

interact

The magazine of **PROGRESSIO**
CHANGING MINDS • CHANGING LIVES



The future for development

Also in this issue:
Zimbabwe behind the headlines
Speaking out for East Timor
Water rights in El Salvador



editorial

The future for development

Words don't have fixed meanings. Like travellers, they pick up baggage on their journeys, and are changed by what they see and experience in the places they visit.

Development is one such word. Packed into this one word is a continent of meanings that even a full issue of *Interact* magazine can only begin to explore.

The word 'development' has always made me uncomfortable. It speaks too much from a Northern perspective: we talk about 'developing countries' as if they are a bit slow on the uptake, but if we help them out with a bit of aid and instruction, they can be just like us – developed.

But if we are stuck with this word, we need to reclaim its meaning. Because the development that Progressio aspires to is not about telling people which way to go, but supporting them in the direction they wish to travel.

Uncharted territories in early maps of the world were inscribed with the legend: 'Here be monsters'. Now we find that the monster we have created – the monster of perpetual economic growth, which enriches the rich and impoverishes the poor – is everywhere. As Andrew Simms and others argue in this *Interact*, we have become preoccupied with feeding this monster – not ourselves.

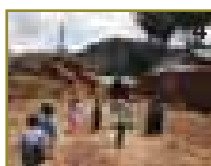
Ultimately, the voices in this *Interact* are calling for one thing: a vision of development that puts poor people first. One that refuses to accept a journey that leaves so many people behind.

Let's draw a new map together.

Cover picture: Children in Aileu, East Timor.
Photo: Nick Sireau/Progressio

interact Autumn 2008

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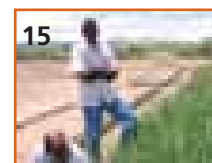
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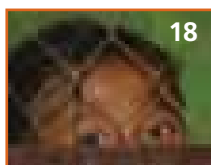
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Published September 2008 by Progressio

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Company reg. no. 385465

Editor Alastair Whitson

Executive Director Christine Allen

Design Twenty-Five Educational

Printing APG (ISO 14001 accreditation for international environmental standards).

Printed on REVIVE 100% chlorine free recycled paper.

Recycle this magazine!

Progressio is the working name of the Catholic Institute for International Relations Charity reg. in the UK no. 294329 Company reg. no. 2002500

The views and opinions in *Interact* are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect Progressio policy.



Progressio development workers and colleagues from partner organisations discussing strategies for tackling HIV and AIDS in Yemen (August 2008).

Rising to the challenge

IN THE BEGINNING I was very afraid and hesitant to be part of a HIV and AIDS programme. [Rasha works on a HIV and AIDS awareness project run by the Women's Forum for Research and Training in Yemen, assisted by Progressio development worker Silvester Kasozi.] I felt that it was not going to be easy because of the way people feel about this sensitive issue – and because I am a woman.

But then I felt maybe this is the chance I have been looking for to prove myself. I am not the type of person that likes to do ordinary work. I like to do something which is different, something that for others has always seemed difficult, something that others look at as a challenge. I felt ready to take that chance.

Moreover I felt that it was a great responsibility, because I believe that everyone should be committed to the work that he or she does. It is not just a matter of doing your work but rather a duty. I believe that there are no extra pieces in the universe, everyone on this earth has a mission

and a goal to fulfill and no-one will be satisfied with themselves unless they feel that they have fulfilled their duty to the very best.

And what more worthwhile or sacred mission can there be than to help someone or to save the life of a human being? I felt that this is the core of our work in the Women's Forum for Research and Training and in this particular programme, so I decided to do it no matter how difficult it was.

So I am very proud of myself and my work. It was hard for me in the beginning during the early workshops, but later on things became easier. Right now I feel that I have gained a lot of knowledge about HIV and AIDS and the differing skills of interacting with others – with new people from different spheres with different perceptions – and of coordinating different activities, taking care of all the small details.

