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ABSTRACT

This issue contains nine papers dealing with influencing public policy through advocacy and lobbying. "Influencing Public Policy" (Rajesh Tandon) looks at opportunities nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have for influencing public policy and constraints to advocacy. "Recent Changes in the Global Aid Environment" (Sunimal Fernando) considers changes in the northern donors that are leading to a redefinition of the relationship between them and southern NGOs. "NGOs and Policy Influence" (Jane G. Covey) explores three issues that are important for the expanding role of NGOs in policy influence. "Advocacy for Influencing Policy" (T. D. Daniel) addresses the role of and challenges for NGOs in policy influence. "Public Education and the Commonwealth Government" (Alstair D. Crombie) interprets and reflects on a survey of Australian Commonwealth Government programs that included some element of public (community) education. "World Summit on Social Development: A Postscript" (Maria Lourdes Almazan-Khan) presents reflections resulting from the author's participation at the United Nations World Summit on Social Development, Copenhagen, Denmark. "Lessons Learned: Making Summits Work" (UNICEF) describes strategies for implementing goals, including identification of the do-able, political commitment, mobilization of a much wider range of social resources, and deployment of the expertise and resources of the United Nations (UN). "The United Nations and the Nongovernmental Organizations" (N. Jasenthuliyana) discusses the role NGOs play in the work of the UN. "Asian Regional Forum of Alternative Institutions" (Rajesh Tandon, Argus Purnomo) argues for the creation of an Asian Regional Forum on Alternative Development Institutions. A book review by Pathma N. Sivaram of "Demanding Accountability" is provided. (YLB)

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DECEMBER 1994

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COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

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This paper is a revised version of a key-note address given at an Advocacy Workshop organised by ***Actionaid****, India.*

Dr. Rajesh Tandon *is President of the Asian-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE), and Executive Director of the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), New Delhi, India.*

RAJESH TANDON

INFLUENCING PUBLIC POLICY

I was wondering whether this phrase "NGO Advocacy" or "Voluntary Action Advocacy" existed at the time Raja Ram Mohan Roy took initiative to pursue social reforms; or even at the time of Mahatma Gandhi's work where significant policy changes were brought about. I was humbled by this reflection that advocacy in India has such historical roots and is not something which we have just discovered. To my mind as a citizen's action to influence policies that affect their lives, advocacy has a long history; perhaps as long as citizenship itself. In more recent years, what have been examples of effective impact of the work of voluntary organisations in framing important policies in our country? I remember that in 1975 I attended a rural labour camp; emergency had been declared at that time and it was in the hills of UP Dehradun, among the tribals, nomadic people and the camp was discussing the new Abolition of Bonded Labour Act which was then promulgated during the emergency and I was wondering what was the history to that and it became clear during the course of the camp. In 1973 some social activists, working in the hills of Dehradun began to talk about 'bonded labour' and ways to deal with it and they brought a minister and a bureaucrat - two sympathetic persons, to the area. Significant policy formulation has taken place as a consequence of this social action. Bonded Labour Abolition Act was promulgated during the Emergency to release and rehabilitate bonded labour in the country.

The 1977 Primary Health Care Policy of the Government of India was largely fashioned after the work of many voluntary organisations in the field of health care; the emphasis on promotive and preventive health care that was brought into the policy (not just curative), had its base in the work of a large number of voluntary

organisations. And, likewise, around that period the National Adult Education Programme was actually crafted by a group of adult educators active in voluntary organisations in the country. This is to put into perspective that while the concept 'NGO advocacy' may be a recent concern but the practice in reality has been here for long. And as a consequence of the work of voluntary organisations, many a times indirectly, there have been significant policy formulations that have occurred in our history.

By this recognition then, one could count a number of other issues around which impact on Public Policy has occurred as a consequence of the work of voluntary organisations. If one looks at the issues of women's rights, environment, children's rights, NGOs, directly or indirectly, have led to policy articulation. I am continuously using the phrase 'Public Policy' because I like the idea of Advocacy being defined broader than lobbying and defining it as process as opposed to an event. I am concerned that we do not subsume under this phrase everything that we do in our work. If the work was organising people or making them aware of their rights - to include that in this definition of advocacy in my view would be to dilute the meaning of the term itself. Therefore, I am looking at the question of Advocacy largely in the context of Public Policy, largely in the context of formulation, influencing, altering, modifying, implementing, discarding, resisting, encouraging - whatever to do with Public Policy. Without reference to Public Policy, the use of the term is very generic and not meaningful at all. I would not include organising, awareness raising, conscientising, skill building as advocacy. In my view it must specifically focus on the question of Public Policy. There may be different ways of influencing Public Policy; it may include the involvement of people themselves in influencing Public Policy, use of media, academic research etc. But I think without focus on Public Policy, the meaning of the word advocacy will get diluted.

Many people think that influencing Public Policy is not the area of work of NGOs and many others think that is the only contribution that we can make. If we view influencing Public Policy as the primary work of advocacy action on our behalf, then the apparent contradiction between grassroots-action and advocacy disappears. It is on the basis of the cumulative experience of working at the grassroots that we actually can come up with interesting, insightful, relevant, appropriate suggestions for the content of the Public Policy itself. I think the experience of people working in the areas of health care, in the areas of bondage, literacy, was the reason why they were able to bring in that substantive focus in the policy that they were influencing. It is the work at the grass-roots that becomes the basis of generating ideas which may provide the substance of a particular Public Policy. Yet, it is not to say that influencing Public Policy can only happen if you have worked at the grass-roots. There are numerous examples of influencing Public Policy very much in the favour of the poor even in our country by those who never had any direct work at the grass-root level. Therefore, the challenge that we are facing may be how to link the work at the grassroots with the task of influencing, framing, formulating and interpreting appropriate pro-poor Public Policy in our country. The question is not whether one can lead to the other - it inevitably does. Those who were engaged in the work of primary health care or literacy in 1950s or 1960s

were not doing that work because they wanted to influence Policy in the 1970s. They were doing that work because it was important to them. But when circumstances materialised in a manner and their experiences were known, it became an important basis of new policies on health care, adult education, etc. In recent years, much of the NGO response, has been largely in rejecting or reacting to Public Policy formulations; it has been successful at times stopping implementation of a policy because it seemed anti-poor. But if we are in the business of influencing Public Policy, we may have to also take upon ourselves the task of formulating or providing positive contents to what the policy should look like. This task may entail dirtying our hands in sitting in the same room with those who ultimately write that policy. Merely resisting anti-poor Public Policy may not necessarily lead to desirable Public Policies in favour of the poor.

The second comment I wanted to make is the importance of recognising the national and global dimension in Public Policy formulation. Throughout the period of post World War II, the concept of Development itself, the concept of Development Aid, the concept of Development Planning, etc. are inherited from the countries of the North. Despite our pretensions that we were formulating National Policy, a lot of those policies were influenced by global forces and agendas. By late 1970's, many World Conferences influenced our own Public Policies. The Alma Ata Conference on Primary Health Care; FAO WCARRD Conference on Integrated Rural Development; the Women's Decade (Mexico and Nairobi), Environment (Rio), Human Rights Conference (Vienna) are clear examples. All I am trying to say is that the global dimension of development policy formulation has existed as long as development has been on the agenda. It is only in the economic liberalisation trends that we may be seeing something more visibly in the last couple of years. And therefore, there is a need to at least take a global view in Public Policy influencing, even if we are operating at a micro or a local level or state or district level policy matters.

Opportunities

One of the major opportunities that is available today is the reasonable recognition, nationally and internationally, of the legitimacy of Voluntary organisations, NGO-kind-of work. "Reasonable" I am saying deliberately because at times it is unreasonable but I think there is a reasonable recognition that the voluntary organisations/ NGOs have a role to play in the development arena.

Second opportunity is arising out of the maturity of our own experiences. We went through a period in the 50s and 60s where the previous variety of voluntary action inspired by Gandhian movement was starting to go out of fashion and it was in the mid/late 60s that a new spurt of what we see as contemporary kind of Voluntary Organisations in our country emerge. So we can see 20 to 25 years maturity period on the basis of our experiences, our analysis, our ability to work with each other with all its limitations, bindings etc. So there is a maturity of experiences, we have scale, macro policy influencing.

The third opportunity I see is the current nature of flux in which the State and its apparatus finds itself in. The dominance of state as pre-eminent, primary instrument of develop-

ment which was established in our country in 60s and 70s has been shaken in the last couple of years. There is a flux in the way in which the State apparatus is functioning and that creates a great deal of opportunity to influence policy formulations.

Concerns

And of course true to our own culture we look at the constraints that are existing. They are not so much constraints in the environment as they are in my view concerns about our ability to seize the opportunity.

The first set of concerns relate to Conceptual Stagnation. Let me elaborate that with respect of advocacy work. First is the stagnation in our understanding about the role of the state. Despite what has happened in the rest of the world, and what is happening in our own country, many a times when we discuss strategies to change the condition of the poor we are recommending more of the same - we are recommending more of the same State, more of the same machinery, which with 45 years of its functioning has demonstrated no possibility of either being sensitive to or concerned about the needs of the poor. Therefore, more of the same - be it in the area of population as the latest issue of seminar proclamations or in the area of poverty-alleviation as the report of South Asian Commission proclaims - they are all recommending 'better' State, more efficient State, less corrupt State, more pro-poor State, but more State. I do not think it is possible - better State, more efficient State, less corrupt State is not possible at all. We need to think about more clearly what its role is in the development arena, what its role is in causing poverty rather in alleviating it.

The second area in which I find conceptual stagnation is on the question of lobbying, advocacy, democracy etc. The form of governance that we have inherited after the British colonial rule was not the form of governance that was gradually emerging from our own socio-political milieu. It was an 'alien' form which was 'imposed'. That form of governance called representative democracy of parliamentary variety only functions if we accept that lobbying is a legitimate activity. Many NGOs abhor those who move in the "corridors of power" - a phrase we use in great distaste; "those who dirty themselves in shaking hands with politicians/bureaucrats". In fact, a vibrant democracy is one where all interests are organised to lobby for themselves. The tragedy of our democracy is that certain interests are well organised and are lobbying, but a whole lot of other interests, particularly those of the poor, are not organised and have not done lobbying. So, if we are going to function in this form of governance which is a 'representative democracy', we will have to accept the necessity of lobbying, of demanding accountability from those who are 'Public Representatives', be they politicians or bureaucrats. It is not something which is uniformly understood or agreed upon, because there is negative connotation to 'lobbying'. Therefore, the question of policy formulation, policy change, policy altering, influencing Public Policy, in this form of governance is essentially going to be an incremental process. We are not operating in a revolutionary context where dramatic transformations take place. If that is the thing, then advocacy should not be on our agenda. Therefore, incremental changes in public policy will require a long-term, sustained lobbying effort which carries with it the

concerns and the interests of the diverse sections of the poor within the world.

And, third, of course, is the dimension of our identity. Who are we? It is a perpetual question: it is a good question to be confronted with once in a while. In the life of an adult spanning 45-50 years, if the question of identity plays up every morning, the adult will remain paralysed. In the same way, we as a sector, will remain paralysed if we do not come to terms with our identity. That identity, in my mind, must be expressed as an autonomous identity in the frame-work of Civil Society; and not an identity which is negatively defined (as 'Neti' Hindu tradition) - non-profit, non-governmental, everything non; that is, a residual identity. Instead of this residual identity, we should have a positive definition of who we are. That will help us in looking at our role as legitimate actors in formulating public policy, if not something which we do because there is a global 'fad' about this.

The second set of concerns relate to what I have hesitatingly call 'Hesitations in Partnership' which includes networking, coalition-building, extending hands of solidarity with each other. I am including opportunities of building partnerships with media, academia, with other sectors (including the corporate). The experience of networking and coalition-building even within the folds of the NGOs and voluntary organisations in the post-independent India has been rather frustrating, painful and difficult. Unless in our analysis we reach understanding that networking, coalition - building, partnership are critical elements of our strategy to influence Public Policy and cannot also develop an understanding of why it is painful and difficult? What should be done to overcome those in our own unique cultural milieu, distinctive to our country?

Capacity

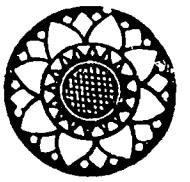
The third set of concerns relate to 'Limitations of Capacity'. I have increasingly found defending myself when I say there are limitations in capacity. It does not mean that we do not have capacity. We have immense capacity. But I would like to humbly share with you my concern that we do lack capacity. We lack capacity in even comprehending how Policy is formulated in this country, leave alone its global dimensions. There is a limitation to our understanding how policy is formulated in our country.

