

Appendix A

Case Studies

CIDA’s “Towards a Long Term Strategy for Canada’s International Assistance Program: A Framework for Consultation”

A Commentary by CCIC

In preparing its Commentary on CIDA’s Long Term Strategy, CCIC reviewed some examples of current programming approaches by Canadian civil society in relation to the primary principles and goals that are driving CIDA’s renewal of its long term strategy for international assistance. These short case studies highlight aspects that demonstrate synergy and consistency with these principles – local ownership, strategic impact, policy influence and the mediation of cross-sectoral relationships. They are only a snapshot of the rich and innovative experience of Canadian civil society engagement with development partners in the South over the past 30 years. CIDA has been a consistent partner in support of much of this work. The case studies point to a mutual need to more systematically draw lessons from our experience to inform not only CIDA’s long-term strategy, but also equally our joint contributions to ending global poverty.

1. Promoting Food Security: Seeds of Survival, an NGO Consortium Lead by USC Canada
2. North-South Civil Society Collaboration for Labour Rights
3. Working in Global Partnerships for Policy Impact: World Vision Canada
4. Bringing Fair Trade to Businesses: TransFair Canada
5. Small Steps for Democracy: SUCO
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11. Integrating Program and Policy: Inter Pares’ Holistic Poverty Approach

The case studies were prepared by the Policy Team of CCIC with the assistance of Anne Bernard and Lise Latremouille, based on information provided by the respective NGO. CCIC assumes full responsibility for any inaccuracies in the text.

Promoting Food Security: Seeds of Survival, an NGO Consortium Lead by USC Canada

The severe drought in the mid-1980s in Ethiopia was devastating to subsistence farmers whose already marginal land failed to produce even the minimum crops needed to feed their families. Without an alternative, people began eating seed stocks, threatening their lives both in the short-term by leaving nothing to plant the next year and for the future by condemning local seed varieties to probable extinction.

**Respecting the
food security
needs of farmers
improving local
seeds and
preserving bio-
diversity**

Responding to the immediate needs of the Ethiopian farmers, a consortium of Canadian NGOs, led by USC Canada, and including Inter Pares and Oxfam Quebec, joined together with funding from Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) to launch Seeds of Survival. This is a highly innovative agriculture programme, working within a framework of long-term sustainable development, which blends the traditional practices of farmers with the knowledge of scientists. With this approach the program has creatively responded to the food security of farming communities in Africa. At the same time, partners have made a significant impact on the approach to agriculture within the international aid community and have contributed to a number of critical changes to policies for agricultural development.

The challenge was to find a way to enable farmers not only to produce enough to eat, but to protect the resources upon which their food production depended. “Improved” seeds were not the answer, guaranteeing high yields only by manipulating the environment with inputs (fertilizers, pesticides, technology-based irrigation) the farmers could not afford and the land could not sustain.

The solution was found through the combined efforts of Canadian NGOs and Ethiopian scientific expertise, and their conclusion was to work with farmers to preserve, improve and use local seeds compatible with the temperamental environments that spawned them. Conserving genetic diversity by sustaining and “enhancing” local seed varieties and preserving fragile ecosystems became the practical task of the Seeds of Survival program.

With similar interventions elsewhere (typically mobilized through NGOs), NGOs are responding to the fundamental challenge of sustainable food security for rural people living in poverty and are implementing key components of “Agenda 21” for environmental

Expanding a network supporting locally managed bio-diversity

protection of rural ecosystems and genetic diversity. The pioneering work done by Seeds of Survival over its 10-year history has created a grassroots agricultural movement that has spread through a network of NGO and agricultural researchers. Thousands of people in 10 African countries, as well as Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, India and the Philippines have been empowered through working with Seeds of Survival. Community seed banks have been formed – owned, managed and run by local people and for local people.

One of the core factors in this evolution was the fact that the NGOs involved were able to maintain their commitment to work together and adapt their own agendas and seek to influence other membership associations. Seeds of Survival interventions were not limited to a static, locally-focused program of work, but rather responded and matured as their understanding of the biological, socio-economic and political dimensions of seeds and food security and poverty changed; and as information was generated and lessons were learned. Food security provides the margin that families and communities need in order to attend to other basic human requirements to change their circumstances of poverty, such as health, education and protection for the most vulnerable. When people are able to feed themselves, and develop the means to do this through time, then other necessities of life can fall into place.

