

GLOBAL SOUTH

Development Magazine

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From Kyoto to Copenhagen

UNSOLVED CLIMATE EQUATIONS

Rethinking global commitment on development issues

Seeking honor and dignity in Pakistan

Ethnic minorities in Vietnam

Going back to Kurdistan

Land conflict & Mayan dignity in Guatemala

Global South Development Magazine is a quarterly magazine published by Silver Lining Creation Finland. The magazine covers a wide range of development issues primarily of the developing world and is an initiative of freelance writers and development activists from different parts of the world.

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contents



3 Global South in the Frame

4 Thoughts about development

Elli Nieminen talks about a different approach to understanding development



Going back to Kurdistan

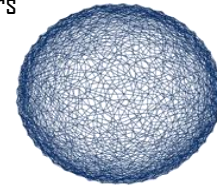
Drakhshan Ali gives an account of Kurdistan after permanently returning there after many years

6

From Kyoto to Copenhagen

9

Cover story on the UN climate summit 2009



COP15
COPENHAGEN
UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE 2009

17 A tiny peak into indigenous life

Saila Orhanen writes about the lives of a Vietnamese ethnic minority

18 Siri Pitkänen's cartoon on Charity

19 Seema Parween's ideas for empowering poor women

Weaving a New future

Rethinking global commitment on Development Issues

21



Cucu Wesseh writes about evaluation of aid & development patterns

23 Seeking honor & Dignity in Pakistan

Zubaida & Khalid Hussain shares an idea of opening a multimedia institute for a social purpose

Land Conflict and Mayan Dignity in Guatemala

25



Manuel Jiménez Fonseca digs into the land ownership issues in Guatemala

Misty steps of Humanity

27

Lawin Khalil Mustafa explores the development dynamics of Nepal

Local realities of Global Policies: Sudip Joshi's Column South

31

Poverty: History or Future? A note from the Editor



From abundance to starvation: A woman at Eworendeke village, longido district Tanzania, milking a sheep to get milk for her child. Following long droughts that hit the Maasai land last year, many northern Tanzanian herders lost hundreds of cattle and milk, their main food. Under normal situations, the Maasais do not drink sheep milk.

Photo: Lingson Adam, Tanzania, alingson@yahoo.com



A child on a street in Pakistan works as a street vendor to support his family. A huge number of Pakistani children drop out of school every year due to poverty.

Photo: Zubaida Hussain, SHAD Pakistan



THOUGHTS ABOUT DEVELOPMENT

ELLI NIEMINEN

I'm a Finnish student at Diaconia



University of Applied Sciences-Finland and I have what some might call an unhealthy

obsession with Africa. I've worked in HIV/AIDS -project in Zambia (2006), and done internships in street children work in Swaziland (2008) and in Ghana (2009). The experiences have made African development an interesting matter



“The key to international cooperation for development is to understand and respect the tremendous meaning of cultural and social context. The West can't promote development from its own starting points, objectives or conditions - which still is reality in most cases.”



to me.

I just returned from Ghana a month ago, and can say that the last visit to the continent was the most rewarding so far. I had a chance to see a lot, and I got a very tangible view on the developmental issues of the country. It raised new questions about the policies with which the West is taking part in Africa's development. Development is always a complex process, and it can't happen with conditions of any other quarter but the one

that's developing.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have become central objectives for all countries, UN agencies, donors and international financial institutions in the fight against poverty and promotion of development. And in fact, they do offer good guidelines, because they recognize the complex nature of development. Goals are a wide selection of targets to be achieved by 2015, and all the goals are

closely connected to each other. Everything affects everything.

One of my Ghanaian friends lost her baby girl when I was in Ghana. The baby died of malaria. It made me think about MDGs. Goal 4 is to reduce child

mortality and goal 6 is to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. It's quite understandable if people have a lot of children when they know that there is a high possibility of losing some of them. Children are a safety net in a country where there is no public social security.

However, having a lot of children can deepen poverty in families: parents don't have financial means to feed or educate their children. Goal 1 is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, and goal 2 is to achieve universal primary education.

MDGs also emphasize global partnership for development (goal 8). However, the focus seems to be on financial aid and trade whereas open communication and pursuit of cultural understanding have been forgotten. The key for international cooperation for development is to understand and respect the tremendous meaning of cultural and social context. The West can't promote development from its own starting points, objectives or conditions – which still is reality in most cases – or else the development is neither sustainable nor ethical.

Accepting the West controlling development is an international 'agreement' on western cultures and societies being superior to others (a form of neocolonialism) or underestimating the role of culture. Manifold cooperation and financial aid are needed but don't give the West the right to dictate the terms.

It's also important to understand development as a two-way process not only financially but culturally. We – the western world – who often feel superior in many ways, should think about the challenges we are facing, and whether comparing our cultures to others could explain, why we are facing them.

Why is it that mental problems, especially those of young people, are constantly increasing in Finland? Could it be that people living in affluent societies can actually feel ill because seeking for maximization of financial welfare, consumption and demands for efficiency have gone too far? Development is needed everywhere, but in some parts of the world development should be understood as decline. (Author can be reached at: elli.nieminen@student.diak.fi)



“It's also important to understand development as a two-way process not only financially but culturally. We – the western world – who often feel superior in many ways, should think about the challenges we are facing, and whether comparing our cultures to others could explain, why we are facing them.”



Going Back to Kurdistan

to my Motherland, to my Original Roots!

DRAKSHAN ALI



Scenic view from Sheikh su Rahman, staircase in Safin Mountain. Mountain Sork (Red Mountain) in front. My birthplace Shaqlawa, Kurdistan of Iraq
© Heiman Khalil Mustafa

After more than two decades living in Diaspora, I decided to go back to my homeland, Kurdistan of Iraq. Again I could embrace the vibrant, warm social life which is unique in our culture. I feel I am a worthy human being in my country, belonging to my community and can express myself in my mother

tongue, the queen of languages which grants me my identity as a Kurdish citizen. To speak in my language, to see my birthplace, to reminisce my childhood memories, to see my faithful friends and dear relatives, all resume my spiritual strength. Indeed nothing is worse than erosion of one's identity. It is the right of every nation to preserve and fight for their identity, culture, language and country. Isn't it the chart of human rights in the United Nations? Obviously, yes!

Naturally, Kurdistan's mountainous landscape has a healing power as the philosophers of nature like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau

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“It is extremely important for the young to preserve their own identity and to know where they descend from and not to feel like an outsider.”
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value the inspiring power of nature to have a positive impact on man. Kurdistan's mountains are symbol of freedom, and revolution. Lofty mountains remind me about the heroic stories of the bleeding struggle of Kurdish nation for

independence from tyranny which gloomed our life for decades. Historical lessons cannot be forgotten; Halabja, Khoshnow valley chemical attacks and the notorious Anfal military operations of the Baath regime are holocaust against our nation and should never be repeated in future.

I have returned to Kurdistan since October 2009 in an academic mission to teach at Salahaddin University in Erbil city, the capital of Kurdistan of Iraq where Kurdish parliament is governing. After I got my master degree in English philology and pedagogical studies from Helsinki University in Finland, I decided to teach Kurdish students as a privilege towards my country. I have been delighted to see how Kurdish students' are enthusiastic and ambitious to learn and receive a higher education to serve their homeland.

Most significantly, it has been a great opportunity for my children to visit their own homeland within my settlement to get introduced to their own culture, history and to the rapid changes occurring in Kurdistan in all sectors of life. "It is extremely important for the young to preserve their own identity and to know where they descend from and not to feel like an outsider."

In fact, Kurdistan needs a strong social security system to protect the poor and the victims of the aftermath of wars, terror and atrocities of the fallen regime. Unfortunately, there are abundant beggars and homeless people drifting from the areas of troubles in Iraq to find a living and shelter in Kurdistan. Here the cooperation of NGOs with the local government is required at a higher level to solve this social phenomenon which has a bad effect on the environment and its deterioration of human rights in the region.

Apparently, women's condition is developing well and they play a great role in the society. There are women organizations which fight for the promotion of gender equality and elimination of violence against women backed by the local government to provide a more democratic climate for progress in this field and to make life promising in Kurdistan.

Thus, the sunny and peaceful Kurdistan needs backing and solidarity of the international powers to recognize it and seek for everyone whose heart is with humanity and goodness to support them to have a dignified life. Kurdistan is the land of immortal martyrs and brave revolutionists who sacrificed themselves for the sake of freedom and liberty of their nation. And I look forward to the coming back of Kurd intellectuals to build modern Kurdistan in order maintain power of law and order for achieving civilization. Let Kurdistan be a mirror of democracy and human rights in the Middle East!

