resilience and addressing state fragility.

In Somalia a Rights Based Approach has not been in the toolbox of the international community. In general, the Somalis have not received support

to make them become aware of their rights or of the international commitments that their state has made; and the transitional state structures have borne little or no duties towards the rights-holders and had minimum or no accountability *vis-à-vis* the people.

State capacities have been below standard. A case in point is the former Ministry of Constitution and Reconciliation – responsible for the by and large successful processes of approval of the Constitution and selection of the new parliament in August 2012 – which was staffed by the minister and one aide alone. With the two persons traveling in Nairobi, the whole ministry was absent from Somalia.

As in other parts of the world, the virtual absence of the state does not mean that there is not an alternative social and political organization or mechanism of service delivery, including justice. In Somalia, traditional structures have survived both in the colonial, post-colonial and the conflict period together with the Somali people maintaining their traditional forms of socio-political organization.

Largely due to the successful support of the traditional leaders' participation to the state-building processes, the key stakeholders were able to reach agreements, which provided for a much greater grassroots legitimacy of the current state structures than before. Yet, failure to meet the agreed quotas of women participation, brewing clan-based conflicts and the unaddressed capacity problems of the state set the stage for continuous hardship for the Somalis.

Lessons learned from ACT Alliance members, which have been working in Somalia with the rights-holders and duty-bearers alike, show that support to inclusion and participation in situations of fragility bears fruit. In addition, in fragile contexts, different actors' roles must be flexible and able to adjust to needs. Tackling fragility and building resilience should not be seen solely as supporting existing state structures, nor should NGO actors limit themselves in only supporting the rights-holders.

When requested by the Transitional Federal Government, Finn Church Aid (an NGO, member of ACT Alliance) seconded its staff to the Transitional Federal Government to support the gov-

ernment's capacity and work during 2012, while simultaneously working in partnership with the UN Political Office for Somalia and supporting the local elders' participation to the political processes. ■

This document was published by Act Alliance in March 2013. ACT is an alliance of more than 130 Christian faith-based organisations working together in development and humanitarian assistance for positive, sustainable change in the lives of people affected by poverty and injustice.

<http://www.actalliance.org/>

Notes

1. Peace and Security, Thematic Think Piece, PBSO http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/14_peace_and_security_20July.pdf
2. World Bank, World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDRS/Resources/WDR2011_Full_Text.pdf
3. <http://www.oecd.org>
4. Act for Peace 2012.
5. Many issues influence the ability of a country to “escape” and to grow out of fragility. These include among others economic liberalisation policies and measures, barriers to export, effect of aid on post-conflict growth and failing regulation. See a full discussion on global factors in Global factors for sustainable peace, Saferworld submission to the International Development Committee's inquiry on the future of UK development co-operation, December 2012.
6. The Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Security among others.

Rethinking the value of the economy in support of women's human rights

Alexandra Spieldoch

A critical review of gender equality post-2015 has been published by the Heinrich Böll Foundation, in which the author comments that, following the Earth Summit (1992) and Rio + 20 (2012), “It would be fantastic to state collectively that as a result of these efforts and others at the national and regional levels, sustainable development has moved in a positive direction. Instead, it is widely recognized that we are very far away from where we need to be.” The following excerpt republishes the Conclusion from that report.

The post-2015 Development Agenda and the SDGs have potential to make a positive, long-lasting difference in addressing today's myriad challenges. Whether they will is another story – and there is room for scepticism. Politically, Rio + 20 should have been the space for dealing with all aspects relating to sustainable development, especially for linking macro and micro-level policies to address all of the issues from an environmental, social and human rights lens. Unfortunately, it was not. And, as many have noted, there are other high-level meetings relating to food and agriculture, the en-

vironment, and gender outside of the post-Rio and post-2015 political space that seem to take precedence.

That said, there is no reason why things couldn't be organized differently. Ultimately, a new understanding of development is needed – even better if post-2015 can provide the intellectual power and the political will to move differently. And, there is growing interest and convergence around this theme.

In terms of the thematic issues, the process is still quite fragmented. And, as has been mentioned, only a small group of women's rights advocates are really engaged in efforts to frame the post-2015 development agenda. This is not to imply that women aren't organized. For example, rural women's groups with GROOTS International and the Huairou Commission are organizing in their communities, with their local governments and in their local contexts.

But their voices are not guiding the consultative process as they should. Efforts to speed up the official decisions forget that lack of process and participation will undermine the success of the post-2015 development framework.

Governance and economic reform

Thematically, it will be important for women's rights activists not to fall into the trap of focusing on micro-level solutions and gender mainstreaming. They will need to be more aggressive and focused in taking on governance and policy reform, including macro-economic policy reform. For example, global policy shifts over the last 30 years have focused on expanding trade and reducing government regulations that have taken their toll on the ability of governments to support sustainable development goals at the national level.

Lower tariffs, cuts in spending and deregulation served to decrease government revenues to support key development policies, production incentives, infrastructure investments and price stabilization measures. Lowered tariffs also led to the privatization of essential services, such as water, sanitation, health, and extension services for the rural poor, who are primarily women and children and entrenched women in their care economy roles.

Global rules have been set without taking into

account the gendered impacts and the negative ramifications are apparent. Poorly designed economic policies represent another form of violence that has compounded the challenges that so many women already face in their daily lives. It is not enough to speak in generalities about the economic trends – specific policy interventions are needed in those arenas where the decisions are being taken. This includes a sustained presence and pressure on the G20 and on the regional and international institutions where major decisions are being taken. To date, very few feminist activists with technical expertise have stayed the course.