The second area of capacity limitation is about the type and range of capacity that we have. While there has been a growing debate on professionalisation of NGOs (including in our co[illegible]y), that debate has been limited to bringing in some people who have got some 'professional' degrees. By bringing medical doctors, veterinary surgeons, agronomists, educationists, engineers, water engineers and soil scientists, chartered accountants, management graduates - by bringing people with 'degrees' alone, we do not create a professionalised competence. Unfortunately, sometimes the two get confused. Whenever an NGO is trying to professionalise, it starts recruiting people with degrees. The concern with the type and range of the competence is that if our accumulated experience of working in an area has led us to believe that policy in that area requires significant expertise then the capacity should be able to not only analyse but also record and document it, in a way so as to be understood by those who are in the 'business' of formulating policy. Unless we have the capacity within our folds this part of

the work cannot be off-loaded to some temporary consultant. It has to be an integral part of our work, if influencing, changing, altering Public Policy is an integral part of our work.

The third set of constraints in capacity relate to our approaches - approaches in how we look at effective ways of influencing Public Policy. I think experience shows that a combination works - that it is a mix of a number of approaches (Media, Legal, Research) together in a strategic way that gives results in influencing Public Policy. Therefore, the question is of building a capacity with such a combination - to be able to use such a combination. There are many interesting ways in which capacity building has occurred. Not merely by training - it is a very limited option. By bringing people on short duration basis, by building relations with institutions that have that kind of capacity, etc. I hope that when we discuss the question of capacity building we not only discuss limitations but also the solutions to capacity building that we have found that may give us some idea. Otherwise standard prescription of training may be too general and not enough or adequate.

Finally, the work of advocacy by NGOs requires clearer perceptions. Those NGOs which have been engaged in significant grass-roots conscientization, mobilisation and organisation building have also been engaging in Advocacy to demand better policies and better implementation. However, mobilisation *per se*, or in itself, is not sufficient for influencing public policy. Grass-roots mobilisation is a critical variable, but it does not automatically equate with, or result in, advocacy. It is useful to keep this distinction in mind, otherwise we will use a new label (Advocacy) to define our past work, and thereby dilute the meaning of the theory and practice of NGO Advocacy.



*This article is based on a background paper presented to a recent national seminar in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 'Northern Donors and the Funding of Southern NGOs', **organised by IRED Asia.***

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SUNIMAL FERNANDO

RECENT CHANGES IN THE GLOBAL AID ENVIRONMENT

It is generally assumed that Aid leads to Development. In an ideal sense Development can be defined as a process through which a country seeks to achieve prosperity with equity. Aid, on the other hand, emphasises a country's subordinate status. It may even perpetuate this status and harden the inequalities which are usually associated with this status. Aid is in fact a contradiction of Development. It must be made clear that Development does not depend on Aid. In fact what is required for Development is innovation, creative ideas, dedication, commitment, social mobilisation and political will. Aid, which creates economic, psychological, cultural and political dependence is in fact a serious constraint to a country's development. The history of countries in the world clearly shows that it is the countries that did not receive Aid and not the countries that received Aid that developed with autonomy, dignity, self reliance and self respect.

It must be clear that Aid is not a "natural" transfer of economic resources. It is a political process; Aid in fact is clearly a post-war and post-independence phenomenon in the developing world. It is also not altogether wrong to say that Aid is a kind of extension to colonialism. Having been fathered by the ex-colonial countries themselves, Aid came to reflect many of the economic, political and cultural interests of the former colonisers themselves. In some instances the attempt made through Aid was to perpetuate the colonial presence, in others to continue previous economic relations. There were also attempts made through Aid by the erstwhile colonisers to maintain the spheres of cultural influence which the colonising enterprises had produced. Military, strategic and defence concerns were also important in some instances.

Broadly speaking, in the 1950's and 1960's Aid was linked to the process

of decolonisation. During this period the main objective of Aid was for the rich countries to try and maintain a colonial presence in the countries which achieved political independence, sometimes by creating a type of Development in which the South provided raw materials and markets while the North produced manufactured goods, and sometimes by creating areas of cultural unity based on the dominance of an European culture of which Francophone Africa, Anglophone Africa and Spanish speaking Latin America are good examples.

From the 1960's to the 1980's Aid was linked to the process of neo-colonialism in which the objective of Aid was to strengthen the flow of resources from the South to the North and thereby perpetuate an economic order in which the prosperity of the North depended on the poverty of the South. It was also aimed to ensure military and political security against the spread of the socialist world order.

After the collapse of socialism in the late 1980's and the emergence of a unipolar world system, Aid is now being used to spread the neo-liberal economic order together with the western model of a consumerist society and its related system of "good governance" to all parts of the world. The cultural diversity and non-western, non-consumerist world views such as those of Asia with their deep historical and philosophical depth are thus being destroyed and supplanted with a homogeneous world system fashioned by the North in its own image and according to its own norms and values.

However, through all these historical periods and irrespective of the different political, economic, cultural and military motivations relating to Aid, the volume of Aid from the richer to the poorer countries has never reached the proportions which are thought of as desirable. None of the world's richer countries have managed to give 1% of their GDP as Aid to the poorer countries. It is only the Scandinavian countries who have even approached this figure; but they too are now reducing their Aid significantly in recent years.

The channels of Aid are various. Some of it goes from the governments of richer countries to those of poorer countries as bilateral Aid. When a rich country makes a donation to international agencies who then re-allocate these funds in terms of poor country needs, it is said to take a multilateral form. Besides this, and this is our present concern, the rich countries also make substantial sums available to funding agencies to be channelled to developing countries through NGOs who may be of either poor country or rich country origin. Such funding agencies do also receive funds from private sources including individuals in the rich countries. Funds channelled to NGOs from these many types of donors sometimes come as emergency aid and aid for relief and rehabilitation; sometimes as humanitarian aid such as food aid; sometimes as social welfare aid; and sometimes as development aid. More recently assistance to NGOs has come in the areas of human rights and the environment.

Unfortunately there is now a significant diminution in the flow of this Aid from the North to the South. There is a serious economic crisis in the North which has refused to disappear despite several predictions to the contrary. In the North there are problems of employment and problems of income as well as threats to the accustomed standard of living. In addition Eastern

Europe has become a new priority. Aid budgets have had to be drastically reduced. If Aid continues it is because political necessity demands that it continues at a reasonable, though much reduced level. But under the radically changed circumstances of the North, not only the quantum but the priorities of Aid have also changed in recent years. Aid continues to be available but not for the same familiar activities and not under the same familiar institutional arrangements as before.

At the same time, largely as a result of the hardships associated with the economic and moral crisis into which the developed North has plunged itself through its dedication to unrestrained capitalism, consumerism and market orientation, the Northern world view itself is now being increasingly questioned by the Northern people themselves, especially by the youth. The problem that is tormenting Northern society today is the problem of increased marginalisation and social exclusion. Northern society is questioning itself and is increasingly placing its own economic, political and cultural institutions under scrutiny. While socialism has been - temporarily or otherwise - discarded, the capitalist world view and its incumbent philosophical, economic social and political institutions are now being seriously questioned in the face of the growing social exclusion that is accompanying the economic and moral crisis of the North.

What all this amounts to is clear: this is a time of change and crisis. Even if it wants to do so, the North cannot continue with programmes of Aid of the type that it has followed since the decolonising exercise began. Some change in policies and in emphasis is inevitable. The South on its side can feel no great satisfaction at how Development has operated during the last four decades. The changes which Development promised have not taken place. It is arguable that the few benefits which have accrued to the South as a result of Development activities have been at the cost of values and attributes which the South if given a choice, may not have wanted to lose.

This raises several issues for the South in its Development. Is the future to be a mere replication of what has happened in the North and which the North itself is today seriously questioning? Or is it to take far more cognisance of its own ethos, of thought and culture, of its values and historical heritage in fashioning the objectives of its development and the means through which these objectives are best achieved?

Given these differing perspectives some may even argue that the North and the South have to pursue different courses in economic affairs and therefore in international strategies. However, this cannot be. The North cannot cut itself off from the South, not merely for political reasons but because of economic necessity. Equally the South cannot pursue its Development as if the North did not exist. The issue from the point of view of the South is the issue of the best deal. How does it negotiate a position that is advantageous to itself given the changing circumstances that the world experiences today.

Are these circumstances with which Southern NGOs need not be concerned? Is this a process in which they have some role to play? Should they as before take funds from what-

ever source offers it to them and forget wider issues? Should they allow the funding difficulties with which they are faced to push them into a position wherein they forget their role as civil society institutions, forget the voluntarism and dedication to a social philosophy which gave them their legitimacy and become "micro enterprises" subcontracting for Aid agencies which come looking for implementing organisations at grassroot level which are more flexible, efficient and cost-effective than governmental institutions? In whatever way NGOs answer these questions for themselves, there can be little doubt that they must at least be aware of the changing context of their activity and of the new political, economic and institutional options that are now before them.

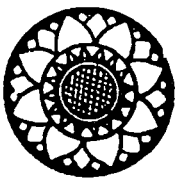
In these circumstances new opportunities are arising for cooperation and collaboration between civil society in the North and civil society in the South. As the opportunities increase for closer collaboration between civil society institutions in the North and the South in their search for an alternative to the capitalist world order which is increasingly presenting itself as a challenge to human civilisation itself, civil society is called upon to confront the Aid system with a new perspective and from a new philosophical base and renegotiate - if possible - a new relationship with it. Such a new relationship, if such is possible, will mean new political options for the NGOs, new institutional arrangements of partnership, new financial mechanisms to replace the project based donor dependent funding system and a new culture of dignity, autonomy and self respect in place of the existing culture of dependence and subordination in the South.

The very circumstances of the crisis in the North create new opportunities for NGOs. But in understanding the nature of the changed Aid environment that flows out of this crisis in the North which reflects a deeper crisis in human civilisation itself, adapting themselves politically, managerially and institutionally to a new set of options in development philosophy and North-South partnership or cooperation, the Southern NGOs face a new challenge. Their sources of funds have not merely been reduced, they are not well tuned to the new opportunities that are before them. Moreover, these funds and many of the development philosophies and activities they support may be inimical to the very interests of the Southern countries as defined by these new options presented by the North and supported by Aid. How then are the Southern NGOs to operate in the future?

The very circumstances of the crisis in the North create new opportunities for NGOs . But in understanding the nature of the changed Aid environment that flows out of this crisis in the North which reflects a deeper crisis in human civilisation itself, adapting themselves politically, managerially and institutionally to a new set of options in development philosophy and North-South partnership or cooperation, the Southern NGOs face a new challenge. Their sources of funds have not merely been reduced, they are not well tuned to the new opportunities that are before them. Moreover, these funds and many of the development philosophies and activities they support may be inimical to the very interests of the Southern countries as defined by these new options presented by the North and supported by Aid. How then are the Southern NGOs to operate in the future?

The obvious question is can they then manage without Aid? If they are to pursue such a course can they mobilise local resources sufficient for their activities? Are they ready, politically, ideologically and psychologically to place their faith on a development model that places primacy of emphasis on social mobilisation, innovation, the people's own knowledge and commitment to succeed rather than on money, funds and resources from abroad? Or can they generate an income through some of their activities which would be sufficient for their purposes?

Are foundations and endowments workable solutions? What role can the private sector play? Are the Southern NGOs ready to negotiate a new relationship with the Aid system on their own terms through a display of their united strength instead of competing with one another to access a pittance from the Aid system which will help them to survive financially and "remain in business"? Are they ready to move away from a mode of Development that places primary importance on Aid and adopt instead a mode which demands collaboration with those civil society institutions and movements in the North that are trying to evolve an alternative to the capitalist world order through a people-centred bottom up process that places reliance not so much on money and material resources but on harnessing the knowledge and experience of the people themselves? Whichever solution is adopted it is clear that we will see a redefinition of the relationship between the Southern NGOs and their Northern donors on the one hand and Southern civil society institutions and Northern civil society institutions on the other, in the circumstances of the Northern crisis and the changed Aid environment that accompanies it.



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JANE G. COVEY

NGOs AND POLICY INFLUENCE

NGO Roles in Policy Influence

For some time now our NGO colleagues have been saying that it is important for the NGO sector to become more active and effective in its efforts to influence government policy. This interest arises from NGO experience during a time when there is more scrutiny of the state's ability to provide services efficiently and equitably, when democracy is on the upswing, and when the problems facing the poor and marginalized seem particularly intractable.