Drakhshan Ali, a returnee to Kurdistan is a lecturer in Salahaddin University Erbil, Kurdistan of Iraq

Passion of thy love

*Tears, tears like white pearls,
bright gemstones,
running down on my roses,
fountains of ancient love,
deep, deep in my heart,
tell me I love you!*

*I couldn't meet you this year.
The hurricanes, the storms are harsh.
In my heart, the wounds are full
fathomed.
In the never, never land shall we meet?!*

*The balsam of your love,
healing my agonies,
my broken limbs, burning eye lashes,
Who knows this mystery, except you?!*

*Pages of thy book turn pale.
But thy love flies everywhere,
blossoming gardens, orchards,
mountains,
dales, running rivers like tresses of
spring maid.*

*Rest on thy chest,
whispering tones,
sweet songs, honeysuckle,
how long I yearn for!*

*Come back to me my dear love!
and let me live with you forever.
with shades of thy evergreen tree
again I am newly born.*

Written by

Drakhshan Ali



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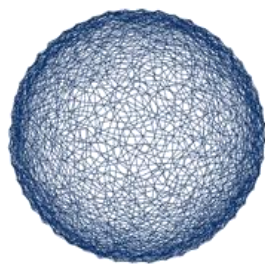
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From Kyoto to Copenhagen: Unsolved Climate Equations

Why did the COP15 fail despite all 'good intentions' and what will be the consequences?

MANOJ BHUSAL

Thirteen years ago on 11 December 1997, in the Japanese city of Kyoto, the world leaders agreed to sign a protocol aimed at combating global warming mainly by stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. The Protocol per se was seen as a milestone in combating climatic changes and fluctuations already experienced in different forms. So far 186 countries and one regional economic organization (the EC) have ratified the Protocol, however, a major polluter; the United States doesn't seem to be interested in complying with the terms of the Protocol though the unwillingness has caused ample international criticism.



COP15
COPENHAGEN
UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE 2009

Sea levels are rising at a rapid rate having risen by 20 cm over the 20th century.

...

In Asia, the homes of 94 million people could be flooded by the end of the century, leading to large scale displacement.

...

By 2050, it is estimated that millions more people could be rendered homeless by rising sea levels, floods and drought.

...

Temperature in 2100 could be up to 5.8° higher than in 1990 if emissions aren't curbed now.

...

The costs of ignoring climate change have been estimated at more than that of the two world wars and the great depression (5% to 20% of GDP).

The world realized that the Kyoto protocol wouldn't be enough to combat the harsh climatic changes seen on the planet. A new international agreement was necessary not to let the ship sink. Against this backdrop, the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference was held at the Bella Center in Copenhagen, Denmark, between 7 December and 18 December.

The Bali Road Map (COP 13) had shown the way where the world leaders were expected to march in the COP15. Unquestionably, the Copenhagen Conference (COP15) came as a hope especially to the developing world as a legally binding agreement on climate change mitigation was expected to be signed and millions of people badly affected by climatic disasters had started to believe that finally the world was being serious to their problems which were, in fact, not created by them. They had hoped that the world was going to be with them, help them adapt to the changes and be ready to pay compensation in the forms of monetary or technological transfers.

Was Cop 15 A Failure?

There are substantial number of optimists terming the conference 'a partial success' or 'a new roadmap to a beautiful future', but everyone knows that the conference didn't meet its

expectations, objectives and ended up with a weak and dubious political statement drafted by only a few powerful nations.

Worse, the Copenhagen Accord was 'taken note of', but not 'adopted'. It wasn't passed unanimously either. Certainly, it will be an abject betrayal to millions of climate-change affected populations on the planet to call the summit a success.

A majority of delegates from the developing countries, especially the poorest and worst hit by climate change, felt cheated and deceived by the big, powerful and, mainly but not exclusively, industrialized nations. Moreover, the Danish Text, a document leaked during the conference,



“Copenhagen has been an abject failure. Justice has not been done. By delaying action, rich countries have condemned millions of the world's poorest people to hunger, suffering and loss of life as climate change accelerates. The blame for this disastrous outcome is squarely on the developed nations.”

NNIMMO BASSEY, FRIENDS OF THE EARTH INTERNATIONAL

....

“The city of Copenhagen is a crime scene tonight, with the guilty men and women fleeing to the airport. There are no targets for carbon cuts and no agreement on a legally binding treaty. It seems there are too few politicians in this world capable of looking beyond the horizon of their own narrow self-interest, let alone caring much for the millions of people who are facing down the threat of climate change.”

JOHN SAUVEN, GREENPEACE UK

....

“We lost our vigorous commitment from other parties to [a temperature target of] 1.5C.

We were not able to secure a legally binding outcome. We were not able to secure mid-term targets, a peaking year and many other factors that AOSIS believes is crucial to our survival.”

DESSIMA WILLIAMS, ASSOCIATION OF SMALL ISLAND STATES

deepened the already sprouted distrust between the developed and the developing world. Subtitled as 'The Copenhagen Agreement', the document proposed measures to keep average global temperature rises to two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Developing countries were apparently outraged by the document as they were not consulted at all while drafting it. The developed world chose to work behind closed doors and neglected the most affected stakeholders. Chairman of the G77 Lumumba Di-Aping said the text 'intended to subvert, absolutely and completely, two years of negotiations' as it did not 'recognize the proposals and the voice of developing countries'.

The Copenhagen Accord

The Copenhagen Accord was the outcome of the



"In fact, the summit couldn't represent the aspiration of millions of people from all over the globe and turned out to be like an expensive elite affair."



summit which was labeled as 'a weak political statement' by commentators.

First, the accord itself is not legally binding, so governments are not compelled to

adopt it, though are recommended to take note of. However, the issue of climate change is not an issue where merely 'taking note of' is enough. The summit did recognize climate change as one of the greatest challenges of the present day, but should have concluded with a legally binding accord setting real targets to achieve emissions reductions.

Second, the accord was drafted by only five nations, the US, China, India, Brazil and South Africa, so leaves sufficient space for criticism from other countries, especially the league of small island and vulnerable countries. It was clearly demonstrated in the summit that dealing developing countries like a single entity is not acceptable to them as they have different, specific,

"I will not hide my disappointment regarding the non-binding nature of the agreement here. In that respect the document falls far short of our expectations."

JOSE MANUEL BARROSO, EU COMMISSION PRESIDENT

....

"(The leaders have) effectively signed a death warrant for many of the world's poorest children. Up to 250,000 children from poor communities could die before the next major meeting in Mexico at the end of next year."

LYDIA BAKER OF SAVE THE CHILDREN

"Each one of us acknowledges that those worst affected by climate change are the least responsible for it. Whatever emerges from our negotiations must address this glaring injustice; injustice to the countries of Africa, injustice to the least developed countries and injustice to the small island states whose very survival as viable nations is in jeopardy."

GERMAN ENVIRONMENT MINISTER NORBERT ROETTGEN

"I have the feeling of dread that we are on the Titanic and sinking fast, but we can't launch any life boats because a member of the crew has decided that we are not sinking and that we have to have informal consultations to decide whether we are sinking or not."

IAN FRY, CHIEF NEGOTIATOR FOR TUVALU

and often local problems and solutions for specific problems can't be general. On the other hand, developing countries had no option but to sign the accord otherwise they wouldn't get even that little support which had been vaguely promised.

The accord talks about the climate funds to be directed to the developing world, but sadly, doesn't give any information and guarantee on where such funds will come from and how. As asked by the accord, all countries will need to submit emissions target by the end of 2010 which has been taken as a positive side of it. The accord, however, didn't talk about the much expected concept of an international approach to technology.

There is No Planet B

An unprecedented tide of civil activism was witnessed before and during the conference.



Thousands of people travelled to the Danish capital and protested incessantly demanding a binding deal and asked the world leaders to be more responsible. Millions of people were engaged in dialogue and discussions all over the world. All these show that people are more aware than before on climate change issues and are ready to exert pressure on hitherto reckless politicians.

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“It seemed that everyone talked and no one really listened in the conference.”

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But still why did the COP15 fail? There is no single answer to this question. There is no single country to blame either. However, the failure of the summit clearly shows that the world leaders, especially the ones representing industrialized nations and big emerging powers, lack a political will to solve the climate change issue through concrete and binding decisions. In fact, the summit couldn't represent the aspiration of millions of people from all over the globe and

turned out to be like an expensive elite affair. Delegates who sat there to solve a crucial problem faced by the humanity were driven by their narrow interests and were concerned about the short-term and corporate gains of their own native governments.

Moreover, it seemed that everyone talked and no one really listened in the conference. If this pattern continues again in the future, that will be utterly frustrating for the entire world as there is no planet B available to us. Time has demanded a new global solidarity that must be expressed vehemently again in the COP16 summit in Mexico this year.

(Author can be reached at manoj.bhusal@silcreation.org)

An SOS from newspapers

On the 7th of December 2009, over 56 newspapers in 44 countries took an unprecedented step of speaking with one voice through a common editorial. They said

that they did so because humanity is facing a profound emergency. Despite similar efforts from all over the world, the summit was regarded as a failure. We reproduced the editorial here too as it is again relevant as the world is preparing for the next climate summit in Mexico this year.

...