According to RAFI, the internationally respected Rural Advancement Foundation International, the Seeds of Survival program has turned conventional modern agricultural thinking on its head. It illustrates just what is possible when scientific experts acknowledge the short-sightedness of the Green Revolution and, instead, form new, respectful relationships with farmers in a joint scientific and agricultural endeavour.

Linking international negotiations for intellectual property protection to farmers' rights and bio-diversity

Understanding the importance of rural initiatives such as Seeds of Survival, RAFI has been working for more than 25 years in international policy forums, such as the FAO and the negotiations surrounding the Biodiversity Convention, to ensure that these field experiences are reflected in international policy agreements. RAFI has promoted the recognition of farmers' rights, for example, over seeds that have evolved over centuries in their fields, as a counterweight to the seed and chemical industry's global promotion of intellectual property rights. RAFI organizes seminars with NGOs from around the world, some of whom have been implementing. Seeds of Survival, to assure participation of farmers and NGOs in these international negotiations that will affect their livelihoods.

North-South Civil Society Collaboration for Labour Rights

The Maria Elena Cuadra (MEC) Movement began in Nicaragua in 1994 aimed at ensuring the human rights of women working in the country's maquila free trade zones, establishing legal protection for safe and equitable workplace conditions.

**Flexible
collaboration
based on
solidarity for
workers' rights**

With financial and moral support from **OXFAM Canada** and **CoDevelopment Canada**, among others, the MEC campaign took a public mobilization and worker education approach to changing the policies and practice in the maquilas: training its members in negotiating skills, educating working women on their rights and building their self-esteem, drawing up a Code of Ethics, and distributing it to workers, employers, government officers and National Assembly members. Utilizing multi-stakeholder meetings, debates on the human rights issues in the free trade factory zones, a country-wide petition in support of the Code and its presentation to the Ministry of Labour, the MEC goal of a Ministry-drafted accord, based on the Code, was realized. Signed by both government and employers, the Accord established an end to discrimination against women workers, promoted their treatment with respect and dignity, provided a safe work environment, agreed to pay legal wage levels, and confirmed their right to organize and negotiate collective agreements.

Of particular significance for the role of NGOs like OXFAM and CoDev is their flexibility and ability to take the initiative and respond to the opportunities and issues as they arise. Responding to change in the MEC campaign, Nicaraguan and Canadian partners have developed trust and understanding through the evolution of the partnership over time. The work has not stopped with the Accord, either in Nicaragua or in the rest of the region. In Nicaragua, the campaign built upon the Accord with initiatives aimed at further health and safety reforms in the free trade zones and at amending the country's Labour Code. Other members of a Central American Network of NGOs have learned from the Nicaraguan experience and have begun similar strategies in free trade zones in other countries in the region.

NGOs integrate North/South participation in government-sponsored trilateral negotiations for corporate codes of conduct

NGOs and civil society organizations bring a special value to complex social policy issues confronting poor and vulnerable people by their capacity to find common cause, co-ordinate their actions and work directly with those affected at the various levels to seek sustainable solutions to these issues. An example of common cause across national boundaries is the coming together of a large number of organizations in Canada and globally focusing on the abuse of workers' rights in Canada. The Campaign for a Base Code of Labour Practice, led by the **Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN)**, has played a similarly role to the Nicaraguan MEC by working to promote and participate in a federal government tri-sector process on sweatshop abuses in Canada, including negotiations and campaigns for a Canadian base code of labour practice for the apparel, footwear and related consumer products industries. These initiatives provide important public understanding for the role of government in encouraging corporate social responsibility.

To broaden initial lobby work on these issues in Canada, the Maquila Solidarity Network facilitated the development of the Ethical Trading Forum and the multi-sector steering committee, called the **Ethical Trading Action Group (ETAG)** for which it became the secretariat. In the spring of 1999, a federal government-appointed facilitator convened the first meeting between Canadian retailers, apparel and shoe manufacturers, labour and NGOs. Convinced of the importance of involving companies, not only their associations who often have self-defined standards or the government, in the implementation of internationally recognized standards, the Maquila Solidarity Network co-ordinated a public education and advocacy campaign to persuade all participants in the dialogue to take a leadership role in intensifying code negotiations.

With global sourcing and markets an ever present reality of globalization, North-South linkages for information and mutual support are central to civil society efforts for corporate social responsibility. MSN and ETAG have successfully used a tripartite process of code negotiations to encourage North/South dialogue and to broaden participation of civil society in discussion, debate and learning on codes of conduct and corporate responsibility, rather than allowing such discussion to be confined to the negotiating room.