The other related issue area that women's rights advocates need to address has to do with "resilience". Women and girls, particularly those in rural areas, are facing many of the development challenges already at an extreme disadvantage due to unequal access to resources and political participation with their vulnerability increased



by climate change, conflict, poverty and hunger. Oxfam India writes, "Strengthening resilience requires a range of measures, from reducing greenhouse gas emissions, to factoring disaster and climate risks into economic and development policy, to ensuring effective national policy and regulatory risk management to address the drivers of disaster risk."

The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) adds that "human rights and equity shall be key to generate resiliency" and Action Aid International adds that "policies must be community-driven and community-centric, with communities empowered to voice their concerns from national to international level to influence policies and practices that build resilience and protect and fulfil their rights (NGLS: 2013)." Much more work is needed to promote a feminist policy agenda for recognizing and support resilience models as it is currently lacking.

In terms of a process to strengthen the post-2015 development framework and measures for implementation, targeted networking is needed. A new women's coalition has formed. Perhaps it has potential to stay close to the process, to expand participation and to offer substantive inputs.¹ Other initiatives are also underway such as the "Ask Africa Now" initiative sponsored by the Agency for Cooperation and Research and Development (ACORD) to consult with African women across the Continent to feed into the post-2015 process.

Strengthening women's voices in sustainable development

In terms of process, one way forward would be to develop "Women's Rights and Sustainable Development Policy Councils". These could be organized within regions and at the national level to bring together a mix of voices to critique the current development model, formulating substantive positions moving forward, promoting cooperation and weighing in on the various themes and processes.

They could include gender experts, grassroots activists, and women leaders with technical knowledge in key areas such as human rights, development, macroeconomic policy or climate change and legal systems as well as sector-specific expertise on food, water, land, and energy. They could play a dual role in strengthening the official process as well as serving as a catalyst for sparking dialogue action among women's rights advocates on the need to engage in ongoing global processes to support human rights and sustainable development.

The other value they could play is in linking

issues that still need to be put together in a more comprehensive way. For example, violence against women, food security, conflict and disaster relief are all inter-connected. And there is very little dialogue on how to assess what is needed.

Either as part of these Councils or as a separate entity, "a women's rights and sustainable development observatory" could also be created to review implementation of the indicators and outcomes, as well as inter-ministerial committees and the promotion of gender-sensitive budgeting.

In fact, the Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean was launched in 2010 as an inter-agency effort whose purpose is to analyze and provide visibility for the achievement of specific gender equality goals and objectives in the region; to provide technical support and training; and to provide an assessment of the inequalities between women and men.

Unfortunately, it is not clear how its agenda is fed by civil society priorities. It is narrowly focused on women's physical autonomy, their decision-making autonomy and their economic autonomy, ignoring a stronger women's rights agenda, also in relation to the environment.

The Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) initiative, which is co-managed by UN Women and the UN Statistics Division, working with the World Bank and the OECD, is also developing gender statistics and data-collection in 10 pilot countries to be reviewed in 2015 (UN Women: 2012).

Again, the indicators are quite narrow. That said, perhaps these tools are a starting point for strengthening gender-based reporting and gender-budgeting within the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs, assuming civil society is an integral player in defining the work.

And, then there is the "nitty gritty" of defining and implementing the SDG targets and indicators. To date, the inputs on gender have been fairly general. It seems dangerous to begin making long lists of gender indicators. Groups should be defining a few select indicators that can truly advance achievements that have already been made.

What is absolutely clear is that women cannot continue with more of the same. Any new formulation of a global order must reflect their reality and their priorities, and will have to be accompanied by

adequate funding and full political support.

If post-2015 is to go anywhere, it will require major institutional reform and rethinking of the value of the economy in support of women's human rights – this is the work ahead. ■

Source: "Gender Equality in the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Where Does it Stand?", published by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Washington, D.C., April 2013.

http://www.boell.org/downloads/Spieldoch_Gender_and_Sustainable_Development.pdf

Notes

1. Groups currently involved include the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), Baha'i International Community, Center for Women's Global Leadership, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), the Feminist Task Force, Global Network of Women Peacebuilders - International Civil Society Action Network, Huairou Commission, the International Women's Health Coalition, Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), the World Federalist Movement, and the Institute for Global Policy.

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Using visual storytelling for women's empowerment

Tamara Plush

Communicators who work with photography and video in the development context know the power visuals can have in bearing witness to the reality people living in poverty face. When contextualized, visuals can transcend distance and create a global dialog around topics in need of deeper understanding and action for social change.

One such area deserving more focus is chronic food insecurity in Africa, where greater visibility of those most impacted is vital in ensuring that global dialog continues towards workable solutions. In addition to journalists, non-government organisations (NGOs) working in affected areas are often on the frontlines of generating stories and images about the challenges people and their families face. The stories and images are often presented through the pen and lens of NGO staff by means of case studies, reports, campaigns and media releases.

While such media is valuable in highlighting the vast challenges people living in poverty face in securing food, there is a growing interest within the NGO sector in telling such stories through the voice of the people they are working with. This is especially true with the rise of more affordable and accessible photography and video equipment in developing countries.

However, while the action of "handing over the cameras" sounds simple for those raised in a technologically driven culture, the process of how to do so in the development context is much more complex if NGOs aim to also ensure the storytelling

process itself not only shows the reality of food insecurity, but does so in a manner that is sustainable, empowering and supportive of social change.

This is the basis for both participatory photography and participatory video approaches that collaboratively use visual storytelling with communities to create spaces for learning and dialog from the grassroots upwards.

Towards such efforts, it is important that an enabling environment for applying visual storytelling exists within the context of how NGOs are implementing their various projects and programs. This will differ depending upon the NGO's theory of change, the political economy, the photographic and visual literacy of the people involved, culture and context, staff capacity, resources and a host of additional factors.