I feel confident in what I am doing, so that I am able to facilitate and answer the questions of the

[awareness-raising workshop] participants satisfactorily without referring to the trainer [Progressio development worker Silvester Kasozi]. Previously the development worker gave me a lot of guidance, but now he leaves me some parts of the training to do by myself to boost my confidence and to help me to be more skilled in doing that job.

I feel very satisfied with the work that has been done so far because from the comments of the people that we have trained it is clear that they appreciate the knowledge and skills they have acquired. The large number of people that we have managed to reach in the short time since we started the programme is testimony to the fact that our efforts are paying off too.



Rasha Mohammed Abdulwahab works for Progressio partner organisation the Women's Forum for Research and Training. She works alongside Progressio development worker Silvester Kasozi, who is training her to run HIV and AIDS awareness workshops in Yemen.

Progressio's vision of development draws on the social teaching of the Catholic Church and the Gospel message, but can be shared by all, writes **Christine Allen**



Foundation stones

PROGRESSIO WAS FOUNDED IN 1940 – as the Sword of the Spirit – by lay Catholics concerned at the Catholic Church's failure to respond to the rise of fascism. From the start, the organisation was inclusive in its ethos and approach, but over the years, alongside the ideas of the people who work with and support us, we have continued to draw inspiration from our Catholic heritage and particularly Catholic Social Teaching.

This edition of *Interact* looks at people's visions and hopes for the future of development. In exploring what we mean by development, we look here at some of the themes of Catholic Social Teaching that are reflected in our work. The ethos and values are inspired by the Gospel message, but will resonate with anyone with a concern for and interest in authentic human development. It is a vision that is fundamentally human, and that reflects a vision for the future that is shared by the people of all faiths and none with whom we work.

The dignity of the human person

The belief in the dignity of people gives rise to human rights which are enshrined in legal processes. But Church teaching goes beyond that and asks us to see people as sacred, and therefore to be valued and cherished.

The desire and search to be fully human is at the centre of Progressio's development purpose. Being fully human is more than just having the basics, but takes on board wider aspects of culture, freedom and a sense of control over one's life and future.

'...Therefore, there must be made available to all everything necessary for leading a life truly human, such as food, clothing, and shelter; the right to choose a state of life freely and to found a family,

the right to education, to employment, to a good reputation, to respect, to appropriate information, to activity in accord with the upright norm of one's own conscience, to protection of privacy and to rightful freedom, even in matters religious.' (*Gaudium et Spes* 1965)

'Development must be directed and judged by the extent to which it benefits human beings in the totality of their being.' (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 1987, para 29)

For Progressio, the person-centred approach is enshrined in the use of development workers: people who share their skills and knowledge with others, with humility and respect. They give and they receive, they share and learn with local communities. It stresses the relationships between people not the financial transactions. People who are poor and marginalised have their own perspectives and analysis too – that is why our advocacy work is rooted in the experience and analysis of communities from the South.

The common good

However, the focus on the human person can never be an excuse for individualism. Within Catholic Social Teaching, the common good is an important concept that encapsulates responsibilities, solidarity and interdependence. Over time, the common good has also widened to cover the responsibility towards all of creation and with it to future generations as yet unborn. The desire for the common good, alongside the preferential option for the poor, is the root of solidarity. The common good is not limited or sectarian – it seeks the good of all by involving all.

'Everyday human interdependence tightens and spreads by degrees over the whole world. As a result the common good, that is, the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfilment, today takes on an increasingly universal complexion and consequently involves rights and duties with respect to the whole human race. Every social group must take account of the needs and legitimate aspirations of other groups, and even of the general welfare of the entire human family.' (*Gaudium et Spes* 1965)

For Progressio, the common good is both what we seek and the way we seek to bring it about. The common good tells us that progress or development is meaningless unless it benefits all, and the poorest in particular. We work with all people of goodwill, whatever their belief system, inspired by a vision of a better world for all. Development is a shared task with those who are poor, and we are privileged to play a part whether this be with partner organisations which are involved in advocating change or through our development workers.