The ways in which NGOs involve themselves in policy are many. Some NGOs have played **innovator** roles, creating new programs or development concepts that have subsequently been adopted by government agencies. In the Philippines, for example, an NGO program to train teachers and students in new forms of intensive and sustainable agriculture was so successful that the government adopted it for the school system as a whole. Other NGOs have taken on the role of **watchdog**, monitoring government formulation and implementation of policies to safeguard the interest of grassroots groups. For example, a coalition of NGOs and people's organizations in Mexico City played a key role in defining and implementing policies to cope with earthquake damage in poor neighbourhoods. Still other NGOs have acted as catalytic **bridges** in promoting cross-sectoral cooperation on intractable problems. The Savings Development Movement in Zimbabwe, for example, was created by a small NGO that linked village savings clubs with government agencies and fertilizer corporations to improve agricultural practices affecting thousands of poor farmers. Taking on these or other roles may enable NGOs to have impacts vastly out of proportion to their size and resources.[1]

As they carry out these roles, NGOs can use a variety of strategies. They may **collaborate** with the state to disseminate a successful local innovation or to improve state services. Strategies aimed at changing public policy and programs include **education** (i.e., providing information, analysis and formulation of policy alternatives), **persuasion** (i.e. using information and analysis to press for policy alternatives), and **litigation** (i.e., challenge through the courts). These roles involve the interplay of cooperation and conflict as NGOs engage in the complex business of policy reform. On the one hand, they must offer positive and workable alternatives and be willing to negotiate and compromise- actions that inevitably bring them closer to government agencies. On the other, they need to maintain their primary allegiance to the grassroots groups whose interests they are representing. A fifth common strategy is **contestation** through protest in various forms to draw attention to negative impacts of state policies and to bring pressure for Change.[2]

NGOs are engaging in policy issues using a variety of roles and strategies around the world. In the Philippines, The Green Forum, a new coalition of NGOs, church groups and people's organizations, is working on several campaigns to influence the Department of Environment's implementation of forest protection policies, to place environmentally sustainable development on the national agenda, and to participate in the 1992 Earth Summit. In Kenya, KENGO, an environmental NGO network, is beginning a grassroots energy study that will form the basis of recommendations for a national biomass energy policy. In Chile the transition to a more democratic regime has produced a government invitation for the NGO community to participate in thinking through national development plans.

As NGOs take on these policy influence activities, they face many challenges. To be effective public interest advocates NGOs need greater capacity (1) to analyze existing policies and offer sound alternatives, (2) to build alliances with other NGOs and movements, (3) to tap the talents and interests of resources such as academia and the media, (4) to gain access and influence with politicians and government officials, and (5) to align their advocacy work with expectations and needs of their grassroots constituents. Few of these capacities are automatically developed in the course of the grassroots activities that are most familiar to most NGOs. Often NGOs will build these capacities through "learning by doing," but it will help a great deal if they can also share experiences with other NGOs that have already learned rather than repeat mistakes of the past.

NGOs also face a complex challenge in balancing various strategies. Too much emphasis on collaboration can lead to state cooptation of NGOs that erodes their relations with grassroots constituencies. Too much emphasis on contestation and challenge produce government backlash that reduces the political space and opportunities for influence. NGOs need to be able to both challenge and cooperate with government agencies, and to make strategic choices among various options that are sensitive to national and local circumstances.

Broader Concerns

We believe that three issues are particularly important for the expanding role of NGOs in policy influence at this time. (1) the role of civil society

in development, (2) the identification of appropriate policy influence strategies, and (3) the roles of external donors in NGO policy influence. These issues are posed because of their direct influence on the role of NGOs in policy and the broader processes of building pluralistic democratic processes to which NGOs commonly subscribe.

1. Civil society and development

The recognition of civil society, the market and the state as interacting determinants of development requires the simultaneous articulation of development goals in social, economic and political terms.[3] Alan Wolfe has proposed that "civil society" is the arena for social development.

> Civil society points toward families, neighbourhoods, voluntary organizations, unions, and spontaneous grassroots movements.... The crucial characteristic of civil society is that it is manageable, available to ordinary people, part of everyday life.[4]

Historically, many NGOs have defined their primary role in terms of social development. Even their economic activities are imbedded in the context of community building and empowerment as in the creation of economic cooperatives. Entry into the realm of policy influence, a political function, offers other avenues for building civil society.

Analyses of social movement and social change suggest that affecting policy is only one benefit of participation in the policy process. Social movements also provide mechanisms for participation in civic and political life that foster consciousness and enable expression and pursuit of community interests in many ways. By encouraging associations and organizations that represent diverse interests, social movements can elaborate the institutional base of civil society.

But there are also potential drawbacks. As NGOs add policy influence to their repertoire of development activities, it is important that they understand how policy influence activities can conflict with their goal of promoting democratization and empowerment at the grassroots. In the United States, for example, it has been argued that lower grassroots participation has gone hand-in-hand with increasing specialized expertise in policy advocacy, as grassroots groups have succumbed to over-reliance on experts and specialists.[5] Public interest advocacy in the U.S. has apparently failed to strengthen broad citizen participation, and allowed NGOs to rely on governmental or elite patronage in lieu of grassroots support.[6] If NGOs take on "professional" policy roles without building popular participation in the process, they may unintentionally become part of a system that ignores grassroots input in spite of their initial values and commitments.

The nature of civil society and the ways in which NGOs may strengthen or weaken its contributions to economic, political and social development need more discussion and debate within the NGO community. Specialized analytic, technical and persuasive competence is required for NGO influence on policy-making. But how do these organizations stay in contact with the grassroots? How do they relate to the NGO sector as a whole? To whom are they accountable? The more NGOs become involved with policy influence, the more important these issues become.

2. Influence strategies

Cross national and cross-cultural discussions of policy influence reveal both impressive similarities and befuddling differences. Often the larger forces that contribute to poverty, alienation and environmental degradation and the dynamics of struggles between the powerful and the powerless are all too similar. At the same time, basic assumptions about social relations (e.g., how to resolve conflict), the nature of citizenship (e.g, rights and privileges of the individual in relation to the state), and appropriate change strategies (e.g, the balance of cooperation and conflict) are often very different.

Relations among governments and NGOs vary considerably across historical and political contexts. One conference of NGO leaders from all over the world suggested, for example, that influence strategies had to be adjusted to respond to type of regime: Quite different approaches were called for in democratic systems, one-party states, and military dictatorships.[7] Simple formulas and frameworks will not suffice to capture the complexity and fluidity of citizen and NGO participation in policy influence. As Michael Bratton puts it:

"Just as we require a framework that enables us to account for citizen engagement as well as disengagement, we need to leave room for engagement between state and society that may be congruent as well as conflictual... more subtle strategies than direct confrontation are required."[8]

In states where NGO involvement in policy is relatively new, strategies and models need to be developed to fit the cultural and political context. Some principles and tools that have evolved in other settings may be useful, but priority should be given to articulating and building policy influence strategies based on local experience and analysis. Learning about Bratton's "more subtle strategies" is particularly important in contexts where histories of antagonism between NGOs and governments predispose them to adversarial interactions or where political contexts are not appropriate for the types of policy influence held out as models from industrialized democracies.

3. The roles of external donors

External donors potentially play critical roles in NGO participation in the policy process, because resources to support policy influence may be very difficult to find. National governments are often ambivalent about encouraging participation in the policy process by NGOs and citizen groups: They may recognize the importance of citizen participation but they may also be reluctant to encourage NGO challenges to government policies and actions.

Most NGOs engage in policy advocacy on behalf of less powerful groups in society-children, women, prisoners, indigenous people, the poor. These groups do not have the economic resources to fund NGO action on their behalf, so other allies with resources are needed. In developing country contexts, these allies often come from outside.

The experience of the human rights movements in Latin America illustrates the crucial contribution of outside supporters. In an analysis of the human rights movement in Chile, Hugo Fruhling notes:

"[NGOs] have almost no alternative to seeking foreign support. The wealthy

sectors of society are generally supportive of authoritarian regimes."[9]

This observation applies to many social, economic and political issues beyond human rights. In general the beneficiaries of the status quo are not inclined to invest resources in changes that will benefit the grassroots groups.

Yet over-reliance on outside support can weaken NGOs' ability to influence policy. The state may dismiss externally-supported NGOs as not representative of local interests or become concerned about foreign interference in national matters. Perhaps more important, NGOs that rely on external resources may not develop the popular support that creates local pressure for change or the national legitimacy that can protect them from arbitrary political action.[10]

In addition to building a strong local support base, NGOs need to clarify the long term consequences of current funding patterns and policies for civil society. Do donor policies support broad-based pluralism? Do they encourage or discourage systemic linkages between NGOs and other sectors? How do they affect the sustainability and grassroots accountability of NGOs themselves? How does donor behavior influence the state's view and policies toward NGOs---- especially in the area of policy influence? What are international donors doing to assist the evolution of local philanthropy? Answers to these kinds of questions can help NGOs and donors create frameworks for donor support that foster long-term grassroots influence on policy as well immediate NGO effectiveness.

A Learning Agenda

We believe that exploration of these issues is important if NGOs are going to be effective in exerting more policy influence. The questions raised are relevant to others concerned with NGOs, including international donors, development thinkers, government decision makers, and other political actors. In our view, several avenues for further learning are particularly important:

1. Policy influence strategies for NGOs

A better understanding is needed of the variety of effective means of policy influence-- cooperative as well as confrontational -- that have been employed by NGOs in different political, social and economic contexts around the world. This knowledge could provide a basis for a) more effective capacity-building for other NGOs, b) more effective cooperation among NGOs interested in influencing national and international policies, and c) better use of donor resources to support participation of NGOs in the policy process.

2. NGO contributions to civil society

Understanding how NGOs enable grassroots participation and build institutional bases for civil society is especially important as the roles of states and markets are changing so rapidly. Under what circumstances do NGOs foster community organization, empowerment, and participation? How do NGO federations and coalitions link the grassroots to regional and national institutions? How do NGO advocacy and public policy organizations relate to the populations for whom they work? Answers to such questions would be valuable to many different actors.

3. Donor policies and programs that build civil society

Donor support for NGOs in some activities has been growing rapidly, but there is relatively little systematic assessment of the impacts of those programs from the perspective of civil society. Are some donor approaches more successful economically, socially and politically than others? Do some approaches sacrifice one set of goals for others? What relationships between donors and NGOs, the market, and the state are needed in rapidly changing political and economic contexts? Answers to these questions might help donors and NGOs as well as governments make better choices among alternative uses of resources.

A Continuing Dilemma

This paper poses three issues that NGOs need to consider as they move toward more active roles in policy formulation. These issues point to the dilemma of effectively bridging the gaps between the social elite (policy makers and donors) and the grassroots as NGOs engage in policy influence.

Maintaining accountability to its grassroots constituency while simultaneously building competencies and credibility with decision-makers is perhaps the overriding challenge facing NGOs that would influence policy. By the very nature of the work, NGOs experience conflict as they try to bridge this gap. The dilemma and tensions associated with it cannot be avoided because they are inherent In the nature of democratic society. But they can be managed, once recognized as a natural dynamic in the life of a grassroots-based policy change effort.

END NOTES

1. For examples of NGOs acting as bridging organizations that have catalytic impacts, including the Mexico City and Zimbabwe cases, see L. David Brown, "Bridging Organizations and Sustainable Development," **Human Relations**, Vol. 44, No. 8, 1991, pp. 807-831. Cases of collaboration by NGOs, governments, grassroots groups, and international donors to solve complex development problems are described in L. D. Brown and R. Tandon, **Multiparty Collaboration for Development in Asia**, Boston, MA: IDR/PRIA/Synergos Working Paper, 1991.

2. Similar strategies have been identified in the context of NGO efforts to influence policies in industrialized countries. See for example, L. W. Huberts, "The Influence of Social Movements on Government Policy", in B. Klandermans (ed.) **International Social Movement Research, Vol. 2,** Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1989 p. 419.

3. Alan Wolfe, "Three Paths to Development: Market, State and Civil Society." Presented at the first International Meeting of NGOs and System Agencies, "Development, International Cooperation and the NGOs," March 6-9, 1991, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. pp 29-30.

4. ibid. p. 3.