One challenge too is that in many NGOs a knowledge gap exists between communication teams who use visual storytelling for external awareness-raising (for funders, potential donors and the public) and the programming team who work directly with the community towards specific development goals. Due to their different areas of expertise and use of communications, tensions can arise if expectations of the visual storytelling process and resulting products are not defined from the start.

To better ensure community-driven visual storytelling supports and empowers sustainable work at the community level, communicators promoting visual storytelling need to recognize that program staff have used pen-and-paper participatory visual communications consistently in their work for years – through hazard maps, Venn diagrams, problem trees, etc.

From this base, processes of using participatory photography and video can be appropriately co-created as additional tools in their visual methods toolbox aimed at fostering local knowledge, promoting dialog and bringing about social change.

Based on this collaborative lens, CARE Australia hosted a five-day visual storytelling workshop in May 2013 with programming and partner staff from Ethiopia, Malawi and Tanzania within a food security program funded by AusAID. The program's goal was "to improve the quality of life for chronically food insecure rural women... in areas experiencing chronic food insecurity resulting from changing and erratic weather patterns, limited

agricultural resources and inputs, and where institutions, practices and norms disadvantage and limit the participation and opportunities of women, especially single and widowed women" (CARE 2011: 1).

The workshop focused in particular on determining how to incorporate visual storytelling into qualitative monitoring and evaluation (M&E) activities for the five-year program, as well as to support women's empowerment efforts.

Because the visual storytelling methodology builds on the belief that empowerment is strengthened by people constructing their own knowledge through a process of dialog, reflection and action, it was important the method fit each country's context, staff capacity, implementation modality and women's empowerment processes. Thus the workshop was designed using a train-the-trainer approach whereby a visual storytelling facilitator not only built staff capacity in photography composition and ethics, basic photo storytelling and community digital storytelling (CDST),¹ but incorporated space for on-going dialog about how each country team could use the visual methods to support women's empowerment, M&E and advocacy.

Such flexibility and collaboration in using the method, rather than a more common approach where the specific application or topic is pre-designed by a visual storytelling facilitator or the donor, allowed for context-specific uses designed by those working directly with community members. As well, they recognized that the photo stories and CDST videos – with the permission of the storytellers – have value as communications products for wider dissemination. As such, the teams discussed the importance of ensuring that the people telling their stories and those in the photographs understand such use and give their informed consent (or parental consent when working with children).

Malawi: Participatory visual evidence by women farmers

One factor that can exacerbate chronic food insecurity is when people's rights to goods and services from the state and/or local government are limited or not provided. Thus, as part of the women's empowerment program in Malawi, CARE uses a tool called the Community Scorecard that enhances dialog between service providers and diverse com-



Staff from CARE Ethiopia and SOS Sahel Ethiopia. (Photo: Tamara Plush).

munity groups – including marginalized and vulnerable women – aimed at improving accountability in delivering goods and services.²

During the workshop, CARE Malawi decided to use Photo Storytelling and Community Digital Storytelling video processes with rural women farmers in two districts within the Scorecard process to investigate, highlight and provide on-going evidence in support of topics prioritized by them for greater dialog and action. Because the Community Scorecard process itself is an empowering way to build women's agency – which includes “skills, knowledge, resources and aspirations” (CARE 2011: 17) – the team believes the Scorecard process will be enhanced through women having a visual and narrative medium that can support their efforts to track, voice, show and discuss their concerns at the district level. This is especially important as the majority of women in the program are illiterate.

Visual Storytelling can be an empowering medium for those who do not read and write as it allows them to share their understanding and concerns about food insecurity, and strategies they identify in their own voice. The resulting print and video stories can also be used by local communities, civil society organizations and CARE to more widely advocate for the concerns of marginalized and vulnerable people who are most impacted by chronic food insecurity. This is done by creating spaces for dialog in ways that other materials in written text form with similar information might not. The visual nature and fact that the views and stories are directly from affected people themselves strengthen the message.

Tanzania: Women farmer educational videos

In Tanzania, CARE aims to improve the lives of chronically food insecure, predominantly Muslim

women who – although they provide significant farming labor in the family – are subject to cultural norms that give them little control over their bodies, livelihoods and land (CARE 2011: 5). As part of the women’s empowerment program, CARE and local partners are working with women who have joined farmer collectives that receive agriculture training from village-based agriculture paraprofessionals. The paraprofessionals are trained volunteers working through village-based Farmer Field and Business Schools established in the program. CARE Tanzania field staff and paraprofessionals will use Community Digital Storytelling to co-produce educational videos about the farming techniques for cassava and sesame production that the rural women are learning. The videos aim to show the planting, mid-season, and harvest and post-harvest handling seasonal activities.

While the videos are educational in nature, they also aim to support women’s empowerment and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). For example, in the area where CARE is addressing food insecurity, gender norms often limit women’s participation in the public sphere – including farmer extension programs and markets. Although some women have been allowed to attend Farmer Field and Business School trainings, the activities are not considered serious or important by the women’s husbands or village society at large.

In this setting, CARE Tanzania hopes that the CDST videos will provide evidence of how new practices can improve agriculture yields to increase membership in the farmer collectives and uptake on the practices learned at the women’s homes. As well – through dialog around the learnings – the CDST videos also support awareness-raising efforts towards the larger community recognizing the agency of the women farmers in contributing to community solutions to food insecurity. In regard to M&E, by creating videos in multiple districts by different farmer collectives during each cropping season, the community and CARE can visually monitor and evaluate the changes over time, as well as link such information to donor communications.

Ethiopia: Tackling gender-based violence

In Ethiopia, CARE is working with SOS Sahel to address gender-based violence in its many forms – which can particularly exacerbate poverty and

chronic food insecurity for women due to the resulting physical and mental impacts. Gender violence in the Ethiopia context can include “hitting, sexual harassment, polygamy and female genital cutting”, as well as the rare but known practice of kidnapping women for marriage (Gamer, Nelson and Starr 2012: 58).