The preferential option for the poor

The common good and human dignity could just be comfortable concepts were it not for this aspect of Church teaching. It places the concern about and perspective of the poor at the centre of its mission and for those who follow Christ, at the centre of their lives.

'...This is an option, or a primacy in Christian charity, to which the Church gives witness down the ages. It affects every Christian who seeks to imitate the life of Christ. But it equally applies to our responsibilities within society, and therefore to our life-style and, if we are to be consistent, to the decisions we make concerning our ownership and use of goods.' (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 1987, para 42)

Therefore poverty isn't so much something that happens 'out there' but is happening to 'us' as a global community.

We cannot address development without looking at our own role in it: as consumers, as travellers, as politicians. Being aware of this responsibility requires us to have a change of heart about how we see the process of 'development'. This calls all of us to be engaged in a radical project where the resources of the earth can be fairly shared by all, including future generations.

'It is impossible to see what right the richer nations have to keep up their claim to increase their own material demands, if the consequence is either that others remain in misery or that the danger of destroying the very physical foundations of life on earth is precipitated. Those who are already rich are bound to accept a less material way of life, with less waste, in order to avoid the destruction of the heritage which they are obliged by absolute justice to share with all other members of the human race.' (*Justice in the World* 1971, para 70)

As a development agency we are concerned about poverty. But this teaching calls us to go one step further – to see the world from the perspective of the poor and to have an analysis of power: Who benefits from decisions? Who loses out? When women are so often powerless, the power analysis brings us a gender perspective; when local communities are not properly consulted by authorities, this perspective gives us an insight into good governance.

Call to action

The social teaching of the Church tells us that because of these elements, the personal is the political. Individuals are called to act, and to respond to needs in whatever way they can. But the way in which we work should respond to human dignity, and be done in solidarity and respect.

'Solidarity is validated within a society when members of the same society recognise each other as persons.... The Church feels called to take its stand beside the poor, to discern the justice of their requests and to help satisfy their needs, within its overall concern for the common good.... The same



Children in a village in the Peruvian highlands near Cusco.

criticism must be applied internationally.... Through solidarity we come to see the "other" in each person, people and nation, not as something to be exploited at little cost to ourselves and then discarded when no longer useful, but as a neighbour and helper who like ourselves must also be a sharer in God's banquet.' (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 1987, para 39)

Whether it be through financial or other support for organisations like Progressio, getting involved in campaigns or becoming a development worker, the imperative is not to sit by but to get involved. Through this solidarity we will also experience more fully what it means to be human.

The full vision of progress – live Simply, Sustainably and in Solidarity

One of the reasons why Progressio has been involved in the *livesimply* challenge is because it resonates so well with our holistic view of development. Models of development have to be more than just economic, but people and creation centred.

Our global solidarity means listening to the communities and responding to their needs; it means development workers living in solidarity, not being paid like international consultants; it means that the perspective of the poor and marginalised are central to our policy analysis and advocacy work.

'The development we speak of here cannot be restricted to economic growth alone. To be authentic it must be well-rounded; it must foster the development of each [person] and of the whole [person].' (*Populorum Progressio* 1967, para 14)

'... the whole concept of development changes dramatically when considered from the point of view of the interdependence of the world community. True development cannot be conceived of simply in terms of the accumulation of wealth and goods by some, if such wealth is acquired at the expense of many millions of human beings and without any proper consideration of the social, cultural and spiritual dimensions of humanity.' (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 1987, para 9)

As you can see from the stories and reflections elsewhere in this edition of *Interact*, this vision is put into practice by partners, development workers and the people we support. Thank you for being part of it.

Christine Allen is Progressio's executive director.

Quotations are from *Gaudium et Spes*, a key document of the Second Vatican Council (1965); *Populorum Progressio*, an encyclical letter by Pope Paul VI (1967); *Justice in the World*, a document produced by the Roman Catholic Synod of Bishops (1971); and *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, an encyclical letter by Pope John Paul II (1987).