Unless we combine to take decisive action, climate change will ravage our planet, and with it our prosperity and security. The dangers have been becoming apparent for a generation. Now the facts have started to speak: 11 of the past 14 years have been the warmest on record, the Arctic ice-cap is melting and last year's inflated oil and food prices provide a foretaste of future havoc. In scientific



journals the question is no longer whether humans are to blame, but how little time we have got left to limit the damage. Yet so far the world's response has been feeble and half-hearted.

Climate change has been caused over centuries, has consequences that will endure for all time and our prospects of taming it will be determined in the next 14 days. We call on the representatives of the 192 countries gathered in Copenhagen not to hesitate, not to fall into dispute, not to blame each other but to seize opportunity from the greatest modern failure of politics.

This should not be a fight between the rich world and the poor world, or between east and west. Climate change affects everyone, and must be solved by everyone.

● ● ●

“This should not be a fight between the rich world and the poor world, or between east and west. Climate change affects everyone, and must be solved by everyone.”

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The science is complex but the facts are clear. The world needs to take steps to limit temperature rises to 2 degrees Celsius, an aim that will require

global emissions to peak and begin falling within the next 5-10 years.

A bigger rise of 3-4 degrees Celsius -- the smallest increase we can prudently expect to follow inaction -- would parch continents, turning farmland into desert. Half of all species could become extinct, untold millions of people would be displaced, whole nations drowned by the sea.

Few believe that Copenhagen can any longer produce a fully polished treaty; real progress towards one could only begin with the arrival of President Obama in the White House and the reversal of years of US obstructionism. Even now

the world finds itself at the mercy of American domestic politics, for the president cannot fully commit to the action required until the US Congress has done so.

But the politicians in Copenhagen can and must agree the essential elements of a fair and effective deal and, crucially, a firm timetable for turning it into a treaty. Next June's UN climate meeting in Bonn should be their deadline. As one negotiator put it: “We can go into extra time but we can't afford a replay.”

At the deal's heart must be a settlement between the rich world and the developing world covering how the burden of fighting climate change will be divided and how we will share a newly precious resource: the trillion or so tonnes of carbon that we can emit before the mercury rises to dangerous levels.

Rich nations like to point to the arithmetic truth that there can be no solution until developing giants such as China take more radical steps than they have so far. But the rich world is responsible for most of the accumulated carbon in the atmosphere three-quarters of all carbon dioxide emitted since 1850. It must now take a lead, and every developed country must commit to deep cuts which will reduce their emissions within a decade to very substantially less than their 1990 level.

Developing countries can point out they did not cause the bulk of the problem, and also that the poorest regions of the world will be hardest hit. But they will increasingly contribute to warming, and must thus pledge meaningful and quantifiable action of their own. Though both fell short of what some had hoped for, the recent commitments to emissions targets by the world's biggest polluters, the United States and China, were important steps in the right direction.

Social justice demands that the industrialised world digs deep into its pockets and pledges cash to help poorer countries adapt to climate change, and clean technologies to enable them to grow

economically without growing their emissions. The architecture of a future treaty must also be pinned down with rigorous multilateral monitoring, fair rewards for protecting forests, and the credible assessment of “exported emissions” so that the burden can eventually be more equitably shared between those who produce polluting products and those who consume them. And fairness requires that the burden placed on individual developed countries should take into account their ability to bear it; for instance newer EU members, often much poorer than “old Europe”, must not suffer more than their richer partners.

The transformation will be costly, but many times less than the bill for bailing out global finance and far less costly than the consequences of doing nothing.

Many of us, particularly in the developed world, will have to change our lifestyles. The era of flights that cost less than the taxi ride to the airport is drawing to a close. We will have to shop, eat and travel more intelligently. We will have to pay more for our energy, and use less of it.

But the shift to a low-carbon society holds out the prospect of more opportunity than sacrifice. Already some countries have recognized that embracing the transformation can bring growth, jobs and better quality lives. The flow of capital tells its own story: last year for the first time more was invested in renewable forms of energy than producing electricity from fossil fuels.

Kicking our carbon habit within a few short decades will require a feat of engineering and innovation to match anything in our history. But whereas putting a man on the moon or splitting the atom were born of conflict and competition, the coming carbon race must be driven by a collaborative effort to achieve collective salvation.

Overcoming climate change will take a triumph of optimism over pessimism, of vision over short-sightedness, of what Abraham Lincoln called “the better angels of our nature”.

It is in that spirit that 56 newspapers from around the world have united behind this editorial. If we, with such different national and political perspectives, can agree on what must be done then surely our leaders can too.

The politicians in Copenhagen have the power to shape history's judgment on this generation: one that saw a challenge and rose to it, or one so stupid that we saw calamity coming but did nothing to avert it. We implore them to make the right choice.

Emissions cut 'both ways'

Rich countries have a double duty to both cut emissions at home and to help fund emissions reductions in poor countries. That's the conclusion of *Hang Together or Separately?*, a report from Oxfam which argues that only rich countries can prevent the world lurching into climate disaster.

The report claims to offer a pragmatic way to measure the emissions targets of rich countries, and how much developing countries must receive to help them cut their emissions as well. It proposes the establishment of a 'Global Mitigation and Finance Mechanism' to provide poor countries with the upfront support they need to limit the growth in their emissions without compromising their development.

Rich countries, it says, must collectively cut their emissions by at least 40% and spells out exactly how much each country must cut emissions by to meet this target. The UK, for example, must cut its emissions by 45.3% by 2020 – the EU should have a combined target of 45%.

While rich countries are responsible for three-quarters of greenhouse gas emissions, the poorest people are being hit first and hardest by a changing climate. Many developing countries have

taken steps to reduce emissions and are looking to rich countries for financial and technological support. For example, Mexico has committed to halving emissions by 2050 and China is a world leader in renewable energy investment.

“Rich countries have the money and the technology to pull us from the brink of no return,” said Oxfam’s Campaigns and Policy Director Phil Bloomer. “They have a double duty – to deliver massive emissions cuts at home and provide money for poor countries to tackle their emissions too.” The Global Mitigation and Finance Mechanism would use money from the sale of carbon permits to provide the upfront support developing countries need. The world’s poorest countries, such as Uganda and India, would receive 100% of the funding they need to shift to a low-carbon development path. However, more advanced developing economies such as Brazil and China would be expected to fund a proportion of the costs, depending on their economic capabilities. (www.oxfam.org.uk)

NEW LIGHT FOR AFRICA



The populations of rich countries are slowly recognising that their traditional approach to lighting is both expensive on the pocket and damaging to the environment. Governments, either through legislation or voluntary agreement with industry groups, are working to phase out traditional light bulbs. Within a couple of years, for example, most major retailers in the UK won’t stock them. It makes sense – low-energy light bulbs use 80% less energy than incandescent bulbs and the UK government says phasing out the traditional bulb would save 5m tonnes of carbon dioxide each year.

But switching to low-energy bulbs is not an option for nearly a third of the world’s population – they don’t have the option to flick on a light at all. In sub-Saharan Africa, up to 90% of the rural population and 74% of the total population lack access to electricity. For more than 500 million people living off-grid, energy poverty is a direct result of economic poverty. Instead they use traditional forms of energy—biomass, charcoal, candles or – most commonly – fuel-based sources such as kerosene. As well as being expensive, fuel-based lighting is costly to the environment – contributing to both greenhouse gas emissions and indoor air pollution.

All of which explains why Lighting Africa, a joint International Finance Corporation (IFC) and World Bank programme, is such an illuminating idea.

Every year African households and small businesses spend upwards of \$17bn on lighting – with many households spending as much as 30% of their disposable income on fuel-based illumination. The aim of Lighting Africa is to leverage global expenditures on fuel-based lighting to develop the market for modern off-grid lighting alternatives that offer African consumers considerably more value for money. “Efficient lighting technologies such as those products containing the latest LED, fluorescent, human-cranking, and solar technologies make it possible for the first time in history to offer energy services to consumers that are clean, efficient and reliable, at price points that are comparable to typical expenditures for kerosene.” (Photo & text www.lightingafrica.org)

Climate Change FAQs

What is climate change?

Earth's climate is changing or that atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases have increased as a result of human activities. The concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide are higher now than at any time during the last 420,000 years.

Overwhelming scientific evidence supports the conclusion that observed changes in the global climate are, in large part, due to human activities and primarily related to fossil-fuel consumption patterns. Without urgent action to curb greenhouse-gas emissions, the Earth will become warmer by 2050 than at anytime in the last 10,000 years.

By how much will temperatures rise?

According to several climate models, if nothing is done to mitigate gas emissions, global temperature will increase between 1.4°C and 5.8°C before 2100. To put this warning in context, it is believed that temperature has only varied by 1°C since the origins of civilisation.

Poor people in developing countries have contributed least to greenhouse gas emissions yet they're suffering the most.

Why the need to limit global warming to 2 degrees?