5. Daniel Yankelovich. **Coming to Public Judgment.** Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991; pp. 1-11.

6. J. Craig Jenkins. "Nonprofit Organizations and Policy Advocacy," in Walter W. Powell, Ed., **The Nonprofit Sector: A Research**

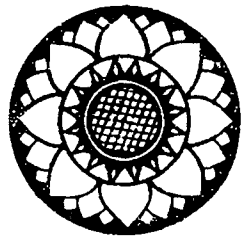
Handbook: New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987 pp. 311-312.

7. For a report of this conference, see Rajesh Tandon, **NGO-Government Relations: Breath of Life or Kiss of Death?** New Delhi: Society for Participatory Research in Asia, 1989.

8. Michael Bratton, "Beyond the State: Civil Society and Associational Life in Africa," **World Politics**, 41:3, 1989, pp. 419.

9. Hugo Fruhling. "Nonprofit Organizations as Opposition to Authoritarian Rule: The Case of Human Rights Organizations in Chile," in Estelle James, Ed., **The Nonprofit Sector in International Perspective,** NY: Oxford University Press, 1989, pp. 358-376. see p. 372

10. Michael Bratton, "Non-governmental Organizations in Africa: Can they Influence Public Policy?" **Development and Change,** Vol. 1(1990), 87-18.



This paper forms the preamble to a longer project proposal presented to the Training Programme on Development Management conducted by PRIA, New Delhi, for South Asian NGOs.

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T. D. DANIEL

ADVOCACY FOR INFLUENCING POLICY

Gandhi said "Recall the face of the poorest and the most helpless man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him." These words are very true in the case of VDOs who are involved in micro action for the development of the target community or involved in translating the experiences of the micro action to influence policy changes both at the micro and at macro levels.

What is advocacy?

Advocacy has been defined as "Actions designed to persuade and influence those who hold governmental, political and economic power to formulate and implement public policy in a manner that benefits, strengthens and improves the lives of those with least power and resources. Advocacy should change societies, institutions and power relationships."

Advocacy in India has much historical roots and is not something new, but in more recent years the examples of effective impact of the work of voluntary organizations had been used for framing important policies in our country. For example the 1977 health care policy of the Government of India was largely fashioned after the work of many voluntary organizations in the field of health care. The emphasis on preventive and promotive health care that was brought into the policy had its base in the work of a large number of voluntary organizations. So as a consequence of voluntary action, many a times indirectly there have been significant policy formulations.

The definition of advocacy should be "broader than lobbying and should be defined as a process as opposed to an event. So the question of advocacy is largely in the context of formulation,

influencing, altering, modifying, implementing, discarding, resisting, encouraging and whatever to do with public policy" (Rajesh Tandon). There may be different ways of influencing public policy; it may include involvement of people themselves in influencing policy, use of media, academic research etc., but without focus on public policy the meaning of the word advocacy will get diluted.

Many think that influencing public policy is not the work of the NGOs. Actually it is on the basis of the cumulative experiences of working at the grass roots that we can come up with interesting, insightful, relevant, appropriate suggestions for the content of the public policy itself. It is the work at the grass roots that became the basis of generating ideas which may provide the substance of a particular public policy. It is not true that influencing public policy can only happen if we have worked at the grass roots. There are many examples of influencing public policy very much in favour of the poor even in our country by those who had never worked at the grass root. Therefore the challenge is "how to link the grass root experience with the task of influencing, framing, formulating and interpreting appropriate pro poor public policy in our country" (Rajesh Tandon). For example in the 1960s, those who were engaged in primary health care were not doing it for influencing public policy but they thought that they were important for them. But when circumstances materialized in a manner and their experiences were known, it became an important basis for new policies on health care. In recent years much of the NGO response has been largely in rejecting or reacting the public policy formulations, it has been successful at times in stopping implementation of the policy because it seemed anti poor. But in influencing public policy, we have to take the task of formulating or providing positive contents to what the policy should look.

Another important aspect could be the importance of recognizing the national and global dimension in public policy formulation. During the post world war 2 the concept of development, aid, development planning etc. are inherited from North. A lot of the government policies were influenced by global forces and agendas. In late 1970s many world conferences influenced our own public policies. A good example is the Alma-Ata conference of primary health care. All this emphasizes the need to take a global view in public policy and influencing even if we operate at a micro level policy matters.

Scaling up the development impact of NGOs

The impact of NGOs on the lives of poor people is highly localized and often transitory. In contrast to NGO programs which tend to be good but limited in scope, governmental developmental efforts are often large in scale but limited in their impact. One of the most important factors underlying the situation is the failure of the NGOs to make the right linkages between their work at micro level and the wider systems and structures of which they form a small part. Some of the successful experiments cannot be replicated because the government structures lack the ability or willingness to adopt new ideas. Hence effective NGO projects remain "islands of success" in an all too hostile ocean. In other words small scale NGO projects by themselves will never be enough to secure lasting improvements

in the lives of poor people. Hence it is not the question of quality of good work of an NGO but how does the NGO maximize the impact. Simple human concer for other people as individuals and in very practical ways is one of the hall marks of NGO work. There is a danger that these qualities will go out of fashion because of mounting concerns for strategy and impact.

Role of NGOs in policy influence

The interest in policy influence arises from the NGO experience during a time when there is a more scrutiny of the State's ability to provide services efficiently and equitably when democracy is in the upswing, and when the problems facing the poor and marginalized seem particularly intractable.

Some NGOs have played innovative roles creating new programs or development concepts that have been subsequently adopted by government agencies.

Other NGOs have taken on the role of Watchdog, monitoring government formulation and implementation of policies to safeguard the interest of the grassroots groups.

Other NGOs have acted as catalytic bridges in promoting cross sectoral cooperation on intractable problems.

Broad strategies adopted by NGOs in policy influence.

Collaboration: NGOs collaborate with the state to disseminate a successful local innovation or to improve state services.

Education: NGOs provide information, analysis and formulation of policy alternatives.

Persuasion: NGOs use information and analysis to press for policy alternatives.

Litigation: NGOs take up the issues and challenge through courts.

NGOs engaging in policy issues using a variety of roles and strategies around the world.

Challenges for NGOs in policy influence

As NGOs take on policy influence they face many challenges. Hence the NGOs need greater capacity to :

analyze existing policies and offer sound alternatives,

build alliances with other NGOs and movements,

tap the talents and interests of resources such as academia and the media,

gain access and influence with politicians and government officials,

align their advocacy work with expectations and needs of the grass root constituents.

Few of the capacities are automatically developed in the course of the grassroots activities that are most familiar to most of the NGOs. Often NGOs will build these capacities through "learning by doing" but will help a great deal if they also can share their experiences with other NGOs that have already learned rather than repeat mistakes of the past.

NGOs also face a complex challenge in balancing various strategies. Too much emphasis on collaboration can lead to state co-optation of NGOs that erodes their relations with grassroots constituencies. Too much emphasis on contestation and challenge produce

government backlash and reduces the political space and opportunities for influence. NGOs need to be able to both challenge and cooperate with government agencies and to make strategic choices among various options that are sensitive to national and local circumstances.

NGOs usual activities, skills and limitations

NGOs usually deliver services like primary health care programs, education programs, income generation and on-farm activities, training etc. They also enhance the skill and the capacity of the grassroots organizations and empower people. They also organise communities for lobbying government resources or to take up a specific issue in the community. All these are done through "projects" at the micro village level.

In order to achieve the above mentioned activities they develop the skills in mobilizing local and external resources, skills in working out the logistics in organizing people and capacity in conscientization. But the limitations of the NGO's functioning are that they could only produce limited impact in a limited defined geographical area. They also make a limited impact socially. They also have limited impact in sustainability of change. They are are also very vulnerable to existing power structures like the existing government system which might block the activities of the NGOs or they might undermine the efforts of the NGO and also might coopt with the NGOs work.

Broad concerns of NGOs in advocacy

The recognition of Civil Society, the Market and the State as interacting determinants of development requires the simultaneous articulation of development goals in social, economic and political terms. Analysis of social movement and social change suggest that affecting policy is only one benefit of participation in the policy process. By encouraging organizations and associations that represent diverse interests, social movements can elaborate the institutional base of the Civil Society. As NGOs take on policy issues, it is important that they also understand how policy–influence activities can conflict with their goal of promoting democratization and empowerment at the grassroots. If NGOs take on professional policy roles without building popular participation in the process, they may unintentionally become part of a system that ignores grass roots input in spite of their initial values and commitments.

It is seen that often the larger forces that contribute to poverty alleviation and environmental degradation and the dynamics of struggle between the powerful and the powerless are too similar. Priority should be given to articulating and building policy influence strategies based on local experience and analysis. External donors potentially play critical roles in NGO participation in the policy process, because resources to support policy influence may be very difficult to find. NGOs have almost no alternative to seeking foreign support. The wealthy sectors of society are generally supportive of authoritative regimes. Yet over reliance of outside support can weaken NGOs ability to influence policy. The State may dismiss externally supported NGOs as not representative of local interests. Moreover NGOs reliance on external resources may not develop the popular support that creates local pressure for change.

Another important question would be how does donor behavior influence the State's view and policies towards NGOs, especially in the area of policy influence.

NGOs playing advocacy role should not loose sight of the grassroots, namely the community and the people for whom it is working for, and should not loose its identity. The organization should not get dominated by advocates rather than field workers and be dominated by campaigns and seminars etc. at the expense of the ongoing work. Usually the NGOs do not have strategies in dealing with the backlash.

Who makes policies

In order that the NGOs take up advocacy to influence public policy, we have to look upstream as to find out who makes the policies. Policies are made nationally and internationally.

Nationally, the politicians, civil servants, businessmen, Aid donors, religious bodies and through lobbies by certain interest groups and issue based groups contribute to the policy.

Internationally, policies are made by bilateral and multilateral aid organizations, Development Banks, trade interests and capital markets.

How are policies made

When policy decisions are made, they are usually made to someones benefit. Policies are made by existing power holders who want to remain in power. Many times policies are made by powerful cultural groups and powerful economic groups.

Hence the policies formulated invariably do not produce intended results due to bad designing and by institutional incompetence. Policy changes take place as corrections of previous policies which may give opportunities for leverage.

Why NGOs have comparative advantages for advocacy work

NGOs have potential in gaining access to accurate information about affects of policies on the poor. Hence it can boldly challenge the assumed effects of the policy. Moreover NGOs are legitimate bodies who can speak on behalf of the poor and it is in a vantage position to organise coalitions and partnerships.

This paper attempts to and reflect on a survey of the Australian Commonwealth Government programs which include some element of public (or 'community') education.

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ALSTAIR D. CROMBIE

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT

'Public education' refers to educative activities designed to promote awareness, understanding, or skills of citizens in relation to important issues on the public policy agenda. Some well-known examples of such issues today are Aboriginal reconciliation, blue-green algae, the Australian constitution and our future governance, violence against women, superannuation and other aspects of financing retirement, road safety, and euthanasia.

The purpose of this essay is to interpret and reflect on the accompanying survey of current Commonwealth Government programs which include some element of public (or 'community') education. The survey included expenditures on labour market programs and English language and literacy, which are also of interest to adult educators, but which should be distinguished from public education in the above sense. This modest, investigative research study was motivated by the inter-related conjectures that public education is becoming an increasingly significant activity of government, and that relatively little is known about its scope and character. It is also motivated by a belief that systematic attention of this sort may lead towards improvement in the quality and the outcomes of public education activities.

One question it raises is the feasibility and desirability, of an annual 'Public Education Budget' report - a regular review of the Commonwealth's public education activities, including perhaps some critical analysis of processes and performance.

The 1994 Budget Survey

Twelve portfolios are included. As can be seen, the information included was obtained from a variety of sources. It was not in general possible with the resources available to

parate the actual costs of public education activities from the total running costs of the responsible agency. Expenditure figures are therefore indicative only. In general one could describe this survey as a pilot. It has revealed a good deal about public education activities of government and, just as importantly, about how one can gather such information.

This is in fact the second such effort. The first such investigation - in 1988 - was also taken under the direction of Richard Johnson, with the assistance of Jacqueline Wilkinson, DEET. Some findings of this initial survey were reported at conferences, including the annual conference of the Australian Association of Adult Education (November 1988). The findings were of considerable interest to this Association, and to the author in particular. By collating and making explicit the scope of Commonwealth involvement and expenditure on public education, it suggested the need for a 'perceptual reversal'.