In response, one approach being implemented in the Ethiopia program is training female community members as paralegals who educate communities on the rights of men and women who suffer gender-based violence. They work with both men and women in raising awareness about the harmful effects of gender violence on society at large. The paralegals can offer support and help with legal grievances, but need stronger government support towards these efforts.

As a new program in the area with more than 200 women trained as paralegals in three *Woredas* (districts), the awareness of services and potential benefits is not yet widely known and realized at the local, regional and national level. Thus, CARE and SOS aim to use visual storytelling as a means for those who have been impacted and found solutions to share their stories to bring into community dialog with larger group meetings, with the intent to gather a collection of stories to support on-going participatory M&E of changes over time. Through such dialog using visual storytelling, the stories can be used to support efforts of community-driven awareness-raising, to strengthen the confidence of the paralegals and the people they are supporting, and for advocacy.

Conclusion

The diversity of approaches to using visual storytelling for awareness-raising, women’s empowerment, monitoring and evaluation, and advocacy highlights the importance of a collaborative approach between the visual storytelling facilitator, communication teams and NGO programming staff. Such a process allows the power of visual storytelling to be used to qualitatively understand aspects driving the complexity of chronic food insecurity for rural women in a variety of contexts, in women’s own perspectives and voice.

By means of an on-going process of incorporating visual storytelling over the duration of the program, the aim is that the stories will not only reveal

deeper root causes of chronic food insecurity, but also spark wider dialog on the issues that help empower the storytellers and lead to potential solutions for social action. ■

References

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- Gamer, G., Nelson, S. and Starr, L. (2013). Consolidated Baseline Report: Tanzania, Malawi & Ethiopia. Technical Assistance to NGOs (TANGO).

Notes

1. CDST videos are short films made from photographs and narration. The CDST methodology uses free software to ensure their production is sustainable and replicable at the local level.
2. “Evidence has shown that through dialogue using the Scorecard, a platform or formal mechanism has been provided within the community that makes it easy for members to question those in authority, investigate decisions made and obtain more information for decision making by the service provider. This accessibility to services, providers and decision makers addresses issues of corruption within communities and regarding service delivery” (CARE 2011: 17).

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What is “development” for?

Teke Ngomba

Drawing inspiration from the Greek philosopher Diogenes of Sinope, who went around the streets of Athens carrying a lit lamp in broad daylight claiming to be looking for an honest man, Maman, a comedian and host of a daily satirical slot on Radio France Internationale, recently told a story of a citizen in a fictional African country who went around his country like a tourist with a camera in hand. He was searching for the two digit economic growth which is constantly reported in the media but which he and others in his neighbourhood had never seen.¹ The search was fruitless.

Like Diogenes’ satirical castigation of moral bankruptcy in ancient Greece, the story from Maman is a condemnation of a key disturbing issue haunting many countries at the moment especially in places like Africa and large parts of Asia and Latin America: a great number of citizens are not experiencing the benefits of much touted high rates of economic growth. The experience of the fictional “national tourist” is, therefore, one that is evident in real life and an issue that has been the subject of intense academic and policy discussions.

The UK-based Overseas Development Institute for instance, published a briefing paper in February 2009 aptly titled *Growth without Development: Looking Beyond Inequality*. The overall argument in the paper, that recent economic growth in developing countries in particular has not been accompanied by sufficient poverty reduction, was echoed in the 2013 *Africa’s Pulse* report published by the World Bank and the 2013 *Africa Progress*

Report, which noted that the “rising tide of economic growth in Africa” has only produced “mixed progress on poverty and human development” and that many resource rich countries are leaving the poor behind” even though they are experiencing economic growth (Africa Progress Panel, 2013: 14-15).

So, while comical in some sense, the story from Maman touches on important issues and raises troubling questions like: what is the use of two digit economic growth if ordinary citizens cannot see or feel it? What really is development? What should development consist of in this era? How can development “actors” work towards achieving an appropriate and sustainable development model and outcome for today and what role, if any, can communication play? They are not in any way new, but the current socio-economic and political challenges facing the world necessitate a re-posing and

re-examination of these questions.

The history of scholarly and policy discussions about ‘development’ reveal that as a concept, development easily fulfils the requirements of what Walter Bryce Gallie in 1956 labelled “essentially contested concepts”. Scholars, policy makers and “development activists” of all sorts rarely agree on its meaning, scope and measurement. Some, like Lawrence Haddad and his colleagues, have recently suggested that the current financial, fuel, food and climate crises facing the world signal that it might be time for us to “reimagine development” (Haddad et al, 2011). Others such as Aram Ziai (2013) have simply called for the concept to be “abandoned” given its conceptual, historical and Eurocentric baggage and that in its place, we should look for other less polemical concepts that can connote improvements in the ‘human condition’.

Villagers in the Sepik River Valley of Papua New Guinea. (Photo: WACC).



As Aram Ziai promptly acknowledged, finding such a new concept is not easy so it seems we might still have to deal with “development” for a while longer, but rethink critically what should constitute its definitive core features or dimensions of in this era. As far as this is concerned, a rather broad but abridged version of the history of development thinking indicates that for a very long time, positive and increasing economic growth as well as rapid industrialization constituted the dominant evidential basis for the presence of development. This dominant view eventually took a beating, was sidelined (but never buried) and in its place, there emerged “alternative” conceptions of what development means and what development should be for.

One of the first major examples of an influential intellectual and policy insight of this “alternative” conception of development was the publication in 1990 of the first United Nations Human Development Report, which clearly indicated that development should be seen as something that goes beyond economic growth.