Working in Global Partnerships for Policy Impact: World Vision Canada

World Vision Canada is an organization that has reflected on its own partnership relations in the South and has challenged itself to seek new roles as civic actors in development. As part of the global World Vision Partnership, over the past ten years World Vision Canada is working with a sustained, multi-dimensional and multi-membership association of NGOs. World Vision Canada works with partners in over 90 countries, reaching more than 70 million people. Advocacy work links in-country offices with a global relations team, focused on international institutions.

Working through a global partner- ship

Together the Partnership represents a scale of community-based development programming that tackle complex issues affecting children living in poverty from which World Vision draws comprehensive and sustained analysis and proposals for implementing good international development policy.

World Vision's contribution to development policy has been especially notable for its consistent and cumulative analyses in two areas over recent years, and both of these relate directly to issues in community development in the context of globalization: peace building and equitable socio-economic development. It is able to draw on a range of national perspectives and field experiences and research in presenting its case. Globally World Vision has utilized its human resource capacity and policy reach to interact with players at the most senior policy level in developed and developing countries as well as multilateral forums, with a point of departure that speaks to and explores very complex problems arising from applied programme delivery and the lived experience of poor people in their communities.

Assessing PRSPs and supporting in-country NGOs to make the process relevant to poverty eradication

Recent policy statements, "*PRSPs: Good News for the Poor?*" and "*Trade for Development: Making the WTO work for the poor*" provide comprehensive assessments of the global dynamics of world markets and financial systems, economic equity and poverty reduction. These analyses are already part of the global dialogue and debate following-up the Jubilee 2000 initiative on debt cancellation and on the implications of trade for poverty reduction, within the context of events such as the Seattle WTO meeting and Prague World Bank/IMF annual meeting this past September. While

making strong contributions to Canadian and international policy in these areas, they also serve and learn from World Vision's support for partners in countries like Senegal as they develop a PRSP: supporting in-country NGO participation in the process as well as reflection and learning on the effectiveness of the process itself as a tool for genuine poverty elimination.

Particularly relevant to Canada's newly-evolving social policy agenda, World Vision Canada is taking a leading position in the analysis and application of policies related to the protection and development of vulnerable communities, especially children, in situations of war, community conflict and socio-economic dislocation. "*Angola: A tangled web - many players in a complex war*", published in July, 2000, for example, presents a broadly-informed socio-cultural, socio-political analysis of conflict in that country. It has concrete policy suggestions for Canadian and international policy-makers in structuring peacebuilding interventions in a manner that reduces risks and avoids contributing inadvertently to more instability.

A policy statement, "*The Right to Peace: Children and Armed Conflict*," outlines a comprehensive approach to prevent the involvement of children in armed conflict, while programming in Sierra Leone works with local NGOs to reunite families, reintegrate children, and improve local child protection. By working together on both policy and programs, NGOs have been able to put children's needs on the peace and security agenda at the Security Council as well as in the development arena.

**Facilitating
Canadian NGO
working
groups
in policy
dialogue with
government**

As Chair of the Children and Armed Conflict Working Group, World Vision Canada facilitated the development of an NGO Action Plan, entitled "*Peace is Every Child's Right*," for presentation at the September 2000 Winnipeg Conference on War-affected Children. Many recommendations from the NGO Plan were directly incorporated into the official report from the event. It continues to provide a solid basis for on-going dialogue with the Canadian government and for presentations in UN fora, such as the UN Special Session for Children and its preparatory meetings. The Working Group maintains an electronic information exchange with more than 100 contacts in Canadian NGOs.

Bringing Fair Trade to Businesses: TransFair Canada

Canadian governments have for many years promoted strong Canadian trade relations through international rules-based agreements governing trade and investment that are respected by all nations, transparent and judiciable. Canadians understand the importance of trade to our economy and increasingly are aware that our trade practices must also be fair, equitable, and socially responsible, respecting widely recognized core labour rights. Canadian civil society organizations, including the trade union movement, have put fair and socially responsible trade practices firmly on the public policy agenda and have also engaged Canadians through their purchasing of goods and services.

Promoting understanding of fair trade practices through citizen action

Aimed at promoting fairly traded coffee produced by small farmers cooperatives in the South, TransFair Canada worked over the 1990s to mobilize links between international development and trade. Other Canadian organizations such as the Canadian Cooperative Association, SOCODEVI and CECI collaborate with coffee coops to improve their capacities to participate in fairly traded coffee. Others are involved as importers and roasters of coffee from such cooperatives.