If global temperatures rise **more than 2°C** over pre-industrial levels, the climate impact on water resources, food production, sea levels, and ecosystems is predicted to be catastrophic for billions of people, and scientists believe dangerous feedback loops (which trigger spiralling temperatures, increasing much higher much faster) are likely to kick in. Two billion people will be affected by water shortages and most of Southern Africa will have to cope with year-round droughts. Global agriculture will be undermined and hunger and malnutrition is likely to kill up to three million more people every year.

If global temperatures are allowed to climb **above 3°C**, billions of people would be affected by severe water stress, crop yields would fall drastically around the world and entire regions, from Australia to Southern Africa, would become non-viable for agriculture.

This could mean up to 550 million additional people affected by severe hunger, and up to 330 million people permanently displaced due to sea-level rise. (Text: Oxfam.org)



Van Kieu Village Photo: Saila Ohranen

Tiny peak into the life of ethnic minorities in Vietnam

Ethnic minorities in Vietnam officially have the same rights as the majority of the population. However, in reality their life is rather different. Usually their living circumstances are worse, their children not well-educated and basic needs not satisfied. Minorities are not represented in politics and their role in public is rather small. This also has to do with language skills, as ethnic minorities have their own languages and their Vietnamese skills might be lacking.

Though Vietnam is rapidly developing and the level of poverty has decreased during last 10 years, unfortunately, this does not apply to the



SAILA OHRANEN

They are still considered as “primitive” and are blamed for destroying their surrounding by their living habits.

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Instead of living where they used to live, maybe even for decades, this minority now inhabits one tiny road in the middle of forests and mountains.

minorities. Many minority groups are among the poorest in Vietnam.

They are still considered as “primitive” and are blamed for destroying their surrounding by their living habits. Tourism also plays a big role, both in good and bad aspects. A good example of this is the famous Sapa village in North of Vietnam, where thousands of tourists go each year to see authentic ethnic minority living.

I spent autumn 2009 living and volunteering in the city of Hue, in Central Vietnam. I was involved in an organisation called Hue Help. During my time with Hue Help I got a chance to visit a Van Kieu community, which is located about an hour away from Hue City. Van Kieu is one of Vietnam’s 54 ethnic minorities. This community of 22 families

used to live up in the forests on the mountains and was capable of living a good life and providing for themselves. However, the Vietnamese government decided to build a hydro-electric dam exactly to the area where this community was based, so these people were re-located and given new houses that



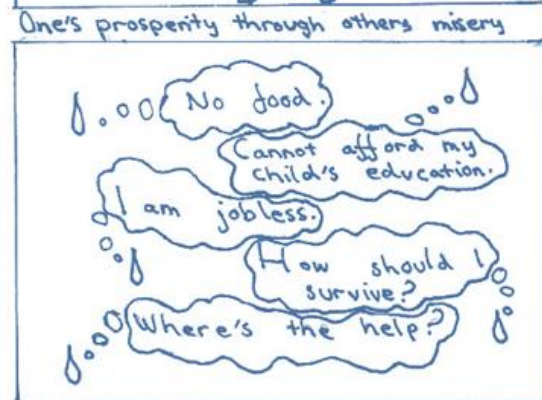
were built by the government. New houses are well built and will be there even after a typhoon hits, but at the same time it was a huge change in the living conditions of this community. A good example of this is the farming possibilities, or more precisely, the lack of them at the present situation.

The community is quite dependent on charity work. For example, during our visit we distributed blankets, rice pots, dishes and some notebooks to the children of the village. It was great to see the actual help reaching those who need it; at the same time it was hard to think how they felt and what a huge change they have gone through. I cannot even imagine how it feels to leave your home involuntarily and adjust into a totally different life style.

At the moment there are different programmes

run for the benefit of the ethnic minorities in Vietnam. For example, during years 2006-2010 there was a programme run by the World Bank and other donors, to improve the quality of ethnic minorities' living conditions. Still they would need more support, attention and appreciation so that they will not be only part of Vietnam's colourful history, but future. (Author can be reached at saila.ohranen@student.diak.fi)

Cartoon Corner by Siri Pitkänen



Siri Pitkänen



is widespread and many Nepalese have had to go abroad to make a living, either as soldiers, servants, or wage laborers.

In cities like Janakpur, the majority of agriculturalists are tenant farmers, and there are also large numbers of small owners and wage laborers. Agriculturalists cultivate very small plots, and their income is so meager that they are often forced into debt. Agricultural wage laborers find employment easily only in the peak seasons, and may be unemployed for most of the year.

Women and children join in the farm work, except where strict Hindu custom restricts women's participation. Among some tribes, women do most of the agricultural work.

In rural areas of Nepal, a woman has to do all household works and has to help her husband in the field work but beyond that she is not allowed to go out of her house for any other work. JHC believes that if a woman supports her husband in field then she can do any other works too. To eliminate poverty from the country, the root level people should be aware of importance of empowerment and social rights. This is why since years JHC has been working on empowerment of rural women.

Weaving a new future

SEEMA PARWEEN

Social entrepreneurs around the world have been working with innovative solutions to society's most pressing social problems throughout years. In the same way social business entrepreneurs have been implementing and measuring the social benefits of business in broad economic or detailed terms. But yes both entrepreneurs are ambitious and persistent, tackling major social issues and offering new ideas for wide scale change.

Janakpur Handicraft Center (JHC) is an organization established 16 years back in 1994, in Janakpur city of Nepal to give as much as employment opportunities to women living in the villages nearby the city. Janakpur is a small town in the southern part of the Terai region (Mithila region) of Nepal, and also a Hindu pilgrimage site with legendary history. People living in this town are religious and conservative, living very simple life.

Labor in Nepal is concentrated in agriculture, which provides a livelihood for over 90 per cent of the population. Outside of agriculture, avenues of employment include handicrafts, pottery, trade, military service, and government work. All these fields are limited in scope; however, many occupations are restricted to certain castes. Unemployment

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"JHC has been supporting economically backward and rural women by giving educative classes, conducting awareness and employment programs for women and providing them opportunity to earn using their indigenous knowledge of art."

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Social Business Entrepreneurship is a way of using business to tackle social issues. Working as a social business entrepreneur, JHC has been supporting the economically backward and rural women by giving the educative classes, conducting awareness and employment programs for women and providing them opportunity to earn using their indigenous knowledge of art. JHC always focuses on changing the social attitude and practices prevalent in the society which are highly biased against women. This had been initiated by working with the women at the root level and focusing on increasing women's access and control over resources and increasing their control over decision making. And, with the dedication of 20 women from different places, different cast and different class, JHC has been producing Mithila arts and crafts in Janakpur. Through their art women are finding independence. Now the women like to ride bicycle from work to their home. They are supporting their families and sending their children school to get good education.

According to Mahatma Gandhi, "If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you

educate an entire family."

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"Various issues that need to be addressed for improving overall conditions of the women in rural areas include making access to affordable cooking fuel for rural women, providing safe drinking water, sanitation, increasing decision making capacity among women..."

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Our predominant patriarchal system doesn't provide enough chances for women to have higher education even if they wish. But JHC is a platform where women can

bring their ideas and questions to explore the world and teach each other. They work as a family and share their problems with each other. Whether it is economic or moral support, women get in JHC and this is the reason women feel comfortable to join JHC.

Women living in villages of Janakpur have great talents of arts and crafts. And JHC has helped women to earn through their own talents.

However, women empowerment in countries like Nepal is a challenging task as we need to acknowledge the fact that gender based discrimination is a deep rooted social malice practiced in these countries in many forms since thousands of years. Women empowerment in Nepal is long drawn battle against powerful structural forces of the society which are against women's growth and development. Conservative village society used to object us that we are spoiling the women in Janakpur but after hard work of years in some villages, people are realizing the importance of self-dependence of women. There is an attitude which still prevails in Nepal where women are considered to be only

worthwhile of household activities and managing the children.

From 1994 to 2004 JHC had good market and was supporting about 50 women workers at the center but due to Maoist insurgency and Nepal's disfigured situation, JHC's function decreased in Nepal as well as abroad.

Since the JHC got weak due to the bad situation of country and this continued for three years. The number of workers decreased from 50 to 20. But still JHC was working for betterment of rural women. After 2007, JHC has again been trying to introduce itself back to market so that it can be able to give job opportunities to many women in Nepal.

Today there are lots of things that are happening in the name of women empowerment in Nepal and lot of resources are spent on this direction. Keeping this in mind it is crucial to have a reality check on what is happening on paper and what is the actual ground situation. It is worthwhile to ponder on the fact that we are one of the worst in terms of worldwide gender equality rankings. This is why the process of women empowerment has been so slow in Nepal.

Women's empowerment cannot take place unless women come together and decide to self-empower themselves. Self empowerment should be all round in nature. Once this happens then we can think about galvanizing the system towards the direction of better health facilities, nutrition and educational facilities for women at a very large scale. JHC is still happy with the work because 20 families are living a good life and helping JHC in awaking other women around the city. When it was established JHC was the one which was working for women empowerment but now JHC has a team of 20 women artists who go to villages nearby to aware people about the importance of education and empowerment. Whether it is a social issue or personal, now the women can speak in front of people and teach other women about their rights and health issues.