The UN report identified people as “the real wealth of a nation” and said that the “basic objective of development” should be to “create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives”. In doing so, “human development” – the process of “enlarging people’s choices”, can be achieved (UNDP, 1990:9). These ideas, developed across subsequent years, have been the bedrock of the annual Human Development Reports.

In the midst of the current global economic crisis, these ideas were re-echoed by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress set up in 2009 by Nicolas Sarkozy, then president of France. Headed by three prominent economists – Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen, and Jean-Paul Fitoussi, the Commission’s report indicated that instead of looking at development solely through the lenses of economic production/growth, the concept should be broadened and seen as referring to people’s overall “well-being”, captured through aspects such as material living standards (income, consumption and wealth); health; education; personal activities including work; political voice and governance; social connections and relationships; present and future environmental conditions and physical and economic insecurity (Stiglitz et al, 2009:14-15).

While it is fair to say that this “people-centred” and non-economic growth focus of what development is and should be has become the fashionable narrative among a broad spectrum of governments and development institutions (seen for instance in the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals), events within the last couple of years raise serious questions about commitments to this narrative. A number of countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have recently been identified as rapidly growing economies with some like Ethiopia and China actually having recent records of double-digit economic growth.

Elsje Fourie recently pointed out, against these record economic growth numbers, many countries in Africa for instance are now putting an emphasis on rapid economic growth as their major development objective and interestingly, some donors are abetting this. The UK’s Department for International Development for instance, recently pledged to “make British international development policy more focused on boosting economic growth and wealth creation” (cited in Elsje Fourie, 2013).

Putting the focus on economic growth as a hallmark of development is unfortunate not only because it is going back in time but, as indicated earlier, the evidence thus far shows that these rising economic growth figures have not led to dramatic reductions in poverty. In a sense, as per the broadened perspective on development indicated above, what is currently taking place is clearly growth without development.

This chequered economic growth vs. development scorecard aside, the world is still mired in a persistent economic crisis whose proportions have caused significant havoc to individuals; families and countries. A major part of the initial response to this crisis from governments in Europe and the US has been the controversial austerity measures, designed to get the economy on track again; improve economic growth; reassure “the markets” and hopefully fend off agencies eagerly waiting to slash off countries’ “triple A ratings” if they fail to implement mostly austerity policies that are ostensibly meant to kick-start their economies.

These austerity measures adopted by several European countries and the US have stretched the crisis unbearably for many people. Globally, the Food and Agricultural Organization noted recently

that since the start of the current economic crisis in 2007, the global progress that had been recorded in reducing hunger has “levelled off” with more and more people falling back into hunger and poverty.

In Europe, the European Commission reported in April 2013 that about 19.4 million people are now jobless in the Euro zone alone and that a whole generation of young people risks being “lost” due to rising joblessness. Across the Atlantic, the US Census Bureau recently pointed out that largely due to the crisis, the number of people officially living in poverty has been increasing consecutively for three years and that as of 2011, an estimated 46.2 million people were living in poverty in the US.

While the debate as to who or what caused this crisis is still inconclusive, its austerity-inclined management thus far, like the economic growth priorities being set across several African countries, smack of a regrettable “back-in-time” focus on economic growth as the means and the end of development. We need to bring the people back into contemporary discussions about development and it is here that communication, in particular, communication for social change, can be a force for good.

Communication and people-centred development

Barry Gills and Kevin Gray (2012: 207) have argued that one of the paradoxes of the current neoliberal economic order is that “it both weakens and simultaneously activates the social forces of resistance.” We have seen this classically in the several protests against austerity across Europe. While the clear failures of the market and governments’ paradoxical obeisance to the market have unleashed waves of protests across Europe, “the people”, and not political institutions or big corporations, are the ones who have shown signs of defeatism.

In a sense, the success rate of “people power” actually to *stop* government or corporate policies in the face of this crisis has been at best dismal. Unfortunately, as William Tabb (2013: 1) has noted, we should expect to see “continued rising inequality in income, wealth and political influence’ especially in the West.”

In order to overcome these and push forward for the prioritization of a more people-centred development agenda in appropriate circles, ordinary people, as Chris Stone of Open Society recently noted, “need voice and their voices need to reach

people in power, people in positions to do justice.” Yet, as Nick Couldry (2010: 1) has clearly stated, the current abundance of media of communication notwithstanding, we are currently experiencing “a contemporary crisis of voice across political, economic and cultural domains.”

Taking communication into their own hands

This “crisis of voice” can be mitigated by contextually appropriate strategies of communication for social change. As Alfonso Gumucio-Dragon (2009: 453) explains, these are “basically about people taking into their own hands the communication processes that will allow them to make their voices heard... to take decisions on the development issues that affect their lives and to ultimately achieve social changes for the benefit of their community.”

Recent experience has shown us that, thanks to digital media, this process can often take the form of largely urban-based, mediated and non-centrally coordinated movements like the so-called “Arab Spring” or, as I write, the protests against the Turkish government in Istanbul. But, in several contexts where technical limitations curtail the possibilities of mass social media-facilitated protests, there is a need for more contextually relevant, people-led communication approaches that can put pressure on political and economic decision makers to establish and pursue more people-centred development priorities.

True, in many cases, local political structures will not easily permit ordinary citizens to express their voices or, even if they do, permit those voices to be heard and taken seriously. But if there is any major lesson to be learnt from the largely inconsequential anti-austerity or Occupy protests thus far, it is that rather than mobilizing ordinary citizens to “fight the system”, specific and central political or economic power wielders – individuals, groups and institutions – need to be targeted and pressured in a sustained communication and protest effort for them to change course where popularly needed.