Rather than providing funding or using direct sales, TransFair Canada, active in the international fair trade movement, focuses on two strategies: promoting fairly traded coffee produced by cooperatives of small farmers; and promoting the TransFair label, certifying fairness in trade, among Canadian roasters and importers. TransFair Canada aim to eliminate, at the source, the commercial inequalities that create poverty.

Coalitions of churches, unions and NGOs to promote fairly traded goods

Its approach is a positive one, convincing businesses that it is to their advantage to offer fairly traded products. It also works to build and sustain demand for fairly traded goods, in its public education for fairly traded coffee with large constituencies of Canadian unions, churches and NGOs who may be already aware of the causes of poverty in the South but are seeking alternative ways to address these conditions. To further these efforts a campaign was launched in spring of 1998, orchestrated by TransFair

Canada and the ecumenical Ten Days for Global Justice with Canadian Churches.

Reflecting the capacity of such organizations to work with multiple issues and partners, the TransFair Canada campaign includes a range of education and promotion entry points, and in consequence, has had a multiplying effect. It has succeeded in persuading more than 45 Canadian roasters and importers to obtain its certification, realizing a 600% increase in the sales of fair trade coffee, supporting farmers in Latin America, Africa and Asia to eliminate poverty in their communities. In the coming years, labelling may extend to other products, such as cocoa, sugar, tea and bananas. Lobbying to reduce Canadian tariffs on processed raw products like coffee would help farmers generate added value and income from their products. In the meantime promotion by TransFair Canada and its partners is putting into practice global citizenship to convince Canadian and other governments that global trade policies must be fair and respect conditions for sustainable poverty reduction. Indeed they demonstrate that such policies can be successful for everyone.

Small Steps to Democracy: SUCO

Sustained commitment to grassroots development

The cooperation links between village-based organizations in Mali and SUCO, a Montreal-based NGO, go beyond a simple partnership for local development initiatives. The process, supported by SUCO, with funding from Fondation Léger, evolved through successive phases in which village populations who were largely illiterate first took stock of their situation, then gradually changed individual and collective behavior to allow the community to take control of its development. Village people are now tackling the more complex issues of democratic transformation and citizenship building through their engagement in the decentralization process launched by the Malian government.

From the outset, SUCO and Benkadi, the Malian partner organization, worked with village people through participatory processes that allowed all social stratas and all voices within the village to be heard. The external role that Benkadi and SUCO played can be summarized as the spark that allowed the process to ignite. This catalyst role and the sustained support over six years not only helped to transform local reality, but it also provided SUCO and the other partners with systematized lessons and learning that can now be applied to other settings. Together they published a small book entitled "*Sur les petites routes de la démocratie*" (Pathways to democracy) that relates the rhythms of this process of learning within community and illustrates how direct democracy can operate.

Strengthening commitment for democratic citizenship

The establishment of popular engagement in the development process pre-supposes a strong sense of trust within the community and between the community and external actors. SUCO and Benkadi therefore discussed at length the exigencies of participatory development that would have to be inclusive of all social stratas including those who were traditionally marginal to decision-making processes, notably women and youth.

Local development and the generation of economically sustainable activities were perceived as essential components for community engagement. Equally important was the process of developing and sustaining locally defined and controlled structures and processes. The management of economic activities was organized to allow the village

association to oversee all aspects of these activities, while day-to-day management was delegated to committees. This process of delegation and mutual accountability was in itself a process of learning and transformation within community. Village people learned that the process would be sustainable only if all parts of the community were convinced that the common project was of interest to them. The process implies that the collaboration between local and external actors be founded on the notion that the accompaniment will be over a long period, since social transformation can only happen over a longer period.

In the current context of economic and political transformation in Mali, many of the traditional hierarchies are weakened. Although some progress has been made in the place that women occupy at the village level, fundamental transformation to eliminate systemic discrimination of women is much slower. The process in the village of Fereintoumou nonetheless sets the basis for community dialogue on a wide variety of issues including the inequity and injustice towards women.

The first goal of this process was to ensure that the community takes control of its development. As Mali is decentralizing its administration towards local communities, a village like Fereintoumou is well placed to use the experience of functioning local structures in their interaction with the State. The decentralization process is presenting many challenges to community leaders and intervenors to engage village associations in authentic collective reflection on the strategies that will be defined and implemented at the local level. Whether elected representatives will take into account the village priorities as expressed by democratically defined associations, will depend on the strength and capacities of communities to make their voices heard.