The journey of women empowerment is very long for any organization like JHC in Nepal but the real change will only be visible when social attitudes and norms change. Various issues that need to be addressed for improving overall conditions of the women in rural areas include making access to affordable cooking fuel for rural women, providing safe drinking water, sanitation, increasing decision making capacity among women, providing equal wages as that of men, ending their exploitation, improving the political participation of women, eradicating poverty among women, increasing the security of women who are engaged in agriculture as daily wage workers, providing affordable healthcare and nutrition and managing the risk of unwanted pregnancies, infections and sexually transmitted diseases.

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RETHINKING GLOBAL COMMITMENT ON DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

*An evaluation of north – south continuum
from an African perspective*

Cucu Wesseh

I embarked on writing this article with a personal subscription and signature to notion of rethinking development commitments in creating a better and sustainable North - South dialogue for equal partnership.

In reflexivity; I am tempted to view this notion

of mine as wishful a thought an in the Utopia of eighteen century Marxism in relationship to our current and modern reality. Nevertheless, I do believe in "change" for "better" life in a "better" world on a global scale.

Therefore, I do believe that this sustainable change is needed in the Global South even more now, than never before.

Evaluating Development:

In his book "Ending Dependence" (strongly recommended) Yash Tandon discusses what constitutes development in the first place. He certainly provides further the caveat that "Development" is self-defined and cannot and should not be imposed from outside. I find the latter to be an important and resonating point of fact for development practitioners working in the South as well as for Northern donors to understand the adverse effect of such tendencies; as they are counterproductive

to development objectives.



Herein lays the argument that

I would like to stretch my argument further to include the emancipation from global, regional and national structures of oppression and repression in all forms and manifestations.

It is a solid and valid point of fact that aid is also usually and always "tied to procurement from donors countries" with regards to stakeholders' desires. This disturbing factual issue about aid being tied to the purchase of goods and services is that it increases costs by 25 per cent. Moreover, most donors channel aid through NGOs from within their own countries. This sort of tendency and counterproductive activity



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"Development is a process of self-empowerment and an integral part of the overall process of the struggle for liberation from the global structures of dominance and control in terms of both "mental constructs and use of language".



impedes seriously the development commitment associated with the North – South relationship continuum. Recent statistics suggest that in the 1990s, approximately 75% of British food aid was channeled through NGOs; 40% of emergency aid from Sweden was channeled through Swedish NGOs; about 65% of US aid (excluding food aid) is channeled similarly. The author admits that food aid may be necessary under certain conditions, but if the factors that created such

emergences are not addressed fully, such aid can be counterproductive. Thus, dependency theory, which often leads to the suspicion of "conspiracy", is vital and indeed becomes a necessary for critical evaluation and assessment.

While the neoliberal definition of development is equated with growth (open markets plus foreign investments and good governance as defined by donors) and wealth accumulation (ensuring that the rich getting richer), from the southern perspective, it is also defined as social factors (wellbeing of the people) plus the democratic factor (right of the people to participate in decision-making) minus the imperial factor (right to self-determination).

A fascinating aspect of "Ending Dependence" is the hypothesis that dissection of development and aid package provides an insight into the provision of taxonomy (classification) of aid to the developing world.

In view of dependency theories, Yash Tandon characterizes Development Aid to include Red aid (ideological aid), Orange aid (commercial aid or non-developmental development aid) Yellow aid (military and political aid), Green/Blue aid (provision of global public goods) and last but not least Purple aid (solidarity).

Ideally, it would be interesting and enlightening to initiate and engage in a discussion on the different types of aid, regarding aid dependency theories as characterized by Yash Tandon in his book "Ending Dependence". Development aid is a highly controversial topic in the continuum of North – South relationship as a subject of critical scrutiny and evaluation.

In this manner, I believe that we in the North and our counterparts in the South together with the bulk of African Civil Societies in the Diaspora can concomitantly *rethink* global development strategies on aid issues towards a better and equal partnership.

In attempting to build my argument against a pro notion of neoliberal "volunteerism as a development tool"; I do undersigned the notion for an immediate address of sustainable development and the sustainability of developmental strategies to substantially influence the conception, design, implementation, and review of growth and development situations in

the global South.

We must rightfully understand and acknowledge that it is a continuous strategy and tendency for donors to dictate the prioritization of development projects in all its totality and implementation processes. This is a wrong approach and in fact does not sufficiently facilitate capacity building and knowledge transfer. This tendency, which seemingly has adverse effect on development goals, is counterproductive and dysfunctional in meeting anticipated objectives.

In retrospect to "Making Poverty History" and the current series of global "Poverty Reduction Strategies", we still find that poverty as an endemic ill in societies has quadrupled in many developing economies. This is because local resources are very often sidelined for expatriate and specialists and/or consultants from donor countries for "sky rocket" salaries and compensations far from the reality of actual need. Contrary wise locals can and could be effectively exploited for and/or in similar drives.

Thus, by elevating the competence and upgrading the capabilities and levels of local social capital; available resources can be utilized to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in sustainable development. Otherwise we in the South can say "to hell with "good intentions", if they do not and are not structured on the basis of new sustainable focus and approach for an equitable level "playing Field" of Global Development initiatives.

If, poverty reduction strategies are channeled equitably across the board without stringent categorization and procrastinating prioritization policies; the endemic will remain with humanity forever. Hence, household phrase "sustainable development will transform into a stagnant of talk and talk with no ado. (Mr Wesseh is General Secretary of the African Civil Society in Finland, an NGO Diaspora Advocacy Group. He can be reached at wesseh@suomi24.fi)

Seeking Honor and Dignity in Pakistan

ZUBAIDA HUSSAIN
KHALID HUSSAIN

While declaring his desire to make the Proton vehicle in Malaysia, venerable leader Mahatir Mohammad once famously explained that no factory makes the automobile rather it is the capacity of the society that is reflected in the manufacturing of an indigenous car.

It is in appreciation of a similar fact that Seeking Honor and Dignity (SHAD) has set itself the mission to establish the SHAD Institute of Still and Moving Images (SISMI) in Pakistan. Our intent is to ensure that SISMI sizzles at par with the rest of the world in knowledge, technology, human resources and quality of professional production. After all, it is our firm belief that the still image reflects the reality of its context and films manifest the capacity of a society to communicate and entertain.

SHAD is a small non-profit NGO, beginning its mission in Pakistan with few resources. But we dream big for it is knowledge that we dig. And we are rich beyond measure in the sincerity of our desires. We look at communications as the new faculty that we Homo sapiens have added to our biological beings through sheer knowledge. This is how we have evolved into the new millennium: we see beyond our eyesight, hear beyond earshot, talk



Photo: Zubaida Hussain

irrespective of distances and act without any limits of geography!

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We are clear in our thinking. Technology is on our side. We have our dreams. And we are willing to go the distance to realize them.

We welcome globalization for we look at it as a step forward in our collective evolution on our planet. This is because at SHAD we are obviously and admittedly biased in favor of technology understood as the application of knowledge. We firmly believe that this evolution holds the key to honor and dignity for millions

of Pakistanis rendered jobless and poor by a security state manifestly extremely inept in economic management and environmental protection.

In our impoverished country millions of children and teenagers forgo classrooms for hard labor. At least 10 million children and 24-30 million adolescents are believed to be working in Pakistan, though the actual number is unknown. The poor need every member to pitch in for food, shelter and clothing. So all toil at a variety of jobs, including some of the hardest and most poorly paid. The money goes to augment the meager coffers of their extremely poor families.

We believe the digital age affords easy communications and breaks down entry barriers to professional still and moving image production. We understand that teaching the disadvantaged youth practical and technical skills in still and moving images will open up honorable and dignified livelihood opportunities for a large number of desperate youth in our country.

Our reasoning is rather simple: with almost half of our land, water and people resources devoted to low-grade cotton growing, processing and export, the country has an 11% share in the 90-100 billion dollars a year global market; devoting national energies and aspiring for a fair share in the global still and moving images markets holds the promise of a return many times greater than what the country makes in terms of GDP at the moment. This is our agenda for advocacy.

Creation of livelihoods, however, cannot wait for the state to change its ways. The needs of the people are urgent and immediate. Therefore, SHAD has started its "Livelihood Internship Program" to help individuals acquire skills and practice the profession of photography while continuing to learn the technology behind still images using modern digital cameras. Every intern owns a personal business at the end of a two year period. We even have plans to help the physically handicapped amongst us to learn "Studio Photography" and earn honorable livelihoods

running their own business enterprises!

Helping a few individuals is, however, not going to address livelihoods issues at the national level or make an impact at the societal level. That is why our mission at SHAD is to setup and run the SISMI. We visualize a large teaching and practicing institute for still and moving images where capacity building is institutionalized on a sustainable footing to ensure operations in perpetuity with its own resources. We want a State-Of-The-Art setup that not only allows teaching and practice in international standards of still and moving images, but also competes with the world's best production studios delivering professional content for international target groups at the global scale. Everything else that we do at SHAD is geared towards an early realization of this goal!