For social movement activists in particular, these ideas may sound irritatingly familiar, but as the seeming return of the logic of development as economic growth suggests, it just might be the case that widespread repetitive re-enactments of these strategies, in a manner that amplifies the re-articulation of the imperative of national prioritizations of “hu-

man development” or “well-being”, are needed to ensure that countries do not lose the focus of what constitutes contemporary genuine and sustainable development.

Allowing the return and entrenchment of the logic of development as mainly economic growth will be regrettable because for ordinary people caught up in various forms of deprivation, development is experiential – not conceptual or merely statistical. ■

Note

1. *La Chronique de Maman* of 3 April 2013: <http://www.rfi.fr/emission/20130403-gondwana-on-rencontre-quelques-fois-touristes-peu-singuliers>

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The world we want

In March 2013 two hundred and seventy representatives from over two hundred civil society organisations from across the globe gathered for three days in Bonn, Germany to discuss “Advancing the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda: Reconfirming Rights, Recognising Limits, Redefining Goals.”

The discussions led to twelve sign-on statements, throughout which certain messages emerged with overriding support. This summary provides an overview of widely endorsed aims and strategic demands for a Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda.

(1) The Post-2015 Agenda must address inequalities.

Inequalities within and between countries in the distribution of wealth, opportunities or power are drivers of extreme poverty, conflict and violations of human rights. Therefore, addressing increasing inequalities within and between countries is a central strategic demand.

(2) The Post-2015 Agenda must respect planetary boundaries.

The realisation of human rights for all and the eradication of poverty and extreme inequalities must be achieved within the limits of our planets’ resources. This requires a holistic approach across all development goals and an equitable distribution of the burdens of adjustment, taking into account historic responsibilities.

(3) The Post-2015 Agenda must aim for a transformation of global structures.

This includes the regulation of financial markets, the restructuring of unfair trade regimes and of intellectual property rights regimes, the termination of tax havens, the redefinition of progress away from GDP towards measures of sustainability and

well-being, and policy coherence for development. All these steps are necessary since the current global economic and financial regimes impose obstacles to poverty eradication and the full implementation of all human rights. New rules have to be created and others removed to ensure that the global frameworks do not constrain human rights and development goals.

(4) The Post-2015 Agenda must be rooted in the existing human rights architecture with an explicit reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

By using the human rights architecture, and including concrete means of implementation, the Post-2015 Agenda will have a strong non-negotiable basis and powerful instruments for monitoring and accountability to ensure that all human rights are respected, fulfilled and protected.

(5) The Post-2015 Agenda must be universal.

Sustainable Development requires efforts from all actors in all regions (north and south). This implies assigning common but differentiated responsibilities according to different historical responsibilities, and capacities determined by economic, ecological and social contexts.

(6) The Post-2015 Agenda must ensure accountability.

Meaningful institutions and enforcement mechanisms as well as clear and time-bound commitments for all actors must be integrated into the Agenda. Such strong mechanisms of implementation, modelled on the existing Universal Periodic Review of Human Rights, are absolutely paramount if the Post-2015 Agenda is to be effective.

(7) The Post-2015 Agenda must be participatory.

It must not be driven by the special interests of donors or the corporate sector but serve as a tool to empower people. For this purpose, it must allow for full transparency and participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of policies by empowering all, especially women, children, adolescents and marginalised groups. ■

Source: <http://www.worldwewant2015.org/node/352520>

Four key issues

Manish Bapna

Following an extensive global consultation process, the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda presented its final report to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on 31 May 2013. The panel was charged with producing a bold yet practical vision for global development beyond 2015, when the current MDGs are set to expire.

There are four key issues for what will surely be a long debate.

1) Will sustainability be on the margins or at the centre of the post-2015 agenda?

The MDGs focused primarily on poverty reduction and the social dimensions of human development, with one stand-alone (and largely ineffective) goal on environmental sustainability.

There is growing recognition now that the twin challenges of environmental degradation and inequality are among the root causes of poverty, and thus are inextricably linked.

The Panel has already acknowledged this in earlier pronouncements, but how and to what extent it takes a more integrated approach to environmental sustainability and equity issues will be a key test of the new poverty agenda.

Will it propose another strengthened, stand-alone goal(s) on environmental sustainability, embed sustainability across a number of other goals, or put forth some combination of the two?

How will environmental sustainability and poverty reduction be linked in the post-2015 agenda?

2) Will specific, measurable goals and targets be put on the table?

Civil society, academics, and others have suggested a wide range of possible goals. At a public consultation in London, for example, the Panel received proposals for 40 new goals in 90 minutes. Some of



these draw heavily from the current MDGs, while others propose adding entirely new goals (e.g. disaster response, governance, inequality, employment, sustainable transportation).

If the panel chooses to present its own proposal, how will it build on the MDGs and address critical gaps in the current goal framework, while keeping to a reasonable number of simple, easy-to-communicate goals?

If the Panel also proposes targets for each of the goals, will they be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound?

3) Will the post-2015 goals ask developed countries to make concrete commitments?

The MDGs focused on improving well-being in developing countries, with developed countries expected to provide foreign aid. This time around, nearly all members agree that the agenda must be universal – with goals that apply to all countries.

For example, achieving food security and meeting the nutrition needs of a global population projected to reach 9 billion people will require curbing excessive consumption in some areas, while reducing waste and improving sustainable production everywhere.

Given the diversity of countries and their development challenges, how will the Panel craft an agenda that applies to rich countries, emerging economies, fragile states, and least developed countries? Will rich countries have to make commitments beyond aid to reach these goals?

4) What kind of global partnership will it imagine?

The world is profoundly different today than it was 15 years ago when the MDGs were being developed. A broader array of actors are now involved in tackling poverty and building prosperity. A universal post-2015 agenda must redefine and reinvigorate the global partnership for development, with clearly defined roles for national governments, international institutions, civil society, and the private sector.