In the process of defining local development strategies, village communities will also have to consider the implications of policies that are defined at the national or international levels and that impact on their lives.

Expanding Public Debate on Controversial Global Issues: Physicians for Global Survival

Working to strengthen official policy on peace and development

Civil society organizations have the capacity to generate and build on knowledge of the most basic issues of development and to sustain a mobilizing environment critical to citizen action. Several Canadian NGOs, including Physicians for Global Survival (PGS), organize to catalyze, shape and strengthen official policy in critical areas of development and peace. This synergy was most notable in the Canadian initiative to ban landmines leading to the 1999 treaty.

Physicians for Global Survival is a Canadian physician-led organization working through the action of individual members and local affiliates across Canada, and in partnership with the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. Like many NGOs, their unique contribution to policy making lies in a programmatic focus that links public awareness raising, community education and advocacy, inter-country mutual support, and input to on-going policy debate.

Creating support for Canadian positions on contentious policies in international fora

PGS tackle national policy issues that are both controversial (e.g. NATO's war in Serbia) and have potential opportunities for progress (e.g. NATO's agreement to review its policy on nuclear weapons). The aim of the organization is to create an enabling public and political environment which will eventually ensure a more coherent, socially responsible and sustained consensus for policy formulation and its application in Canada and internationally. Toward this end, the PGS works closely with other like-minded NGOs and civil society associations to provide members and supporters with appropriate information and tools for taking effective action. They promote public education for consistent, multi-dimensional and persistent Canadian public voices on important policy issues for the Canadian government. These may sometimes be critical of government policy directions, but may also serve to expand political space in the public realm for advancing Canadian positions on contentious policies on the international stage (at the UN and elsewhere).

An example is the current initiative of the PGS network to raise the profile of the threat of nuclear war in South Asia, as Pakistan and India increase their respective arms capacities. Long-term relationships and the ability to cut across official

**Tackling
controversial
policy issues**

political boundaries are critical characteristics of many NGOs, and PGS builds on its long history of co-operation with its counterparts in both countries in this case. Since 1991, it has contributed financial and human resource support, as well as input into the production of a video, for peace and disarmament education in the sub-region, including study visits to India and Pakistan to raise issues and exchange ideas with counterparts in the medical community, government officers and the media. Since 1998, it has been closely involved with the development and ongoing implementation of the Canadian government's peacebuilding fund allocation for South Asia, and that same year conducted a joint seminar on peaceful conflict resolution strategies with Indian colleagues at the IPPNW World Conference in Australia.

Putting Poverty on the Agenda at the UN and at Home: Canada's National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO)

The National Anti-Poverty Organization provides a good example of the ability of NGOs to reach across borders and constituents to influence policy at home and abroad. Recognizing the conceptual and policy links between poverty at home and that of developing countries, the International Committee of NAPO was formed to bring anti-poverty work to the forefront both domestically and internationally.

**Policy
Coherence:
Canadian civil
society
connecting
with the
multilateral
system**

In 1998, NAPO made a formal presentation to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as part of Canada's third report on the implementation of the International ESCR Covenant; in March 1999, together with the Charter Committee on Poverty Issues and the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation to the Human Rights Committee, it contributed to the joint submission of Canada's fourth report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Since then, the International Committee has continued to provide international social, labour, and human rights information to its constituency in Canada.

**Connecting
realities:
People living
in poverty in
Canada and
the South**

NAPO has increasingly collaborated with civil society organizations focusing on poverty in developing countries to promote connecting actions and events, including the Poverty Forum relating to the Summit of the Americas in Santiago Chile, organized jointly with IBASE, an anti-poverty organization from Brazil. Working with its own constituency of people living in poverty in Canada, NAPO produced a tabloid information brochure, which was mailed to all participants in the Santiago Poverty Forum, promoting actions on behalf of homeless people internationally. It made a significant contribution to the issues brought by Canada to the "Copenhagen Social Development Summit Plus 5" meeting in Geneva in June 2000, helping to ensure that commitments made by Canadian and other governments to coherent, equitable and comprehensive social policies were kept at the centre of the table.

Consistency between what a country espouses in international forums and what it actually does at home is fundamental to ultimately taking effective action in both settings. Participation of NGOs like NAPO in these events, with their immediate connections to the concrete realities of people whose

basic human needs are not being met on the streets of donor governments' own countries, challenges our assumptions, integrating the Canadian policy agenda and anchoring the rhetoric of development in the concrete realities of unsustainable poverty wherever it occurs.