Doing all this needs resources. We are working to raise funds with the help of friends in Pakistan and abroad. We are busy seeking seed money and project support funds to help us launch SHAD on the way to fulfill its mission. However, we realize and are very conscious of the fact that civil society and philanthropic resources may not be able to help us all the way. That is why we are also working to produce documentary and feature films in collaboration with local, regional and international partners. The revenues generated will, hopefully, take us to the destination of our dreams!

We are clear in our thinking. Technology is on our side. We have our dreams. And we are willing to go the distance to realize them. That is why at SHAD our favorite quotation is from celebrated writer Paulo Coelho's novel *The Alchemist*: "When you desire, the whole universe conspire to make it happen"!

(More information about SHAD can be obtained from <http://seekinghonoranddignity.webs.com>, author can be reached at zubaida102@yahoo.com, SHAD is soon going to be a Silcreation's partner organization in Pakistan)

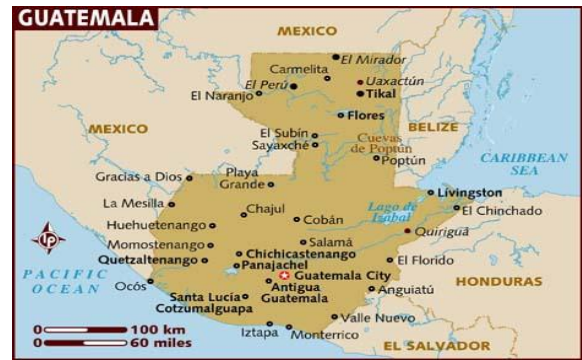
Land Conflict and Mayan Dignity in Guatemala: A Question only of the Past?

MANUEL JIMÉNEZ FONSECA

The problem of land tenure in Guatemala as in the rest of Latin America dates to colonial time. Guatemala, as other Spanish colonies, was subordinated to the interests of the metropolis. The main goal of colonization was the appropriation of land which was used for mines, plantation agriculture and other profitable economic ventures. However, high mortality and in a lesser extent protective legislation issued by the Spanish crown helped assuring that indigenous communities kept part of their lands.

This scenario changed radically in Guatemala during the liberal governments of the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. These governments promoted an agrarian reform based on private titles of ownership, by which land was taken from Mayan communities and distributed among coffee landholders, mostly Germans.[1] This concentration of land meant that by 1926 only 7.3% of the population owned land.[2] Having no land thousands of Mayans were forced to work in the coffee plantations under difficult conditions of forced labour. Coffee became the number one export and the economic and political power of the German landowners in Guatemala continued growing until the end of the II World War when most of their lands were expropriated. US interests in Guatemala were also notorious. The arrival of United Fruit Company, which seized vast areas of land, increased the pressure over resources in rural areas. The power of banana companies was so big that Central American countries were referred to as “banana republics”.[3]

Counterinsurgency units of the Guatemalan army. The outcome of the war was devastating, more than 200.000 civilians dead or disappeared, 150.000 refugees and over 1 million people internally displaced. Thousands of civilians were



As a result, modern Guatemalan history was shaped by the attempted to get rid of the immense power of foreign companies and implement an agrarian reform in order to distribute land among the rural poor.[4] This was precisely the goal of Jacobo Arbenz who was elected president of Guatemala in 1951. However, strong national and foreign elite groups opposed Arbenz's efforts to promote a more equitable distribution of wealth in the country. His project of agrarian reform, which threatened the lands of the United Fruit Company, was the final element that precipitated the US sponsored coup d'état that put and end to Arbenz's government in 1954, reverting most of his social reforms.[5]

Years later elements of the army loyal to Arbenz started a guerrilla war that was to last for more than 30 years -from 1960 to 1996. Mayan communities did not generally participate in the low-intensity civil war until the 80s. When they joined their main motivation was not ideological. They were rather driven by the historical legacy of exclusion and racism faced by their communities, the unequal distribution of land and the oppressive system of forced labour under which they worked in the plantations. [6] A reinforcing factor after the war started as the growing repressive violence used by

tortured and torture was also widely used without motive (such as information gathering) as part of the act of killing.[7] The impact of the war among the civilian Mayan population was severe. Three

out of four of those killed during the war were Mayans and almost half of them belonged to Christian-based communities close to Liberation Theology.[8]

After the 1996 peace accords that ended the war land inequality continued unabated because the economical and political structures of the country were not modified. Guatemala is one of the countries in the world with the most unequal patterns of land distribution.[9] Whereas 1% of the landholders have 75% of the best arable land, 96% survive cultivating 20% of the land, 90% of the rural population live in poverty and 500,000 families live under the poverty line.[10] Poverty affects mostly the indigenous population that concentrates in the rural areas of the country. The government's promises -in the peace accords- of facilitating the access of Mayan population to land and fighting discrimination have not been fulfilled.[11]

Far from being overcome, land concentration is currently increasing. The international demand for biofuels in order to reduce greenhouse emissions in the USA and EU has fostered economic interests in new lands for African palm and sugar plantations.[12] The oil industry is also acquiring

new properties in Guatemala. Due to traditional communal property and lack of access to the legal system Mayans often lack legal title of their property. Hence, they are easily displaced by strong lobbies and big landowners. The consequences of the unequal distribution of land are manifold. Firstly, clashes between communities and landholders often end up in violent conflict. Secondly, land dispossession limit Mayan communities' options of survival. One possibility is to seek for a job in the *fincas* (farms) where the working conditions are often semi-feudal.[13] Alternatively, communities or individuals can migrate to new lands and expand the natural frontier, cutting virgin forest in order to survive. Both paths lead to a life of struggle and hardship. Migration and settlement in new lands has also an adverse effect on the surrounding environment.

Land is vital for Mayan people. In fact, it has been one of the most important factors of cohesion and resistance against the oppression faced since the Spanish Conquest.[14] Besides, land is a constitutive part of Mayan spirituality which is of foremost importance to maintain a sense of identity and dignity among the Mayan population.

[1] Benjamin Keen and Mark Wasserman, *A Short History of Latin America* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1984) 460.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Pedro Arias et al., *The World Banana Economy 1985-2002* (Rome, FAO, 2004) 79.

[4] See Benjamin Keen and Mark Wasserman, *A Short History of Latin America* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1984) 430-469.

[5] The engineering role of the CIA in the coup has been explicitly acknowledged by this organization. See Angelina Snodgrass Godoy, *Popular Injustice: Violence, Community, and Law in Latin America* (California, Stanford University Press, 2006) 43. See also Piero Gleijeses, *Shattered Hope: The Guatemalan Revolution and the United States 1944-1954* (Princeton University Press, 1991).

[6] Hannah Wittman and Laura Saldivar Tanaka, 'The Agrarian Question in Guatemala' in Peter Rosset et al. (eds.), *Promised Land: Competing Visions of Agrarian Reform* (Oakland, Food First Books, 2006) 23-39, 23.

[7] This irrational violence served nevertheless a very concrete and rational objective. It aimed at creating a society of fear, discouraging any social or political demand against the repressive state. This strategy is discussed in Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt, *Societies of Fear: The Legacy of Civil War, Violence and Terror in Latin America* (London-New York, Zed Books, 1999).

[8] The most thorough information about the Guatemalan war can be found in the four volume publication *Guatemala Nunca Más*, elaborated by the Human Rights Office of the Archdiocese of Guatemala. Bishop Gerardi who played a key role in the release of the reports was murdered days after the reports became public.

[9] Wittman and Tanaka, 'The Agrarian Question', 24.