Adult educators have long thought of themselves and their field as marginal, unrecognised, unappreciated, and under-funded. Such judgements are of course not without basis. They have been under-pinned however, by the presumption that government funding for adult education will be labelled 'adult education', and be disbursed through the education department to adult education providers. However, if one can 'see' that Landcare, for example - which is funded through the Department of Primary Industries and Energy - is, to a very significant degree an educational program, and that this is only one of a large number of such programs, then one is led towards an appreciation that adult education of one kind or another accounts for a massive volume of funding, and pervades the public policy agenda. The perceptual challenge is dual; we adult educators have not seen Landcare (and other such programs) as adult education, and neither, by and large, have those working on Landcare.

This somewhat blinkered vision of the adult education movement has even extended to labour market programs and English language and literacy provision. The former area of course accounts for by far the largest amount of expenditure on adult education. Working Nation commits the government to an additional $6.5 billion over the next four years; the majority of this will support training for unemployed adults, and be administered by the Department of Employment Education and Training. The Adult Migrant Education Program is another large expenditure area, disbursed in this case through the Immigration and Ethnic Affairs portfolio.

It is now becoming clearer and more widely appreciated that programs of public education are a very common response of government. There are grounds for believing that such activity is expanding. While it is important, I believe, that adult educators deepen their understanding of the increasing role and scope of public education, this is also true for those who conceive, design and manage such programs. Despite the enormous total volume of such activity, and quite extensive overlaps in aims and methodologies, there is little evidence of coordination or collaborative efforts. Anecdotal evidence from adult education providers at the community level points more consistently in the opposite direction.

Another question which this survey raises therefore is the feasibility and

desirability of introducing some type of cross-government processes or activity to facilitate the exchange of experience with public education activity, and perhaps, the pursuit of 'best practice' standards for such activity, including evaluations.

The Scope of Governmental Public Education

The accompanying survey collates information from twelve departments - those which could reasonably be expected to be responsible for the bulk of governmental public education expenditures. Those not included are Defence, Finance, Housing and Regional Development, Foreign Affairs and Trade, Finance, Social Security, Tourism, and Veterans Affairs. A more detailed look at these portfolio areas would undoubtedly identify some additional elements of public education. Veterans Affairs, for example, conducts health promotion activities for its constituency of some 680,000 veterans, and has produced a veterans 'Quality of Life Program' for this purpose. The Treasurer has announced that $7 million has been allocated to public education on superannuation, to be administered through his portfolio by the Australian Tax Office and the Insurance and Superannuation Commission. This is to say that the data assembled here will understate the total picture.

The data that we can comment on reveal an impressive scope and diversity. Because of the way in which the budget figures are now produced, it is not possible to cost the various programs with any accuracy. In a number of cases this would involve estimating the proportion of expenditures of an agency - such as the Office of Multicultural Affairs, or the Australian Electoral Commission - that could be attributed to public education activity. In other cases public education programs are assigned a global budget allocation for expenditure over a period of several years, and one would have to go to individual agencies to seek information of what was expended in a particular year. In some cases one needs to distinguish carefully between public education activity and public relations activity; Governments also spend a good deal on promoting and marketing their chosen policies and programs. Bearing in mind these complexities, it seems probable that Commonwealth expenditure on public education is in the range $100 - $200 million.

Within this total there are some large clusters, and a large number of rather small programs. Some of the largest clusters are found in relation to familiar 'access and equity' target groups - Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, women, people of non-English speaking background, people with disabilities, and the unemployed. Much of the public education effort is directed at overcoming various forms of prejudice, intolerance, and stereotyping, which constrain or limit the life opportunities of those affected.

The Minister for Human Services and Health has recently announced that there will be a public education program in relation to people with mental illnesses, for example, which will aim to reduce community ignorance and anxiety about such people. The Office of Multicultural Affairs is responsible for a number of programs aimed at increasing community awareness and understanding of our cultural diversity. ATSIC and the Aboriginal Reconciliation Branch of the Prime Ministers Department fund programs

aimed at increasing knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal Australians.

There are substantial programs directed at issues which particularly affect women, and wider issues of gender awareness and relations. Several of these are administered through the Office for the Status of Women - programs on violence against women, NESB women's health, judicial education, and 'Working Families - Sharing the Load'. Others are administered through the Health portfolio, and include programs on breast and cervical cancers, family planning, and women's health.

Not surprising, rural Australia is another focus for public education activity, a good deal of it under the rubric of the Rural Adjustment and Services program; Rural Counselling, Countrylink, the Rural Access Program each have a public education dimension. Some of these programs clearly relate to the contemporary pressures on agriculture and rural communities, economic and meteorological.

In some ways the two largest 'classic' areas of public education activity are health and the environment. Apart from the very significant resources allocated to addressing community awareness and understanding of particular diseases or health conditions-Aids, breast cancer, drug abuse, and so on, there has been a gradual shift in favour of preventive health measures under such program names as health promotion or health advancement. A prime motive for government in this area is containment, and hopefully reduction, of future costs of health care as a result of a better informed public, more willing to take responsibility for managing and seeking to improve their own health and fitness. This is especially true perhaps in the area of occupational health and safety, where the costs fall on industry, as well as individuals and the public health system. The National Occupational Health and Safety Commission spends a good deal of its budget on various types of education and training.

Public education on environmental issues also has both remedial and preventive aspects. As with health, there is a growing realisation that without widespread public awareness, involvement, and finally changed behaviours, little progress can be made. The Landcare program, funded through Primary Industry and Energy, is an Australian success story in public education, and has spawned a small family of parallel programs, such as Dunecare. The Commonwealth Environmental Protection Agency has undertaken explicit public education activities in relation to cleaner production, water quality, and lead in petrol while the Department of the Environment is responsible for public education activities flowing from the Rio Earth Summit, such as Local Agenda 21.

The work of the Murray Darling Basin Commission exemplifies the priority of public education where solutions have to be found to serious long term environmental degradation problems. Each of the fourteen Technical Advisory groups contributing to the Commission's Algae Management Strategy included public education as a priority for action. The Commission has recently partnered with the Australian Association of Adult and Community Education in a three year 'study circle' program aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of water quality issues and the actions that individual and communities can take.

There is a further clustering of public education activities in the area of social justice, where the Human Rights an Equal Opportunity Commission is a lead agency. It has responsibilities in the areas of race, sex, and disability discrimination, and privacy, and one of its objectives is 'to reduce discrimination by increasing the understanding, acceptance, and observance of human rights and equal opportunity in all sectors of Australian society' Other public education activities in the areas of gender awareness, multiculturalism, and aboriginal reconciliation, and electoral education might also be grouped under the social justice heading.

Public education is a prominent part of the work of the Australian Electoral Commission, which has amongst its goals 'to achieve increased public understanding of and participation in the electoral process'.

The Attorney General's portfolio, which includes a number of independent statutory agencies, carries out public education in a range of areas. It includes the work of the Insolvency and Trustees Service (information and education on personal insolvency), the Bureau of Consumer Affairs (increasing consumer's and supplier's awareness of their rights, responsibilities and obligations), the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (reducing discrimination by increasing the understating, acceptance and observance of human rights an equal opportunity in all sectors of Australian society), the Law Reform Commission, and the Family Law Council. The Office of Legal Aid and Family Services funded programs of marriage counselling, marriage education, family education, adolescent mediation and family therapy, and family skills training to a total of some $19 million in 1992-93. Public education activity in this domain reflects the fact that the law is often best regarded as a last resort, and works best when those affected have some understanding of the legal process.

Public Education - Questions and Issues

1. What does the volume and range of government expenditure on public education tell us about modern government? Although we do not have the data to confirm it, there is a widely shared perception that government's role in public education is expanding. Is this a corollary of the drive for 'smaller government' - a recognition that as government's withdraw 'back to basics', they leave behind a new need for public knowledge and understanding? The recent commitment by the Minister for Human Services and Health to an $8 million 'community awareness campaign' in relation to mental illness could be an example - a flow-on from de-institutionalisation. Governments have also been withdrawing from provision of agricultural extension services, or converting such services to a fee-for-service basis. Is an increase in public education programs directed at rural communities one of the consequences?

Alternatively, an increase in funding for public education may be a reflection of the 'ungovernability' of advanced technological societies; there are those who argue that with many aspects of the current global 'problematique' we have passed the limits of government, and that only a mobilised civil society can resolve the complex messes we now confront in such areas as environmental degradation, violence, health and lifestyle.

Any serious analysis of questions such as these would have to begin with more research, and in particular the collection of relevant data over a longer period of time, in order to establish whether or not a significant trend exists.

2. There is a second, more cynical interpretation of the 'public education' phenomenon. It is argued from time to time that such 'campaign' are a knee-jerk political response to policy 'hot spots'; a way of being perceived as 'doing something', while effectively buying time while media interest and political sensitivity abates. During 1993 for example, violence against women - arguably a deep seated, culturally ingrained dimension of Australian society - became an 'issue in good currency', and one of the responses was to fund community awareness and education processes. A recent public commentator on the government's commitment to change attitudes towards mental illness warns that "four year band aid education programs were inadequate as the community's ignorance stemmed from deeply ingrained, almost sacrosanct ideas of mental illness". (Ref. 'The Australian.' Nov. 5-6)

Relatively small amounts of money distributed amongst the lead agencies in the relevant community of concern, for community awareness or public education activities, may effectively co-opt them to the side of a caring and responsive government.

This raises further questions about the way in which issues get onto the public policy agenda in the first place, and the role that governments and the media play in creating and managing this agenda. In the realm of the environment for example, we seem forever prone to react to the immediately pressing problem, and find it much more difficult to conceive the kind of time scale and scope of educative effort appropriate to significant reversal of undesirable trends.

3. This issue of motive - short term political buffering, or damage control, versus long term commitment to change through education - is likely to be reflected in methodologies chosen, and in the kinds of agencies that are contracted to carry out the work. Short term opinion management is best put in the hands of advertising and marketing experts, advised by the appropriate political 'spin doctors'. Methodologies will most likely centre on use of the mass media, particularly television. Strategic commitment to social or behavioural change through education on the other hand will tend to draw on educational and community development concepts and theories which address the challenge of moving from awareness, to information and action.

It is a reasonable interpretation that the government's 'public education' activity has been dominated by the mentality and methodologies of marketing, rather than education, and that advertising agencies, rather than educationalists, have designed the strategies. This reflects in part, no doubt, the reality of the political time cycle, which constantly constrains governments towards what in educational terms are short time horizons for reporting achievements. An educator's opinion of the appropriate scope and time frame required for efforts to significantly increase public knowledge and understanding of the case for aboriginal reconciliation, or a new system of governance, may be politically

less appealing than the estimates of an advertiser.

How much of the current public education effort is short term, reactive, and educationally superficial? If this is a problem, what could be done to improve the probability that future government expenditure on public education was educationally sound, and not just politically effective?

4. A further closely related issue concerns the distinction between public relations work and education - between the communication and 'selling' of government decisions, policies, strategies, and the cultivation of an informed but critical citizenry, better equipped to make decisions about the complex issues that confront them. Sceptics would argue that government initiated public education is almost bound to be in some measure self-serving, to promote the government's perception of an issue, and its preferences for responding to it.

This kind of judgement has to date vexed the commonwealth's stated wish to enhance the political literacy of the population, to enable a truly informed and rational debate to occur of the vital issue of our future governance. An academic-led 'Civics Expert Group' is currently preparing a strategic plan for this purpose, which will have to include some recommendations on the way in which such education can be kept at arms length from government.

Given that all education about the social world is in a basic sense value laden, it need not be a concern that governments have decided that for example, a reduction in smoking will be good for community health, or consumption of less fat and salt will diminish the prevalence of heart disease. Given such judgements, there are still important choices of process for bringing about the desired changes in attitude, belief and behaviour. The educational paths would tend to rely more on 'cognitively open' approaches, which provide relevant information to people in settings that conduce to critical reflection and informed decision.

What are the appropriate limits on governmental strategies for 'selling' its policy and program solutions, and how could such activity be demarcated from authentic public education activity, in which success would not necessarily be measured in terms of the numbers agreeing with the government's view?

5. An important practical issue is the feasibility, and the desirability, of seeking to enhance 'whole of government' awareness or coordination of the total public education effort.

Given for example, the preoccupation in the priority domain of skills formation with bench-making and international best practice, one could make a case for similar attention to quality and quality improvement in the area of public education. One might then begin a search for world best practice standards in Scandinavia, where democracy has long been self-consciously underpinned by a strong commitment to adult education on public affairs. Olaf Palme once famously remarked to the effect that 'Sweden is largely a study circle democracy.'