Shaping the Public Agenda for Development: The Jubilee 2000 Debt Campaign

The Jubilee 2000 campaign is a broad civil society initiative, spear-headed by the Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative (CEJI), a coalition of the Canadian churches, as part of a world-wide campaign of civil society organizations that responded to the spirit of Jubilee in a call for global justice. Canadian non-church NGOs and community groups also participated directly in this coalition or were engaged through their work with the Halifax Initiative, a Canadian NGO coalition focusing on reform of the multilateral system.

**Mobilizing
Canadians for a
Global Public
Good: debt
cancellation for
the poorest
countries**

For more than three years up to December 2000 this global campaign mobilized citizens around the world in a call for the cancellation of unsustainable and unjust debt for the poorest countries.

In Canada, the campaign for debt cancellation has had two dimensions that reinforced each other – 1) education and action at the grassroots, raising 400,000 - 500,000 signatures on a petition in support of the debt cancellation and 2) the public policy level, seeking a leadership role for Canada among creditor countries, particularly with the G-7 industrial countries. Youth were also drawn into the initiative, participating in the various launch strategies, organizing events (e.g. breaking the chains of debt on Parliament Hill), setting up local Jubilee committees, and holding public debates and collecting signatures.

The global Jubilee Campaign was remarkably successful as the campaign spread internationally throughout industrial and southern countries. Debt cancellation was placed on the agenda of the G7 governments and multilateral institutions, which resulted in accelerated initiatives (albeit incomplete in realizing the goal of complete cancellation for the poorest countries and delinking debt initiatives from stringently imposed structural adjustment programs). Success was not only the effect of a coalescence of a broad range of civil society organizations around a common goal. It was also

**Linking
complex debt
proposals with
the lives of
people living
in poverty**

the result of an effective linkage of a complex policy question (the mechanics of international debt) with an understanding of the impact of unsustainable debt on the lives of people living in poverty. Civil society organizations working with people living in poverty and in sectors affected by debt were crucial in making these links.

In Canada the campaign was a strong motivation behind the announcement by the Prime Minister in March 1999 that Canada would cancel all bilateral debts owed by a selected group of Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) once they had successfully completed the HIPC Initiative process. It was an important step, adding impetus to movement on the part of the United States, France and Britain to declare 100% bilateral debt cancellation for an even larger group of HIPCs.

Extensive media coverage, international co-ordination, development education, timely action and global networking between churches, faith groups and national justice groups are all factors leading to the success of Jubilee 2000 in Canada and abroad.

Local Ownership, Shared Values and Program Partnerships: South Asia Partnership (SAP)

Programming partnerships based on shared values

Over a 20 year period, South Asia Partnership (SAP), as an initiative of Canadian NGOs, has carefully evolved a unique partnership between autonomous coalitions of South Asia and Canadian development organizations, founded on shared values, policy dialogue and program engagement. SAP is now an equal partnership of SAP Bangladesh, SAP Nepal, SAP Pakistan, SAP India, SAP Sri Lanka and SAP Canada. Along with its Asian partners, SAP Canada is one of the members of the SAP International, based in Colombo.

South Asia Partnership is the only Canadian-based organization that brings together a wide array of Canadian and South Asian partners for the sole purpose of promoting human development in South Asia. More than 22 Canadian development organizations are members of SAP Canada. As such it is in a position to link development knowledge, monitoring and action with direct experience in carrying out poverty reduction strategies in South Asia.

Policy dialogue

With professional staff in each country providing a combination of field-support and communication activities, SAP is expressly able to build on this capacity to facilitate forums of exchange. These forums bring multiple perspectives together (government, private sector, NGO, theoretical and practice-based) on emerging issues, which are often politically risky, in search of clear strategies of intervention. In doing so, it provides a safe and catalytic environment for open dialogue where participants over time build trust and arrive at an informed shared agenda rooted in shared values.

Through its Canadian members and South Asia partnerships, SAP Canada has provided a space for reflection and a channel for policy dialogue and advocacy on a broad range of foreign affairs, economic and trade, human rights and equity policy issues. SAP-sponsored forums may be especially important, by reason of mandate, expertise and experience, to challenge dominant analytical and policy assumptions. They are opportunities to consider policy implications for poverty eradication in South Asia on themes

and areas that complement official Canadian ODA and foreign policy through dialogue with a range of development actors not often accessible through official channels. For example, seminars (with reports) have been held most recently focusing on

- India - Pakistan regional peace issues and initiatives,
- Contributions of the international community to the peace building process in Afghanistan,
- Insurgencies and opportunities for development in Northeast India,
- The impact of globalization on health, and on human rights, and
- The prospect of peace in Sri Lanka, and democratic development in Pakistan.