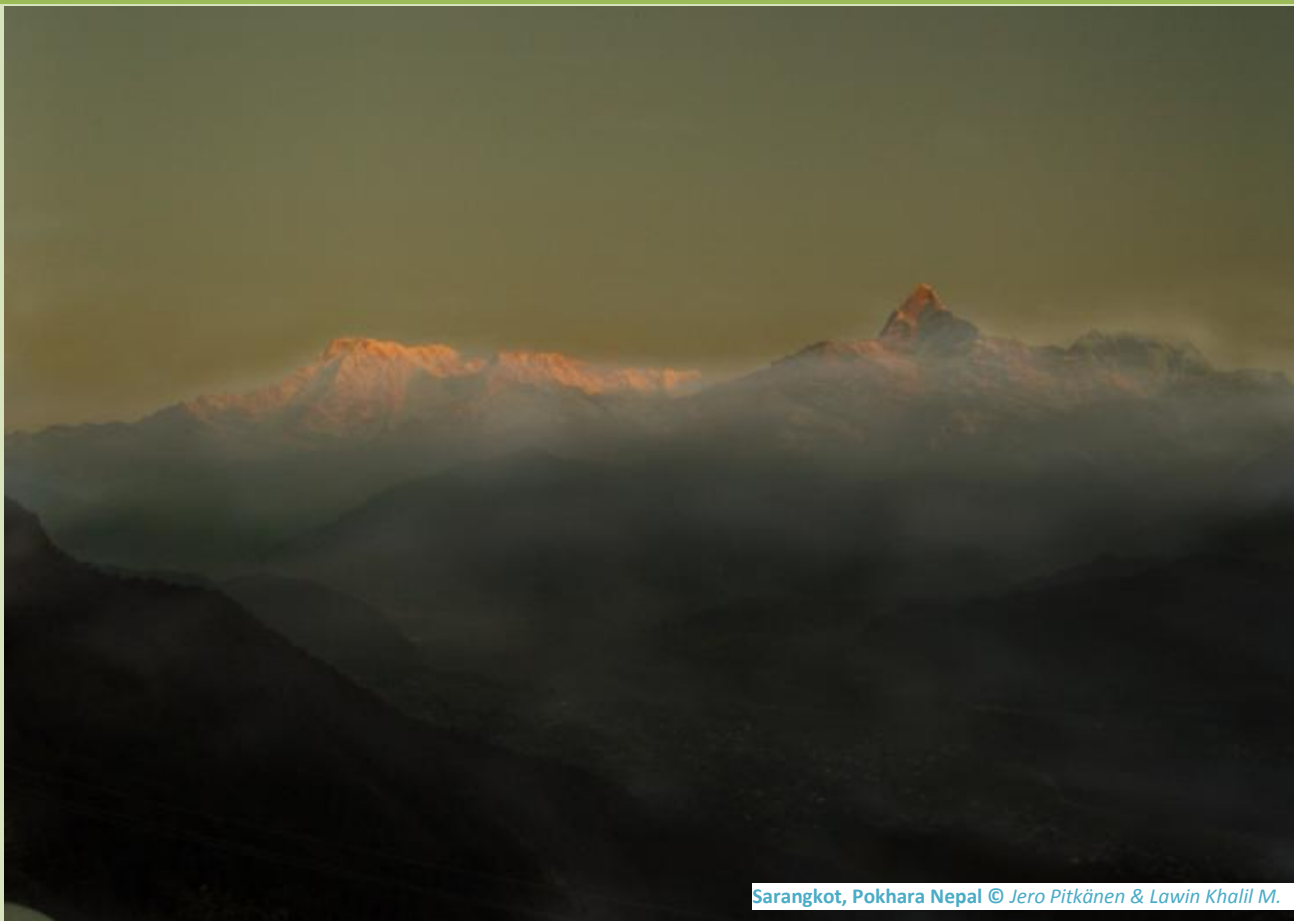
[10] The United Nations Verification Mission for Guatemala, 'Situación de los Compromisos Relativos a la Tierra en los Acuerdos de Paz', Guatemala, May 2000.

[11] United Nations Commission on Human Rights, 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous People, Mr. Rodolfo Stavenhagen, on his Mission to Guatemala', (E/CN.4/2003/90)Add.2, 24 February 2003) 8.

[12] Action Aid International, 'Food, Farmers and Fuel: Balancing Global Grain and Energy Policies with Sustainable Land Use', Report of November 2008, 15-16.

[13] A World Bank Country Study, *Poverty in Guatemala* (Washington, The World Bank, 2004) 60-62.

[14] Michael D. Coe, *The Maya* (London, Thames and Hudson, 1999) 231.



Sarangkot, Pokhara Nepal © Jero Pitkänen & Lawin Khalil M.

Misty Steps of Humanity

LAWIN KHALIL MUSTAFA

It has been many years since the restlessness that drove me in search of a place where my soul could at last rest. After visiting several countries, I was beginning to fall in dismay that such place only existed in mind. Ironically, I was right! An instinctive thought led me to Nepal. On autumn 2009, I would come here for my internship as a social work student working with street children. Nepal would prove to be a milestone for a heightened enlightenment of the importance in our lives to lead the values of humanity. What are the rocks and roses of Nepal?

“Street children are often compelled to lead a life in the street. Look into their tragedies and ponder their circumstances in relation to society’s function. Its roots are there!”



gesture of culture turned the winter into summer in a blink of an eye. Next moment you know - in a finger snap - I was in the rush of a chaotically systematized traffic, where the vividness of the outside world through the window evoked a sense a peace one could not measure. The sound of horns honking endlessly as if there was an

orchestra going on, the noise of people speaking aloud from far distance, the haste at which life ran but yet the tranquillity which

people held beneath their surface, the denseness inside which space could barely bear, the temper which the city cleverly held; they were all incidents telling a story about my belonging.

In the richness of the street, the variety of colourful lifestyles and professions shining through open doors invite a newcomer to watch with utmost interest. From the talents of drum

Where does its benevolence stand? The haven which I sought for was nested in our souls.

As I arrived to Kathmandu, I was warmly welcomed by a wrapping of a silky yellow scarf around my neck. This simple

making, stone carving or carpeting, people were occupying themselves in order to generate an income over which they could prevail in life. The unimaginable number of small shopkeepers revealed the necessity for people to self-employ themselves in order to manage their household. Indeed, life did not seem easy! But yet people could treasure out their friendly vibes. The scars of poverty were inevitable to ignore. Even if one had curtained their eyes, the cries of the deprived could still haunt them. The old and undernourished porters' carrying heavy loads with the support of their head was astonishing to see but yet, a sorrowful one to bear. The disabled old man who begged for his surgery, the amputated child who begged for his family, the street child who begged for drugs in order to escape the pain of street, and the mother who begged for her child's milk in areas where expensive 4-wheelers passed by and tourists spent their fortune; were all misfortunate circumstances testing one's heart.

One may say begging is gang-coordinated or result of peer-group pressure. One may say mothers beg goods for reselling purpose. I do not care what they say because in the end, I do not believe in people longing a life, where they are put in a position to beg. I will not believe!

For me, they beg due to our failure! They beg because the system makes them beg. They beg because we human beings have failed to live for others. While some of us are consumed in our comfort and luxury, others misfortunes tend to be neglected with ease. It is as if we were never born with a heart. Or have we forgotten our humanity? Some said we should not feel sympathetic for the street kids. "They beg to have access to drugs. They are criminals. They are khates (dogs) who live in the streets." These are either rotten or then ignorant mindsets furnished in our society. Street children are often compelled to lead a life in the street. Look into their tragedies and ponder their circumstances in relation to society's function. Its roots are there!

Words simply do not suffice to fill in the depth of sadness. The extent of shame which I felt upon human beings failure to meet a life where we all work in harmony to make each other's lives better

is disheartening. Sometimes, it drives me to the point of insanity to think how unequal our society is: some live in palaces and others are squeezed to shelter themselves in boxes. In the child centre where I worked, I can still remember a child's family who were living in such pitiful conditions. Who is the obvious inheritor of poverty? Something is terribly wrong!

Why children live in streets? There are numerous reasons. For instance, the civil war (1996-2006) between the government and the Maoist rebels had a significant impact on the nation in all areas of life: Individuals or families in rural areas were internally displaced and separated, women and children's situation worsened dramatically, adults and children were forcefully recruited for the Maoist cause, poverty and mortality rates grew, national security became more unstable, human rights were violated more and the nation's overall development faced a setback. Nepal has yet to recover from the aftermath of civil war. Since many families sought refuge and a chance for a better life in urban cities; they also came to discover the unforgiving reality of city life. Families became victims of the system! They were impoverished due to lack of coping mechanisms, for example, illiteracy and lack of skills either hindered their employment or influenced them to embark upon low-paid jobs such as becoming a porter or then a house servant. A chance for a decent standard of life was not under their grasp!

Such deprivation obviously affected children also. Instead of attending schools, children were sent to the street by their parents or guardians in order to earn for their subsistence. Some were also abandoned because their growth and wellbeing was not ensured. They were either cared by organisations or then they were left in "care" of the street. What's the outcome? Children are running in the street begging and collecting plastics with torn and filthy clothes in hopes of survival. Although they may receive new clothes through donations, they cannot wear them because its effect on begging and survival would be detrimental. How can we blame them for our mistakes? People need to build on their understanding and seek a more constructive

approach, rather than degrading and excluding them from society.



Street children sharing momos © Lawin Khalil Mustafa

By observing my surroundings and discussing with the locals, thoughts burst into opinions that there is much room for development. Unemployment, lack of an official welfare system, inadequate provision of facilities and services, caste-based discrimination, brain drain and dependency on external bodies, developing rural areas access to basic services such as schools and clinics, drafting the constitution, training authorities and people about human rights, expanding on resources and strengthening implementation of law, the apparently low impact of INGOs', NGOs and central government to influence any dramatic changes and the inefficiency of Nepal's government - proclaimed to be highly corrupt - to enable a more dignified life for its citizens; are all some of the challenges that need to be examined and addressed nationally and internationally.

Nepal, the country which can boast by its number of NGOs and INGOs', is one of the least developed countries. According to 2009 Human Development Report conducted by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Nepal ranks 144 out of 182 countries in the human development index (HDI).