A new global partnership must also reflect the rapidly evolving role of emerging economies such as India and China. The potential for South-South cooperation is great, and new institutions like the proposed “BRICS bank” present both opportunities and challenges in an increasingly complex development landscape. How does the panel propose that all these actors work together effectively to fulfill the post-2015 aspirations?

Why does all of this matter?

The post-2015 agenda must provide a common compass for navigating the turbulent waters of a planet with growing development needs and finite resources. The recommendations to the UN Secretary General come as the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals gets underway.

These recommendations are sure to be closely watched – and critiqued and complimented – by its members. While we can be fairly sure that what is proposed next week will not be the final product in 2015, it will be a crucial first step. ■

Source: WRIInsights, posted 29 May 2013.

<http://insights.wri.org/news/2013/05/4-issues-watch-recommendations-post-2015-development-agenda>

Promoting and protecting the right to freedom of opinion and expression

A Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Frank La Rue, was presented to the UN General Assembly on 17 April 2013. It analyses the implications of States' surveillance of communications for the exercise of the human rights to privacy and to freedom of opinion and expression. While considering the impact of significant technological advances in communications, the report underlines the urgent need to further study new modalities of surveillance and to revise national laws regulating these practices in line with human rights standards. What follows are the conclusions and recommendations.

78. Communications techniques and technologies have evolved significantly, changing the way in which communications surveillance is conducted by States. States must therefore update their understandings and regulation of communications surveillance and modify their practices in order to ensure that individuals' human rights are respected and protected.

79. States cannot ensure that individuals are able to freely seek and receive information or express themselves without respecting, protecting and promoting their right to privacy. Privacy and freedom of expression are interlinked and mutually depend-

ent; an infringement upon one can be both the cause and consequence of an infringement upon the other. Without adequate legislation and legal standards to ensure the privacy, security and anonymity of communications, journalists, human rights defenders and whistleblowers, for example, cannot be assured that their communications will not be subject to States' scrutiny.

A. Updating and strengthening laws and legal standards

81. Communications surveillance should be regarded as a highly intrusive act that potentially interferes with the rights to freedom of expression and privacy and threatens the foundations of a democratic society. Legislation must stipulate that State surveillance of communications must only occur under the most exceptional circumstances and exclusively under the supervision of an independent judicial authority. Safeguards must be articulated in law relating to the nature, scope and duration of the possible measures, the grounds required for ordering them, the authorities competent to authorize, carry out and supervise them, and the kind of remedy provided by the national law.

82. Individuals should have a legal right to be notified that they have been subjected to communications surveillance or that their communications data has been accessed by the State. Recognizing that advance or concurrent notification might jeopardize the effectiveness of the surveillance, individuals should nevertheless be notified once surveillance has been completed and have the possibility to seek redress in respect of the use of communications surveillance measures in their aftermath.

83. Legal frameworks must ensure that communications surveillance measures: (a) Are prescribed by law, meeting a standard of clarity and precision that is sufficient to ensure that individuals have advance notice of and can foresee their application; (b) Are strictly and demonstrably necessary to achieve a legitimate aim; and (c) Adhere to the principle of proportionality, and are not employed when less invasive techniques are available or have not yet been exhausted.

84. States should criminalize illegal surveillance by

public or private actors. Such laws must not be used to target whistleblowers or other individuals seeking to expose human rights violations, nor should they hamper the legitimate oversight of government action by citizens.

85. The provision of communications data by the private sector to States should be sufficiently regu-



lated to ensure that individuals' human rights are prioritized at all times. Access to communications data held by domestic corporate actors should only be sought in circumstances where other available less invasive techniques have been exhausted.

86. The provision of communications data to the State should be monitored by an independent authority, such as a court or oversight mechanism. At the international level, States should enact Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties to regulate access to communications data held by foreign corporate actors.

87. Surveillance techniques and practices that are employed outside of the rule of law must be brought under legislative control. Their extra-legal usage undermines basic principles of democracy and is likely to have harmful political and social effects.

B. Facilitating private, secure and anonymous communications

88. States should refrain from compelling the identification of users as a precondition for access to communications, including online services, cyber-café's or mobile telephony.

89. Individuals should be free to use whatever tech-

nology they choose to secure their communications. States should not interfere with the use of encryption technologies, nor compel the provision of encryption keys.

90. States should not retain or require the retention of particular information purely for surveillance purposes.

C. Increasing public access to information, understanding and awareness of threats to privacy

91. States should be completely transparent about the use and scope of communications surveillance techniques and powers. They should publish, at minimum, aggregate information on the number of requests approved and rejected, a disaggregation of the requests by service provider and by investigation and purpose.

92. States should provide individuals with sufficient information to enable them to fully comprehend the scope, nature and application of the laws permitting communications surveillance. States should enable service providers to publish the procedures they apply when dealing with State communications surveillance, adhere to those procedures, and publish records of State communications surveillance.

93. States should establish independent oversight mechanisms capable to ensure transparency and accountability of State surveillance of communications.

94. States should raise public awareness on the uses of new communication technologies in order to support individuals in properly assessing, managing, mitigating and making informed decisions on communications-related risks.

D. Regulating the commercialization of surveillance technology

95. States should ensure that communications data collected by corporate actors in the provision of communications services meets the highest standards of data protection.

96. States must refrain from forcing the private sector to implement measures compromising the privacy, security and anonymity of communications

services, including requiring the construction of interception capabilities for State surveillance purposes or prohibiting the use of encryption.

97. States must take measures to prevent the commercialization of surveillance technologies, paying particular attention to research, development, trade, export and use of these technologies considering their ability to facilitate systematic human rights violations.