Audiences, participants and experiences involved in these events have been diverse, and have the potential for being more so as documents are distributed and implications of the discussions themselves begin to percolate through the various agencies' own policy-making.

In 1999, SAP Canada undertook the responsibility of coordinating four in-country consultations - poverty dialogues - with 'poor' people in rural and urban localities. The dialogues were implemented by SAP Nepal, SAP Pakistan, the Canada Cambodia Development Program (CCDP) and the Philippines Development Assistance Program (PDAP). This report was intended to inform the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)'s efforts to refine and improve its strategy for poverty alleviation in Asia.

At the moment SAP Canada has taken up the issue of small arms proliferation in the region. The widespread proliferation and easy availability of small arms is a pressing threat to the security of the states and peoples of South Asia.

Recognition within the region of the scale of the small arms problem is growing. The UN small arms conference in July 2001 offers a short-term focal point for engaging government officials and could provide momentum for further regional activity. SAP is organizing five national and one regional dialogue on Small Arms problems in South Asia where civil society and government representatives are expected to come together to design a common plan of action.

These initiatives are also designed with a focus to bring forward the voices of the people from South Asia to inform Canadian foreign and development policies.

Changing the Legal Framework to Eliminate Discrimination against Women in Guatemala: Centre canadien d' études et de coopération internationale (CECI)

A coalition of women's organisations in Guatemala with technical support from a human rights organisation, the Centro para la Accion Legal en Derechos Humanos (CALDH) and funding and support from the Democratic Development Fund of CECI, have been involved in action and policy advocacy to change laws that discriminate against women, since 1995.

Between 1995 and 1996, the women's organisations and the Centre succeeded through research, mobilisation and advocacy to have important articles of the penal code abrogated on the basis that they discriminated against women. The targeted articles of the penal code gave harsher sentences to women than men in cases of adultery and common-law unions, both considered as crimes.

The strategy involved public and popular mobilisation, including media support, so that the pressure on government to change would come from as broad a base as possible. The process was built around the recognition that the women's movement is diverse, that differences had to be acknowledged and accepted in order for the coalition to be flexible and participatory. Leadership was shared and tasks were distributed and specialised to allow for wide participation.

Sustained policy action rooted in long-term capacity building for community based women's organizations

This initiative build on long-standing relationships of Canadian NGOs with indigenous and refugee women's organizations in the early and mid-1990s. For example, Inter Pares and the Anglican's Primates World Relief and Development Fund had been working with women's organizations at the community level, strengthening their capacities and their leadership, enabling them to later play an active role in the campaign to change Guatemala's legal framework affecting women. The Montreal-based Rights and Democracy also contributed to strengthening the policy capacities of women's organizations.

The campaign's coalition building process not only ensured the ultimate success of the action, but it also served to strengthen the women's movement and other civil society

organisations. They gained knowledge of their capacity and strategies for political action and success in promoting changes. One of the major objectives of the campaign by the women's movement was to use the context of the law to educate and popularize concerns for fundamental injustices and inequities between men and women in Guatemala.

Capturing lessons and applying these to civil society participation in the renewal of governance in Guatemala

With support from CECI, the process was well documented through a research-action project that systematised the lessons from this successful action, lessons that can be applied to future citizen action in Guatemala. The success of the action gave not only women's organisations, but also all of civil society in Guatemala a boost in the belief that citizen action for a renewal of Guatemala's governance and peacebuilding is now possible. For women's organisations, it also demonstrated that alliances can be created despite important political, social and economic differences, and that collective action can address discrimination for all women. Women have learned that legal action can impact very directly on women's individuals lives and are essential extensions of the grassroots work of women's organizations in gender discrimination and women's empowerment.

Supporting a peacebuilding framework

The campaign unfolded in a climate of open, public and peaceful debate, which provided additional assurances for the peace process in Guatemala. The administration of justice was improved because judges, lawyers and justice administrators were forced to look at the gaps and contradictions within the system, thereby opening up the possibility of change in other laws and causes. The activists used the Inter American Human Rights Court to support their actions, a process, which proved very useful. The legal aspects of the action were well documented and covered by expert activist women lawyers. The actions and the public dissemination of the results have helped establish a judicial culture that respects rights.