In addition to improvement of practice, and perhaps a prior consideration, is the question of whether anyone needs to know what the size of government public education activity

is, what are its trends, major types, and so forth? There are probably many activities of this sort, which find expression across a range of government agencies, but which are judged not to merit the administrative effort of central attention, let alone coordination. The trend in public administration has been in the direction of reducing rather than elaborating such formal coordinative functions and processes.

The Office of Government Information and Advertising (OGIA) plays this role in relation to public information processes. The Office 'provides consultancy assistance to government departments and agencies on advertising and other methods of public communication. This includes market research, public relations, strategic planning, marketing and advising on the content and appropriateness of printed material for public use'. It is the 'whole-of-government' equivalent of the departmental public information/public relations units maintained by each department to publicise its programs. There is at present no such attention to public education processes.

Two obvious reasons for introducing some measure of central coordination here might be to nurture improved practice through exchange and critical reflection on past experience-to profit from past experience - and to seek synergies - productive ways in which planned public education activities can support or feed on one another. Central coordination of some sort would also assist the development of systematic collaboration with academics and other professionals with expertise and involvement in public education.

6. Finally, there is an issue of particular interest to the Australian Association of Adult and Community Education. Adult and Community Education (ACE) is increasingly recognised and supported by governments as the 'fourth sector' design, delivery and evaluation of learning opportunities for adults. Many of them are already substantially involved in public education activity, on their own initiative. Collectively this ACE sector has a capacity to partner with government in active public education programs on such issues as superannuation, mental illness, waste management, and so on. The AAACE, which is the government supported national peak body for adult and community education, has already taken a lead in the development and dissemination of adult discussion group, or 'study circle' material on landcare (Department of Primary Industries and Energy), aboriginal reconciliation (Aboriginal Reconciliation Council), and blue green algae (Murray Darling Basin Commission).

This fourth sector of education is a nation-wide distribution system managed by people with skills and experience in adult learning processes, who work closely with their local communities and are committed to the ideals and values of 'active citizenship'. Governments at all three levels are increasingly recognising and supporting ACE providers, especially in relation to their capacity to deliver certain types of vocational training for adults. They also have a significantly undeveloped potential for contributing to public education.

Possible Future Actions

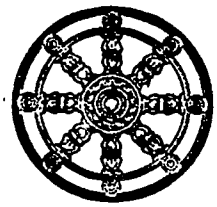
This essay is intended to stimulate some critical reflection on the phenomenon of government sponsored public education: Why are governments involved in such activity? How

do they go about it? What are the topics or subjects of such activity? Is it an expanding realm of governmental activity? Is it adequately evaluated? Is there an appropriate concern for quality and performance improvement? Whilst there are practitioners, a number of consultants, scholars, policy analysts, and so forth interested in such questions, I am not aware of any systematic or substantial work in this area. I would like to suggest three possible paths for future activity:

1. That the 1994 budget survey be repeated in 1995, using the lessons from the 1994 experience. This may enable a much more precise estimate to be made of the scope of public education activity, and provide a more substantial body of data for addressing some of the above questions.

2. That there be a research project focussing on the theoretical, conceptual and methodological frameworks in use in public education activities, directed at elucidating the conditions for effectiveness in meeting the stated aims of such programs.

3. That there be an invitational 'round table' meeting in 1995 of practitioners, politicians, scholars and educators to explore public education as a distinctive area of educational practice, and develop recommendations for practice improvement.



This report presents some of the reflections of the author resulting from her participation at the recent World Summit on Social Development, Copenhagen, Denmark.

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MARIA LOURDES ALMAZAN-KHAN

WORLD SUMMIT ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT : A POSTSCRIPT

The United Nations World Summit on Social Development, held on March 6-12, 1994 in Copenahagen marked the culmination of wide-ranging international deliberations on the festering global problems of poverty, unemployment and social (dis) integration, initiated by a UN General Assembly Resolution on December 1992. It was the largest gathering of heads of state (116 attended) with a sizable participation of NGOs (over a thousand registered) and government officials. The Summit was a timely attempt to draw world attention to the issues of marginalisation, inequity, displacement, violence, ethnic and civil strife in a period when the ethos of growth and the promotion of open, free-market forces in global economic organisation had attained renewed predominance.

The Summit had a special significance to ASPBAE and groups involved in education given the crucial role education plays in poverty reduction and elimination, employment generation and social integration. There is ample evidence indicating that the majority poor have been consistently denied access to basic social services including education. Investments directed at these groups have remained low and very inadequate. The World Bank estimates that in low-income countries, more than 40% of those who enter primary school fail to finish (World Development Report 1990). In spite of this, government allocations to education even in these areas have usually been disproportionately skewed towards investments in higher education - thus favouring the elites in these societies. Education as in South Asia, is very much urban and male-biased. Even when available, the quality of education accessible to the poor is dismal. Often irrelevant, and disempowering, this education has had very limited impact in reducing the vulnerabilities of the marginalised and

the excluded. Ensuring that education for the poor was on the agenda of the World Summit and its preparatory activities motivated ASPBAE's active intervention in this event.

To many NGOs who participated in the Social Summit, involvement was promised on: 1) the possibility to influence policy-makers (even in a limited way) towards effecting incremental reforms in future policies and programmes; 2) maximising the opportunity presented by these international events to highlight alternative development thinking in the mainstream of national and international debate; (3) the potential of this event in forging strategic alliances and linkages between and among various institutions of civil society involved in social development.

Through its membership in the People's Alliance on Social Development (PASD), ASPBAE assisted in facilitating dialogues, workshops, consultations within the region to provide opportunities for various NGOs, people's organisations (trade unions, peasant associations, women's groups etc), consumer groups, members of the media and other institutions of civil society, to articulate their analysis and positions on the core themes of the Summit and put forward a set of alternative frameworks and policies reflective of their different contexts, aspirations and visions of development. ASPBAE and the other members of the People's Alliance disseminated information on the Summit and NGO activities related to its peparatory work at national, regional and international levels. The People's Alliance participated in all the regional and international Prep Comm meetings of the Summit and was very active in lobbying work specially through the Group of 77 countries. It coordinated its efforts with the other NGO networks involved in lobbying and advocacy during the Social Summit like the Women's Caucus, the Development Caucus, the International Council for Volunteer Associations (ICVA) and the International Council for Social Work (ICSW). In relating with these networks, the Alliance provided a distinct contribution by forwarding positions and platforms defined through regional consultations and dialogues in the largest regions of the South (Asia-Pacific, Africa and Latin America), thus providing a strong voice from Southern NGOs in the deliberations. The People's Alliance was signatory to the Copenhagen Alternative Declaration, the common statement drafted during the Social Summit by over 600 NGOs including the major NGO networks active in advocacy during the entire preparatory processes.

During the NGO Forum in Copenhagen, the People's Alliance convened daily workshops to discuss the main areas of debate and discussion in the formal sessions, notably debt, structural adjustments, women and social developments and employment. It sponsored a dialogue between NGOs and G77 representatives to table NGO concerns regarding the direction of the emerging agreements and resolutions during the committee negotiations. In these activities, ASPBAE, along with the other regional association members of the International Council of Adult Education (ICAE) from Africa, Latin America and North America, shared experiences of the popular education movements in their regions in addressing the questions of poverty and other social concerns. A special issue of the **ASPBAE Courier** "Putting Literacy on the Agenda of the Social Summit" was distributed during the NGO Forum in Copenhagen.

The Dannish Association of Adult Education a national member of ICAE hosted the People's Alliance meetings in their office in Copenhagen. They also provided logistical support to the network during their stay.

At the end of the week-long event, the final agreements of the Summit left much to be desired. The Summit delegates failed to agree on clear targets and benchmarks for agreements and commitments made. Majority of the developed countries steadfastly refused additional allocations to augment the existing resources for social development and catalyse the implementation of the Programme of Action. There was no consensus on the UNDP 20/20 formula. (This proposes the allocation of 20% of ODA and 20% of the national budgets to social development - the effect of which would have been the generation of the necessary resources to forward the commitments made in Copenhagen. Initial estimates indicate that $30-40 billion per annum over the decade is required solely for the universalisation of basic social services). There was no progress in the negotiations for debt relief.

These raise very serious doubts about the sincerity of governments and the UN in abiding by their commitments and in implementing the Programme of Action. Further, as the NGO Alternative Declaration states, ... "the overreliance that the document places on unaccountable, open, free-market forces as a basis for organising national and international economies aggravates, rather than alleviates the current global social crisis. This false premise threatens the realisation of the stated goals of the Social Summit."

Many tend to believe that the poor, at whose behest this Summit was called, may ultimately have very little to gain from this event.

While understandable, such pessimism should not obviate the value of some advances made by the World Summit-these constitute leverages NGOs may utilise to further opportunities for the poor and further expand the spaces for reform and change.

The political commitment of the heads of state to global poverty eradication and full employment goals is definitely a step forward. For the first time in UN history, the negative consequences of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) were recognised, and a commitment made to ensure that SAPs should include social development goals. States were also called upon to reduce military spendings and to prioritise social development.

The Declaration included a commitment to promote and attain universal and equitable access to quality education and health. The Programme of Action (Chapter III on the "Expansion of Productive Employment and the Reduction of Unemployment" recognised the critical role of education and training in addressing the problems of unemployment and under-employment and called on governments to establish well-defined educational priorities and effective investments in education and training.

The recognition of civil society's role in advancing social development figured prominently in the final text of Agreements.

How NGOs and civil society build from this recognition and advance the positive gains achieved during the Social Summit is a challenge of the coming period. The People's Alliance and its convening member organisations have made a commitment to carrying these processes forward.

The Alliance intends to participate in efforts towards monitoring the im-

plementation of the Social Summit agreements. With its membership largely located in countries of the South where the fruition of these commitments and programmes are most required, the Peoples Alliance can contribute meaningfully in this effort. The Alliance is exploring the possibility of collaborating with the UNDP which is keen on initiating the formulation of monitoring indices for the Social Summit Agreements.

The People's Alliance intends to continue providing arenas for study, discussion and debate on social development issues towards the formulation of alternative, people-centered development policies and programmes, arising from and reflective of the rich experience of NGOs and civil society in advancing social development. Towards this end, the Alliance hopes to convene a People's Summit on Social Development by 1997.

ASPBAE and its regional partners in ICAE are in a vantage position to participate in monitoring the Social Summit Agreements as they relate particularly to the promotion of education and basic social services specially for the poor. They can monitor government commitment to social development as expressed in budgetary allocations to social spending. Experience has however shown that increases in budgets to education are no guarantee that the poor will have access to quality education. ASPBAE should enjoin their member organizations to continue pressing their respective governments to define education policies and programmes consistent with the goals of poverty eradication and full employment. Culling from their practice, they should actively contribute to the policy debate and the search for appropriate strategies to ensure that education is accessible to all children and adults, enabling of people in their total development, empowering specially of the poor and the most vulnerable.

This paper reproduced here with the courtesy of UNICEF., New York, USA, was widely distributed at the preparatory meetings of the World Summit on Social Development, with a view to enhancing the capacities of NGOs in lobbying and advocacy, deriving from Unicef's wide experience of similar international conferences.

UNICEF

LESSONS LEARNED: MAKING SUMMITS WORK

The question of implementation, of giving declarations and resolutions some grip and purchase in the real world, is the most important, the most difficult, and the least discussed of all issues in the development debate.

This is also the question with which the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) will be most urgently confronted. The need, therefore, is to identify and to build on strategies that have proven to work. Models can be previous summits, most particularly the World Summit for Children in 1990. The commitments entered into are being translated into reality on the basis of the following principal strategies.

* the breaking-down of broad goals and objectives into 'doable' and measurable positions;

* the securing and sustaining of the greatest possible political commitment at the highest possible political level - and the simultaneous mobilization of media and public support;

* the mobilization of a much wider range of social resources than is conventionally associated with social development efforts - including educational systems, mass media, schools, religious groups, the business community, and the non-governmental organizations; the demystification of knowledge and technology in order to empower individuals and families; and the reduction of procedures and techniques to relatively simple and reliable formulas - allowing large-scale operations and the widespread use of large numbers of paraprofessionals;

* the deployment of the expertise and resources of the United Nations and its agencies, and of bilateral assistance programmes, in close support

of agreed goals. This should include the close monitoring of progress, followed up when necessary by increased support.