E. Furthering the assessment of relevant international human rights obligations

98. There is a significant need to advance inter-

national understanding on the protection of the right to privacy in light of technological advancements. The Human Rights Committee should consider issuing a new General Comment on the right to privacy, to replace General Comment No. 16 (1988).

99. Human rights mechanisms should further assess the obligations of private actors developing and supplying surveillance technologies. ■

The full report can be found here : http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session23/A.HRC.23.40_EN.pdf

ON THE SCREEN...

NYON (SWITZERLAND) 2013

The interreligious jury at the Festival Visions du Réel, 19-26 April 2013, awarded its prize of CHF 5000 to the film *Zum Beispiel Suberg* (still below) directed by Simon Baumann (Switzerland).

The citation reads: “For its beautiful quest in which youth and tradition complement each other as well as the individual and the community. This enables the village to open up again to the world. The film maker’s starting point is his native village. The rural roots vanish and new inhabitants live in a self imposed closure. Without being nostalgic the director offers a vivid regard of an ongoing change of transformation.”



The jury also gave a special mention to the film *Les Chebabs de Yarmouk* directed by Axel Salvatory-Sinz (France): “For its authenticity and poetic and touching language. The film-maker approaches the reality of the enclosure in a Palestinian refugee camp in Syria. His work touches the dreams and the deceptions of a group of young people to overcome with courage and hope the doubts and difficulties of a whole generation.”

Since 2005 SIGNIS (World Association for Catholic Communication) and INTERFILM (International Inter-Church Film Organisation) have been present at the Festival with an interreligious jury, which includes a representative of a member of INTERFILM and SIGNIS and a member of Jewish and Muslim faith.

The jury awards a feature-length film of the international competition and possibly a commendation that sheds light on existential, social or spiritual questions as well as human values. The prize money is donated by both the Swiss Catholic and the Swiss Protestant Churches (Conference of the Churches in the French speaking part of Switzerland/CER).

The members of the interreligious jury 2013, nominated by the Swiss representatives of SIGNIS and INTERFILM were Lucie Bader Egloff, Bern (Switzerland) – President; Houda Ibrahim, Paris (France) Shafique Keshavjee, Puidoux (Switzerland); Jörg Tazsman, Berlin (Germany).

OBERHAUSEN (GERMANY) 2013

At the 59th International Short Film Days 2-7 May 2013, the Ecumenical Jury appointed by INTERFILM and SIGNIS gave its prize of Euros 1,500 to *Nation Estate* (still below) directed by Larissa Sansour (Denmark/Palestinian Territories, 2012).

The members of the jury stated, “This film uses the science fiction genre to cram the whole of Palestine into a skyscraper. All that’s left in its sterile interiors is a nostalgic view of the former home country through the windows. Formally stylized and with a precise eye for detail the film shows a utopia of this unresolved conflict.”

In addition, the Jury gave a Commendation to *Yellow Fever* directed by Ng’endo Mukii (Great Britain, 2012). Statement: “The ideal of fair skin tempts many girls and women in Africa to make painful attempts to change their appearance. This film, which was also screened in the Children’s and Youth Film Competition, visualizes the condition of feeling insufficient in an exciting mix of collage, animation and dance, ingeniously addressing the racist causes of this feeling of inferiority and their reinforcement by today’s mass media.”

The Jury gave a Certificate for a film in the International Children’s and Youth Film Competition in



connection with a recommendation for Matthias Film and Katholisches Filmwerk to buy the film for their catalogues. The film was *Quand ils dorment* (When They Sleep) directed by Maryam Touzani (Morocco, 2012).

Statement: Eight-year-old Sara loves her grandfather. When he dies unexpectedly, she looks for a way to say goodbye despite religious conventions. The film addresses a universal theme in a culture foreign to us. Its direct camera and unpretentious narrative style make it convincing. A film that moves both children and adults.

Members of the Jury: Daniel Gassmann (Switzerland), Irina Grassmann (Germany), Fr. Petr Vacík, SJ (Czech Republic), Eberhard Streier (Germany).

CANNES (FRANCE) 2013

At the 66th Festival de Cannes (15-26 May 2013) the Ecumenical Jury awarded its prize in the Official Competition to *Le Passé* (The Past) directed by Asghar Farhadi (France). Motivation: How do we take responsibility for our past mistakes?

In a thriller style, the director shows the daily life of a stepfamily, where everyone's secrets and the complex relationships gradually disentangle. A dense, deep and engaging film that illustrates this verse: "The truth will set you free" (John, 8:32).

In addition, the Jury awarded two Commendations. To *Soshite chichi ni naru* (Like Father, Like Son) directed by Hirokazu Kore-eda (Japan). Motivation: At what point does a father actually become a father?

Two couples from different social backgrounds discover that their sons have been exchanged in the maternity ward. The film deals in a simple and subtle way with a human dilemma: are blood ties more important than the love which bonded them for seven years?

A second Commendation went to *Miele* (Honey) directed by Valeria Golino (Italy). Motivation: The film offers a complex and unprejudiced view on the issue of euthanasia. The filmmaker shares with discretion and mastery the doubts and the torments of a young woman who helps terminally ill people to die, leaving to the audience the freedom and the responsibility to take a stand.

The 2013 Jury consisted of Gianluca Arnone,



Italy; Tiziana Conti, Switzerland; Marek Lis, Poland; Denyse Muller, France (Jury President); Samuel Petit, France; and Gianna Urizio, Italy.

The prestigious Cannes International Film Festival is held annually in France, and it previews new films of all genres, including documentaries, from around the world. Founded in 1946, it is one of the best known and well publicised film festivals in the world.

There has been an Ecumenical Jury at Cannes since 1974. It will celebrate its 40th anniversary there in 2014 under its new President, Dr Julia Helmke, Commissioner for Art and Cultural Affairs of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Hannover. ■