Moving on, the country is still experiencing a transition from monarchy to democracy. Although monarchy in Nepal was abolished and replaced with republicanism, the concept has yet to grow into society. It is still a new born baby. In real life practice, it seems to be unfamiliar for most citizens, especially for the uneducated and illiterate. People require more educational opportunities and high illiteracy rates are also a dilemma which requires addressing. According to Unicef-Nepal, 43% of the total adult populations between the years 2003-2008 were found to be illiterate.

In autumn 2009, the political situation in Nepal



Utopia of a world coloured by humanistic values is yet a dream. We should yet always pursue it. What would it be without it?"



was indeed unstable. The Maoist party and other parties seemed to be in constant conflict. National

bans, heated discussions and protests were consistent in discussions and relatively implemented. The high presence of armed police and turmoil of safety symbolized the nation's vulnerability for stepping towards anarchy.

Regardless of the countless challenges, I am yet optimistic for Nepal's future. The land has a vast capacity to develop itself but it requires an elaborate strategy on national and international level. Furthermore, it requires the people's commitment. Migration of the young and the intellects in Nepal is unfavourable for the country's development. The nation requires experts which can harness its vast resources, for example, its water resources that are one of the highest in the world. Nevertheless, the country experiences power cuts on daily basis. Furthermore, the locals generated some negative

views on dependency that they experience, for example, towards India's experts to harness their resources. The need for independence is valued.

It has been stated that Nepal will draft its constitution by May 2010. I look forward to this step! In the long run, I hope it will prove to be beneficial for the people and serve them in all areas of life. I hope it will direct the process of building a solid child protection system which can realize basic needs of children; protect them from slipping to the street and also rescue them from harms such as substance use and abuse and sexual abuse committed against them by local and international paedophiles'. Children are after all, the future of our existence. Nepal's legal framework appears to be going in a positive direction but I believe its implementation and



“What is truly remarkable and respectful is a guest visiting a poor family will be served with the best that the house has to offer. That is a quality we should all learn from: Giving!”



development of resources will pose to be a challenge that might require decades in order to meet a successful standard.

As much as I recognize the wide array of problems and its complexity for seeking a resolution, I still must state that despite the low standards which Nepal has been credited for in terms of human development, the nation's beauty yet never diminishes. Nepali culture arises a hopeful and humane feeling of how some individuals, families and communities yet hold onto each other and live under an informal welfare model at difficult times. While the official structures appear weak and the government is struggling for the nation or is “blossoming” under corruption, the general view of the culture brings a positive turn of tide within

the melancholic challenges that have been outlined so far. Although the efforts of the informal sector do not serve to be preventive for eradicating social dilemmas that torment the society, it is yet an admirable quality of humanity. However, the utopia of a world coloured by humanistic values is yet a dream. We should yet always pursue it. What would it be without it?

As much as there is space for a better world, Nepal has touched me with its beauty. Having lived six years of my childhood in Pakistan, Kathmandu worked its magic to reminisce the long lost memories. It was invigorating! I did not feel like a stranger but rather as a returnee: a person who had long been away from a vibrant culture that was embedded in his soul. One must achieve the utmost level of empathy in order to understand the peace and happiness, which I have come to find among the people and its culture. Not only the culture blends harmoniously with my identity, but it also prompts me to consider a future in a place which I could call home. Although people face difficulties, the social nature and unconditional happiness which they carry despite having little is fulfilling. What is truly remarkable and respectful is a guest visiting a poor family will be served with the best that the house has to offer. That is a quality we should all learn from: Giving!



Tharu cultural dance, Chitwan Nepal © Lawin Khalil Mustafa

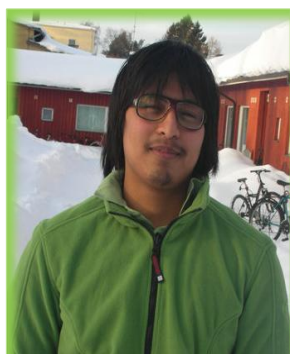
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LOCAL REALITIES OF GLOBAL POLICIES

SUDIP JOSHI

In the 90s I was sitting in the shoulders of American Peace Corps and the Toyota- Pajero was meant to be GTZ- my private driving wheels indeed. Had you born to a mother working for WDO (Women Development Office) post-1990, you would have felt GTZ and Peace Corps as a growing infant and you should have had an expatriate care taker. The international guys would indisputably be these two and the big brother for Nepal unilaterally would be the United States. As an adult I stand today, the world to Nepal has grown multi polar and people have started hearing constructively silent and new-to-us countries like Finland. Nepal happens to be unusually a spoiled brat with a magnificent flow of foreign aid. Nonetheless, my compatriot Nepalese are still busy in subsistence farming and still my NGO-folks find IGA, HIV, agriculture and old- fashioned micro credit neo-labeled into micro entrepreneurship or so forth. RBA, advocacy and governance are the magic words in development showbiz today. And the money in the development business, as they say and as we hear, has been growing significantly. To this day, foreign aid forms one of the pillars of not only Nepal but many developing nations.

BUT FOR THE YOUNGSTER LIKE ME, the effectiveness



of aid has been satisfactory at the best. May be infinite, the drawing room discussions to the intensive multilateral diplomatic dialogues on aid effectiveness. To me what counts, is the simple tangible plans, actions and evaluations that I can disseminate to the rural local realities. Be it again Nepal or any other Southern

regions, the macroeconomic perspective of aid evaluation equivocally will give the less impact of development assistance than predicted. In North, a big majority of population I sense contend the aid assistance flowing to the south or handful of those who affirm the need for more aid required. On the other hand, even if the macro figures seem climbing up, the increasing gap in income distribution and existing social differences do not necessarily satisfy the economic growth. Even the watchdogs of economic growth are satisfied today with the fact that the recent trend of growth is been more conducive to make the rich richer and leaving behind the poor as usual.

We are at a perfect whirlpool of crisis, in fact convergence of the pitfalls. The global economic downturn at one hand while, the complex matrix of food crisis, human crisis, poverty crisis, crisis in human welfare and fuel crisis is alarmingly high. The crisis seems to have raised the sphere of people's mistrust with the state and governance. And parallel now is also crisis in the trust of NGOs and donors who have less lived the expectations of people on contrary to the mushrooming numbers.

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005 has brought about a roadmap for more coherent, effective, harmonized and aligned development cooperation. Yet, the drift expected in the impact of aid seems an ex-ante reality. The big gap it adds is through budget support to the central government of Southern nations. Successful is, the profound

policy edited but which is very hardly realized at the grassroots of these countries. In the poorer region, the problems are not just multiple fold but very diverse in nature even within a small location or small density of population.

The global policies have been well transferred into the national level along with the country specific realities. But challenge lies in bringing the national plans (*most usually designed in the central level and disseminated to local level*) into local truth- first each local regions have different needs second, the low capacity and public trust of local public actors. The baseline of any intervention or policy planning should of course come in a bottom-up hierarchy- the local public and local government should have their own way of doing it. *The participatory and democratic process is mandatory.* Then, combined should make an integrated national level development policy. At the same time, the capacity, role and obligations of local public actors should be building or increased. Having said that I, however, do not mean to undermine or leave behind the existing actors on the field. It is been a seer reality, there are bunch of existing actors financially supported locally (the least), nationally (handful of few) or internationally (the majority). But clearly it indicates they have not been able to address the needs of people or to render proper justice as projected. It is the time to stop working on blocks and get the actors more involved and networked with each other and importantly with the local government/ local public actors. The opportunity and undeniably the magic words of development lie to work in a holistic integrated approach for a community or local level first. It is the time to empower the local governments.

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Poverty: History or our Future?

The adjacent picture was taken in a primary school run for the disadvantaged children in north-west Bangladesh. The school was run by an NGO and assisted by the local community and international donor agencies.

The two girls shown in the photo had been attending the school for more than a year, and it was not the first primary school they had joined. They were pulled out of their former school as their family had to migrate to a new place after losing everything in a flood.

They didn't attend any school for almost a year as their parents were too poor to afford their even minimal educational expenses. Rather, they stayed home and assisted their moms with household chores. However, after an NGO worker persuaded their parents, they had been able to rejoin their educational odyssey.

Reportedly, the number of similar cases has been dramatically increasing in Bangladesh as floods, draughts and other natural disasters have been more common than before mainly due to climate change. Among others Bangladesh has been worst hit by climatic fluctuations, global warming and the number of climate-change-poor is growing rapidly.

Making poverty history has been an exceedingly admired cliché as the world is making its move,



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 “Climate change needs an urgent and globally united attention; otherwise, we won't be able to make poverty a distant past, but an unavoidable future reality.”
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though slowly, towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. However, climate change has emerged as an unprecedented threat to the social and economic development in the global south and is capable of putting the future of the humanity in jeopardy.

It has been clearly seen from all over the world that fighting poverty won't be possible unless concrete and viable provisions are made to deal with the effects of climate change. Development of local adaptation techniques and technological improvements will certainly help, but an unflinching global solidarity is a must.

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