Identifying the doable

The selection of goals is crucial to this process. Such goals are often necessary to translate potential into results: they can make the abstract into the tangible; they can bring a sense of common purpose to the wide variety of organizations and interests that must be involved in any large-scale human enterprise; they can sustain and lend urgency to efforts that are necessarily long term; they can serve as a banner for attracting media attention and public support. Goals break general overall aims into "doable" propositions.

The essential lesson is that overall aims must first be closely examined to see where the potential breakthroughs can be made. Knowledge, technologies, and the experience that has been gained from 40 years of conscious development efforts must be scrutinized in order to identify the low-cost techniques - whether in health care or education or other areas - that have been proven to work and are waiting to be put into practice on the same scale as the problems. Thereafter, it is a case of breaking down overall aims until the doable proposition is identified, which often itself be broken down further.

A goal is not a goal unless it has a date attached and unless progress towards it can be measured - which requires among other things close monitoring and periodic reviews of progress on the basis of up-to-date and reasonably accurate social statistics.

A major strand in today's consensus on development issues is that economic growth alone is no guarantee of human progress, especially for the poorest, and that the universalization of the basic benefits of progress should be both directly promoted and directly measured. Without better statistics, this part of the consensus simply cannot be implemented. **The Copenhagen Summit should therefore attempt to institute new means of generating accurate and timely statistics on all aspects of both social development and social disparity.** These social statistics must then become part of the warp and weft of media coverage, of political debate, and of public concern.

Political commitment

Once specific goals have been internationally agreed, high-level political commitment must be mobilized. Once secured, political commitments must be sustained (and resecured whenever there is a change in government or leadership). The realities of political life mean that the important is constantly under threat from the immediate. Social goals therefore have a tendency to sink without a trace as soon as political waters become choppy - and must be dragged back to the surface at every opportunity.

Wherever possible, the process of building on formal political commitments should begin with the drawing-up of specific national plans for the achievement of agreed goals.

The limits to what can be achieved by political mobilization of this kind as clear as the potential benefits: it is not an approach that, on its own, can be expected to bring about fundamental economic change. Yet as part of an

overall strategy it has proved its importance. Most analyses of development issues in recent years have led eventually to the point that **the political will is lacking to do what could be done.** In the future, instead of bemoaning the lack of political will, we must do more to build it.

Social resources

The strategy of social mobilization is another strategy which could also help to implement whatever goals emerge from the Copenhagen Summit.

This potential arises from the transformation in social capacity across the developing world. That capacity - to organize, to administer, to reach out to support and inform an entire population - has been transformed by the 2 billion radios and the 900 million television sets that today bring broadcasts, satellite transmissions, and video into most communities; by the rise of literacy to almost 70% and of primary school enrollment to almost 80%, and by the 9,000 daily newspapers that are now being published in the developing world; by the growth of government services; by the more than 5 million doctors and nurses. It has been transformed by the growth of banking and postal services, of electricity, gas and water utilities, of marketing channels, of the trade union and cooperative movements, of employers' associations and professional societies. And most of all, it has been transformed by the growth of thousands of voluntary agencies, non-governmental organizations, women's organizations, religious societies, consumer groups, youth movements, and the million of local neighbourhood associations, etc.

Today, this potential of social mobilization can be used to promote and support education and training, family planning and child care, environmental protection and energy efficiency, and agricultural innovation. It can help to create an informed demand for basic services, and it can help to make available knowledge and technologies for lightening the workloads of women and girls. Social capacity has to be consciously mobilized for social development.

The role of the United Nations

In 50 years of working for development, and collaborating with governments and aid agencies in over 150 developing countries, the United Nations family of organizations has built up an enormous fund of experience and expertise in almost every area of social development. This capacity, too, must now be more fully exploited for the implementation of today's development consensus.

In large measure, that development consensus is grounded in the work done by United Nations and its agencies in the 1970s. The first UN Conference on Human Environment in 1972, the World Population Conference and the World Food Conference in 1974, the UN Conference on Human Settlements in 1976, and, perhaps most significantly, the World Employment Conference of 1976, were major forces in coming to grips with new and complex issues, assessing the trends, and drawing the conclusions that have influenced the world's thinking about these issues over the last 20 years.

But it is true to say that **few of the recommendations, goals and targets emerging from these major conferences of the 1970s were translated into widespread programmes of action.** Any progress that

there might have been was effectively derailed in the 1980s by the debt crisis, by structural adjustment programmes, by the swing towards an almost exclusive reliance on free-market economic systems, and by a major shift in power towards the Bretton Woods institutions. Much of the work and many of the insights of the 1970s were there by forgotten.

The swing towards market economic systems was necessary. But whereas it is obvious that free-market economic systems are more capable of generating economic growth, it is far from obvious that they are capable of creating just, civilized, and sustainable human societies. And in the recent commitment to free-market economic policies in many nations of the developing world, supported by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, insufficient account has been taken of the effects on the poor, on the vulnerable, or on the environment.

The social and human consequences of this omission are now beginning to be felt. One result is a revival of interest in social development, and this is clearly reflected in the calling of the Copenhagen Summit.

The potential of the United Nations family must now be exploited if the social development goals emerging from Copenhagen are to be translated into action.

Broader challenges

On the broad front of economic and social development - in addition to the three broad objectives for discussion in Copenhagen (the reduction of the proportion of people living in absolute poverty; the creation of the necessary jobs and sustainable livelihoods; the significant reduction in disparities among various income classes, sexes, ethnic groups, geographical regions, and nations) - UNDP has also put forward specific goals for consideration. Its suggestions are:

* That the governments of developing countries should allocate at least 20% of their expenditures to meeting priority human needs for adequate nutrition, clean water, safe sanitation, basic health care, primary education, and family planning information and services, and that the industrialized nations should restructure existing aid programmes in order to also allocate minimum of 20% to these same basic priorities (this "20/20" initiative is now an agreed position of UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA.)

* That these increases in expenditures on basic social development should be structured into agreements between donor and developing countries designed to meet basic human needs within a defined time - and that progress in implementing these agreements should be internationally monitored.

* That both developing and industrialized nations should agree to a targeted annual reduction rate for military spending (UNDP suggests a 3% per year reduction, which would yield approximately $ 460 billion in the second half of this decade).

The Forth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in September 1995, could also attempt to break down the overall aim of progress for women into specific goals. Again, the experience gained in recent years should make it possible to advance doable propositions in such fields as equal opportunity legislation, women's reproductive health, equality of educa-

tional opportunity, and the widespread promotion of the kind of low-cost technologies that could be an important first step in liberating the time and the energies of many hundreds of millions of rural women in the developing world.

The effectiveness of any and all of these goals will depend upon their being broken down, and if necessary broken down again and again, until the doable propositions are identified. If this can be done, then the Copenhagen Summit will have built the basis for a renewed international development effort in the second half of the 1990s.

This paper first appeared in the Sri Lanka ***Daily News*** *of May 12, 1995, and is partially reproduced here with the courtesy of this national newspaper.*

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N. JASENTHULIYANA

THE UNITED NATIONS AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

The 50th anniversary of the United Nations coincides with a time in history that calls for serious rethinking of the ways in which the organisation deals with development, peace and security. It is therefore, a time not only for reflection on the achievements and lessons of the past, but also for charting a course for the next century.

There is much to celebrate. When the Charter of the United Nations came into force on October 24, 1945, it heralded the birth of the United Nations as an organisation created to maintain world peace and security and to work for social progress. Although its failures and frustrations have received widespread attention, its successes in economic and social development and peace-keeping have clearly made a difference in the second half of the twentieth century.

A forum for all nations, the United Nations represents the highest aspirations of all people for a world free of war, poverty, repression and suffering.

To carry out its mandate, the United Nations must have basic resources at its disposal. It requires not only the political and financial backing of member states, but also needs the support and understanding of its larger constituencies - the general public, non-governmental organizations and the business community. The 50th anniversary commemoration seeks to deepen this understanding and commitment, inspire a new generation of United Nations supporters, and pave the way for the next 50 years.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are part of the broader United Nations community. This might not have always been true in the past because the United Nations was considered to be a forum for sovereign states alone. Within the space of few

short years, however, this attitude has changed. Non-governmental organizations are now considered full participants in international life and are an essential element in the work of the United Nations Organization.

This change has been greatly accelerated by the pace at which the world itself has changed over the past five years. The complete upheaval and transformation of the international system which dictated international relations for 40 years has allowed us to view economic, social and cultural phenomena without the ideological blinkers of the past. Today, there can be no doubt that the many problems facing the world are all inextricably linked and that we must build a framework which takes into account not only political issues, but economic behaviour and social and cultural aspirations.

In this process, non-governmental organizations are a basic form of popular representation. Their participation in international organizations is, in a way, a guarantee of the political legitimacy of those international organizations.

In 'An Agenda for Peace', the Secretary-General explicitly recognised that the goals we all share, the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security cannot be accomplished solely through the actions of the United Nations and member states. Indeed, as the Secretary-General has stated on several occasions, *"Peace is too important to be entrusted to State alone."* Therefore, he noted, that NGO's must be involved in all phases of peace-building efforts, and in doing so will complement the work of the United Nations. It must be noted, however, that while the humanitarian and social work done by NGOs in the context of United Nations peace-keeping and peace-making activities are often conducted under perilous and difficult conditions, these activities cannot be conducted without proper regard for the political complexities involved in a particular operation. Proper consideration must also be given to the view that despite the valuable contributions that NGOs make toward international peace, the influence of NGOs is disproportionately weighted to those based in the industrialised countries because those organizations are able to tap greater financial resources to conduct their activities.

Therefore, as efforts are made to expand the work of NGOs into the United Nations system, we must all be aware of this disparity and work hard to ensure that in doing so we do not further widen the gap between rich and poor, between North and South.

These elements must also be taken into account in the field of international development, in which NGOs continue to play an active and essential role.

In his recently published 'Agenda for Development'. The Secretary-General recognized NGOs as one of the important actors in the area of development. The report noted that NGOs undertake projects valued at more than $7 billion annually. Long active in the search for peace, NGOs have often been at the scene of conflicts at an early stage making a crucial contribution to the immediate relief of stricken populations and laying foundations for the reconstruction of war-torn societies. With flexible structures, the ability to mobilize private funds, and highly motivated staff, NGOs possess a vast potential to effect development.

Over the past decade, the growth of NGOs in numbers and influence has been phenomenal. They are creating new global networks and proving to be a vital component in the great international conferences of this decade. The time has arrived to bring NGOs and United Nations activites into an increasingly productive relationship of consultation and cooperation.

In doing so, we must keep in mind the different roles that NGOs play in the work of the United Nations. In many cases the work of NGOs takes place in very specific, very trying circumstances and deal with high-profile issues, such as disaster relief and the care of refugees. These cases often receive the most attention from the media and hence the general public is quite aware of the work of NGOs, such as the International Red Cross and Oxfam.

Equally important, however, is the work of the multitude of other NGOs, such as the international network of Lions Clubs, whose work is of a lower profile but which is conducted worldwide and on a continuous basis. This quiet, often behind the scenes work, contributes to community-building at the local level and as such represents a vital, though sometimes, intangible, contribution to international development and security.

In 'An Agenda for Development' the Secretary-General declared development as the most important task facing humanity today. Yet, as the United Nation celebrates its 50th anniversary, there is a danger of losing sight of such an essential task. Beset by the growth of conflicts, and the necessity to maintain the peace in the tense post-cold war environment, we risk getting lost in the urgency of peacekeeping, at the expense of the longer term development effort.

In the last few years the United Nations has started a process of re-examination and redefinition of development which takes into account the progress of the past half century and which is aimed at restoring to development questions the urgency they deserve.

Through a cycle of world conferences the United Nations is trying to shape a consensus around certain essential development values. This process began at the World Summit for Children in New York in 1990 where the world's attention was drawn to the problems, needs and rights of its most vulnerable citizens. In Rio de Janeiro in 1992 the United Nations gathered the world community to discuss the links between environment and development. In Vienna in 1993 the United Nations brought together world leaders to debate the proposition that without full respect of human rights there can be no lasting development. Indeed at that conference the right to development was reaffirmed as a basic human right.

In Cairo in 1994 the United Nations Conference on Population and Development re-established the population dimension as a central aspect of development. Population growth can be an asset to development but unchecked growth in population can also represent a special challenge to the development effort.

In Copehnagen the World Summit for Social Development was concluded. At this summit problems such as poverty, unemployment and social dislocation were examined by the representatives of the world community.