CECI continues to support the development of democracy in Guatemala through the support of civil society organisations, and has learned that support to well organised and democratic processes within the women's movement can have real impact on democratic change.

Integrating Program and Policy: Inter Pares' Holistic Poverty Approach

Inter Pares is a medium sized Canadian NGO that works in long term partnerships with organizations confronting the displacement of people through war, human rights violations, economic impoverishment; and increased marginalization of people living in poverty. Its core goal is the promotion of peaceful, organized struggle and dissent by marginalized people against the structural obstacles to equitable and sustainable development.

Emphasizing a programmatic approach for strategic impact

With a strong programmatic approach, Inter Pares structures its work in three themes: 1) governance and security; 2) migration and population; and 3) democratic economy. Working with long-standing partners across the globe and in Canada the approach to each area is an integrated, cross-national perspective that moves beyond immediate symptoms. It focuses attention on underlying strategic and transformative issues such as power relationships; protection of women's reproductive health and rights; reintegration and decriminalization of refugees; and the complex impacts of macro-economic policy on the social, cultural, political and economic lives of people.

Scaling up policy work from the local to national and global levels

Within this framework, the *scaling-up of policy work* is centrally important for Inter Pares and its counterparts. This involves analyses of community experiences and their articulation as policy concerns at local, national, regional and international levels, as well as seeking a synergy between policy work in Canada and that which counterparts pursue overseas. Linking micro to macro levels, building common regional and global advocacy approaches, enriching the work of counterparts by sharing experiences and supporting them with Canadian policy initiatives are essential conditions of genuine transformation.

Work since the mid-1990s with counterparts in Bangladesh and India is one example. Partners in these countries have been collaborating with coastal villages to resist unregulated introduction of shrimp aquaculture into their communities by government and multilateral agencies like the Asian Development Bank. Aimed at increasing foreign exchange revenue, the social and environmental costs of shrimp have

**Confrinting
the impact of
shrimp
aquaculture**

been high, huge numbers of people displaced, in-shore fisheries lost and serious human rights abuses.

In 1995, Inter Pares and its Bangladeshi counterpart Nijera Kori facilitated anti-shrimp activists from India, Bangladesh, Thailand and Malaysia in forming a network to promote coastal resources preservation. At the same time they helped form a coalition of Canadian NGOs in support of the Asian initiative; while documenting the social and environmental impacts of the aquaculture industry; and educating Northern consumers on the issues. Together with CUSO, the Consumers Association of Penang and the Sierra Club of Canada, a literary and photographic project "In Defense of Land and Livelihoods", documenting the industry in Asia was developed.

Reaching out to international forums, a tribunal was organized in conjunction with the 1996 UN Commission on Sustainable Development, bringing the issue to governments and the multilateral Banks. In 1997, the Sierra Club coordinated a consumer awareness campaign in Canada through provincial environmental organizations. Meetings between Southern counterparts and divisions of the Canadian government, including the department of Fisheries and Oceans and CIDA, helped to raise awareness of common environmental, social and cultural concerns.

Results were apparent at many levels. The Indian Supreme Court found in favour of a petition from the Land for the Tillers' Freedom NGO, issuing an injunction against expansion of the aquaculture industry. Supported by Nijera Kori, villagers in several coastal regions declared "shrimp free zones", effectively stopping expansion of the industry and associated human rights abuses. The Bangladesh Government introduced land use planning in its fisheries master plan. Links between Asian and Latin American NGOs led to an international network tasked with lobbying and public education campaigns against unsustainable aquaculture. The Asian Development Bank, CIDA and others, now aware of the problems, are requiring detailed socio-environmental impact assessments prior to any new investment. "In Defense of Land and Livelihood" was nominated for a Canadian development education award, and is being used by NGOs across Asia as a model for work in Latin America.

By working in coalition, Inter Pares has enhanced its ability to advocate at multiple levels, allowing issues to be put on the agenda of local, national and regional governments and organizations; and scaling up of NGO activities at international levels to ensure coherent policy interventions in different political environments. The deliberate strategy of moving interventions from local to regional and international levels played a major part in influencing governments, multilateral institutions and Northern civil societies; support to local groups provided the education and advocacy foundation for activities at their own national levels. Regional NGO linkages created forums for learning and exchange, and the capacity to engage with regional and international institutions. Institutionalizing all of these activities was made possible through Inter Pares' work with lasting networks among relevant and mixed stakeholders, North and South.