Renewed commitments were made towards the eradication of poverty, imaginative approaches to issues of unemployment were presented and courageous initiatives to end social dislocation were discussed.

In September 1995 in Beijing the international community will gather to discuss the integration of women into the global development effort. Without the active participation of women there can be no development. A greater role for women is both an indicator of development and a precondition for the development process to take place.

Finally in 1996 in Istanbul the World Conference of Human Settlement, Habitat II is to be convened. The importance of this conference dealing with the many issues of development in an urban environment is such that it has been rightly labelled "The City Summit."

It is heartening to note that there has been significant NGO participation at each of these conferences and in particular at the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development where over 1,400 NGOs were accredited to the conference and many more participated in the parallel global forum. More than 2,500 NGOs attended the Social Summit in Copenhagen and larger numbers are likely to attend the Beijing and Istanbul conferences. These numbers illustrate the point that NGOs have become an increasingly essential element in the work of the United Nations and that their growth has mirrored the changing nature of the organisation and the international situation in which it operates.

The participation and input of NGOs and grassroot organisations ensure that the programme of action adopted at these conferences are based on a close reading of the needs of populations everywhere. Development though requiring international cooperation is the responsibility of member states and can only succeed if it respond to the need of people and articulates these needs into a coherent policy framework. Because these needs are in many cases most clearly expressed through NGOs, the participation of such organisations in United Nations conferences and other work of the organisation is clearly a crucial link in the process.

Together with academia the professions and the private sector NGOs are a cornerstone of what the commission on Global Governance commonly referred to as the Carlsson Commission has referred to as Civil Society.

One of the recommendations contained in the Commission's recently released report was the establishment of a Forum of Civil Society comprised primarily of NGOs which would meet each year prior to the beginning of the General Assembly and which would address among other things the agenda items to be considered by the Assembly. The forum would serve as a vehicle for providing direct input into the deliberations of the General Assembly and thus would be quite different from the annual NGO conference organised by the United Nations Department of Public Information.

Establishment of the Forum and integrating its work into the work of the United Nations will of course require a great deal of cooperation and consultation between the United Nations, NGOs and other members of Civil Society and member states. This proposal must be considered in the context of the broader recommendations of the Carlsson Commission for

reform of the United Nations system and the on-going efforts of the organisation to adapt to its new role in a changing world. While this process will not be an easy one and will certainly be evolutionary rather than revolutionary, the Lions International and other similar global organisations will have a significant role to play....

As the international community tackles increasingly complex issues partnership is a theme that has often been stressed by the Secretary -General. And for the United nations one of the most important partnerships is the one it has forged with the NGO community.

NGOs have been instrumental in shaping the message of the United Nations to the international community-indeed in shaping the organisation itself - since the days of the Charter Conference in San Francisco. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the organisation, NGOs continue to provide vital links between the United Nations and its worldwide constituencies placing issues on the global agenda and sharpening the focus of the United Nations.

This paper jointly written by Rajesh Tandon and Argus Purnomo strongly argues for the creation of an Asian Regional Forum on Alternative Development Institutions.

Dr. Rajesh Tandon *is the President of ASPBAE and Executive Director of PRIA, New Delhi.*

Mr. Argus (Pungki) Purnomo, *former CEO of WAHLI, the largest NGO coalition on environment in Indonesia, went on to build POLANGI, a new NGO focused on Policy Research and Advocacy on Environment and Sustainable Development.*

RAJESH TANDON

ARGUS PURNOMO

ASIAN REGIONAL FORUM OF ALTERNATIVE INSTITUTIONS

Over the past two decades, several initiatives of various forms have emerged in many Asian countries. Most of these initiatives have been based on the organized efforts of the poor and the oppressed themselves. Several other initiatives have taken the form of what have come to be known as non-governmental organizations or voluntary developmental organizations in the countries. These initiatives have blossomed and acquired a place of prominence and attention in the countries regionally as well as globally. Yet, there appears to be certain gaps, in the emergence of an Asian, integrated and comprehensive perspective of alternative development in the Asian context. This paradox can be understood in the sense of absence for an appropriate mechanism at the regional level. The need for such a mechanism can be understood from various ways:

1. Asia has witnessed, over the last fifteen years, an interesting and powerful emergence of sectoral and thematic networks and organizations. Today such networks exist in the areas of environment and sustainable development, appropriate technology, indigenous people, women, literacy and adult education, community health, culture etc. These regional networks and associations, have brought together grass-root initiatives and NGO's concerned with the theme and sector to begin to articulate an Asian position and perspective on that theme. The sectoral or thematic networks or associations have rarely interacted together to evolve a common and comprehensive understanding of problems of development and their long-term solutions in the Asian context.

2. In the absence of a regional forum to bring together experiences from diverse themes and sectors, synthesis and evolution of an Asian posi-

tion and perspective on problems of development and frameworks for alternative and sustainable development from the perspective of the poor and the oppressed has not occurred. It has not occurred largely because the sectoral and thematic networks and associations have been busy articulating and organizing their thematic and sectoral issues, positions and perspectives. Therefore it was perhaps premature for such an integrated and synthesized Asian forum to emerge. Now may well be the historical time for such an evolution.

3. Many a time the work of peoples' organizations and voluntary development groups tends to be reactive. Many a time they are fighting the problems the poor and the deprived face. Most of the energies go in maintaining the levels of survival and in critiquing the dominant models of development, strategies and programmes, implemented by national and international institutions. Very little opportunities and mechanisms exist to articulate our own ideas and concepts, our own analysis and our own perspective, on what is our vision of a desirable society and therefore, a desirable and appropriate framework of development in our societies. So whether it is a question of "Education for All" or the question of "Green Fund" proposed by the World Bank most of the time our response has been reactive as opposed to proactive. Creation of an Asian forum should help in building up a process by which our vision, our dreams, our perspectives begin to get articulated, synthesized and presented as alternative frameworks and strategies of development in the Asian context.

4. Increasingly, many peoples' organizations and NGO's are finding themselves in a paradox. Increased attention nationally and internationally is happening along with serious encroachments on the political space for peoples' organizations and NGO's to operate in the country and the regional context. This necessitates a response, which is supra national and many a time regional, so that we could learn from the experiences of others, and provide the solidarity that is needed, in continuously struggling to maintain and expand political space for peoples organizations and NGO's in our societies. This is possible only when a mechanism or a platform looks at peoples organizations and NGO's in our societies as expressions of civil society and rooted in the civil society of our various countries in the region.

Platform

Therefore, there is a need to initiate a process by which an Asian regional platform is created which will serve the following purposes:

1. The platform will become a network for exchange of information on issues, which are currently falling inbetween the thematic and sectoral issues, but which require, continuous and ongoing attention from peoples organizations and NGO's in the region. For example, issues related to debt, relationship between Government and NGO's, GATT and trade issues, emerging consequences of a unipolar world with the absence of the political East, developments in Eastern Europe, military interventions in Iraq and the consequences of the war, etc. require a mechanism for ongoing

exchange of information and possibilities for joint and collaborative action at the rgional level. Even though many of us were concerned at the war in the Gulf and it's aftermath, we wanted to do something to show our solidarity, to act in ways consistent with our values and perspectives, we found that there was an absence of a mechanism or a platform, which would make it possible for us to act and respond to the situation arising from the Gulf war. An Asian Regional Platform could serve such purposes.

2. The platform could also become a mechanism of building coalitions and alliances, across sectors and themes, to pursue integrated views and issues. It could also become the basis for facilitating a regional response on issues which are regional in nature - this may include the policies and role of Japan in Asia on the one hand, and military dictatorships, on the other. Strengthening democracy and building institutions to ensure participatory democracy in our societies and the region, could well require large scale alliances and coalitions going beyond the boundaries of the nation-states and it is here that such a platform could assist in becoming a mechanism of such ongoing alliances and coalitions.

3. Such a platform could create the possibility for building up, articulating and presenting a regional perspective and voice on the problematic of development in the Asian region. Many of our experiences, analysis and understanding remain fragmented and sectoralized, or bound by the peculiarities of our nation-states. With increasing internationalization of development policies, interventions and financing, it has become all the more important that we evolve a regional perspective and voice on alternative development frameworks, strategies and approaches. A platform of this kind could create a possibility for us to think from our own experience, to synthesize and articulate that perspective and to use it to engage other regional and international institutions and forces.

Obviously a platform of such a kind would take a while to work; obviously such a process of evolution must be gradual, consultative and interactive. Clearly many more purposes will get added, some will get dropped and many will get refined. How such a platform will operate, what mechanisms for internal democracy and functioning it will create will all need to evolve gradually and in practice. The purpose of the platform is not to act at the local level or to do advocacy on behalf of a theme or sector but to support existing regional networks and various national efforts engaged in advocacy and grassroots action. Thus the platform is not intended to supersede or derecognize existing national and regional initiatives and efforts but to strengthen them in and evolutionary, supportive and integrated way. The platform need not become a physical infrastructure but a platform of people, experiences and ideas throughout the Asian region. Existing institutional infrastructure and capacities could well be utilized to pursue various programmes and strategies that get generated. But essentially the platform should be seen as a platform of people, of experiences and ideas, struggling at the local levels to articulate an alternative vision for their own societies in the region.

Book Review

"Demanding Accountability" - The Global Campaign & Vienna Tribunal for Women's Human Rights

By Charlotte Bunch and Niamh Reilly

Published by : Center for Women's Global Leadership
United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)
New York, USA.

Anybody who had the opportunity of being in Vienna for the World Conference on Human Rights could not have missed the Women Caucus and the connected work to assert the "Womens Rights are Human Rights".

The book consists of four parts. The Road to Vienna; The Tribunal Women Demand Accountability; Vienna success and future challenges; Campaign documents and Resources. Recognising the elimination of "violence against women in public and private life as an human rights obligation in the Vienna Declaration and supporting the necessity of treating the equal status and human rights of women as a priority for governments and for the United Nations is a historical event in human rights and women's organizing activities. This victory was not an accident. The spade work done by the women organizations and some individuals around the world has been narrated here.

The most important event was the "Global Tribunal" held in Vienna at the World Conference. The Tribunal was seen as an event that would draw upon the previous local and regional hearings and mark the culmination of several years of campaigning for the recognition of womens human rights. This book very beautifully lays down the preparatory works, the working and structure of the Tribunal and the end result. The book in sequence gives the NGO activities in Vienna and also give excerpts from the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

For the billions of women all over the world who did not have the opportunity for being at Vienna, this book gives an idea of what our sisters have achieved and gives the necessary encouragement to translate the international language of human rights for the local usage and fight gender based human right abuses.

Pathma N. Sivaram
Sri Lanka.

EGON P. WINTER

POLISHING DAMAGED GOODS

our species in crisis

THERE IS, OF COURSE, NO BRIGHT SIDE TO EXINCTION. LIKE DEATH, IT IS RELENTLESS AND ALL-INCLUSIVE, NOT RESPECTING GENDER, AGE, WISDOM, OR WEALTH.

Egw.

Hundreds of millions of species have already become extinct but we ignore the growing possibility of our own premature extinction. Preoccupied with our every day affairs, we shut our eyes to the severity of the threats, although our daily headlines reflect the approaching chaos we are sliding into and computer simulations assessing the major threats to our existence give us a scant 40 years unless we change course! To no avail:

-- many women continue having more than two babies (some one a year);
-- chemical poisoning has not slowed the manufacturing of poisons;
-- cancer-causing holes in the ozone layer have not stopped destruction of rain forests;
-- wars and mass persecutions continue across the globe;
-- epidemics like AIDS remain incurable;
-- international investments are promoted while social needs go begging;
-- the reality of our common destiny has not reduced our bigotry;

The damaged goods could still be salvaged and our existence safeguarded by setting up global agencies with funds and authority to protect us from the most serious threats to our existence. But: governments do not voluntarily let go of power; the influence of nongovernmental organizations is diluted by their insiders' private agendas; and the rich are paralyzed because they cannot stand the idea of the levelling effects of extinction.

Who among our species' 5.6 billion are least compromised and, therefore, best qualified to help us get out of this trap?

1. the very young who have the most to lose from early extinction. They must lobby governments and the rich so that funds and authority will be delegated to global agencies;
2. the very old who have the least to gain from self-promotion. They must become ombudspersons in organizations that are vital to our survival.

To make these actions count, the young and the old will have to build local, national, and world-wide movements of individuals determined to live out their lives or help their descendants stay alive.

It all comes down to whether we love life enough to fight for it.

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