THE COURAGE of our convictions

We will not achieve our goals unless the world changes its vision of development, says Joanne Green

2005 WAS A PIVOTAL YEAR for development. UK civil society and the UK government led the way in putting poverty at the centre of the political agenda.

Three years later and much of that optimism has been swamped by climate change and a global food crisis. As we assess progress towards Millennium Development Goal 7 (to ensure environmental

sustainability), we see a much bigger ecological problem than we thought we had at the turn of the millennium.

Like climate change, the current food crisis is a symptom of deeper problems. It should prompt us to look at fundamental flaws in the Northern-driven economic development model: a model which pushes intensive, export-led agriculture on Southern countries to satisfy the interests of multi-national companies, at the expense of food security and environmental sustainability for the poorest communities.

Aquifers and rivers are being pumped dry. According to the Comprehensive Assessment of Water Management in Agriculture, if today's food production and environmental

trends continue it will lead to water scarcity in many parts of the world. Mono-cropping comes at the expense of local crop biodiversity. In Ecuador, 10 years ago they had 40 varieties of potato. Now they only have four – exposing poor farmers to much greater vulnerability, especially with climate change.

In the words of Marcial Lopez, a farmer from Nicaragua with whom Progreso works: 'Small producers have been confused by the lure of greater wealth to adopt methods and solutions that are really working in the interests of corporations rather than society.'

Instead of prompting us to question the current model, such food crises provide opportunities for vested interests to push for solutions that further promote their interests, as witnessed by the outcomes of the recent CBD (UN Convention on Biological Diversity) and Food Summit meetings. One example is the intensity with which genetic modification is pushed as *the* panacea for food security. Such an approach concentrates on a technological 'quick fix' and ignores the fact that people are hungry because of unequal access to natural resources and food, not insufficient food production. There is enough food to feed everyone in this world. But less than half of the grain we produce is directly eaten by people. Most goes into animal feed and, increasingly, agro-fuels – another so-called solution to climate change that has actually decreased access to

'Small producers have been confused by the lure of greater wealth to adopt methods and solutions that are really working in the interests of corporations rather than society'



Fernando Ruiz/Progreso

Members of the Movimiento Indígena y Campesino de Cotopaxi, which is supported by Progreso development worker Fernando Ruiz and the Institute of Ecuadorian Studies.

food and further depleted natural resources.

We cannot have more of the same and we are in no position to take risks with untested technologies, especially as climate change will reduce water availability and increase the importance of having a broad crop biodiversity on which we can depend. It is no coincidence that our planet is already at its environmental limits and poor farmers are already too vulnerable. Poverty and the environment are inextricably linked because poor people become more marginalised as their environment is degraded.

The system needs to change so that it isn't biased towards the interests of the rich and powerful and fails to protect the poorest. We need a different vision of development.

Governments and institutions must adapt and change. And citizens of developed countries also have a responsibility. I write this knowing that my society and my attitudes and lifestyle and choices are part of the problem like never before. Our insatiable appetites for more are hitting the poorest communities the hardest.

Despite what some may say, there is a trade-off between further economic development in the North and meeting goals on the environment and poverty reduction. The current systems are not sustainable. And technology is not the answer.

We need a new vision of development in which a people-centred food system allows the voices of small-scale farmers to be heard. Where the needs of poor producers and consumers are met. Where autonomy and self-sufficiency are theirs.

We need a new vision of development in which northern consumers face the impact our choices have on poor communities and their



Farmers in Intag, Ecuador, preparing ingredients for an organic fertiliser.

environments and change correspondingly.

We need a new vision of development in which governments move beyond short-term technological fixes to address the long-ignored root causes of the food crisis and restructure economic systems and global institutions to be pro-poor. Poor people need a food system that is capable of withstanding economic and environmental shocks.

The recent IAASTD (International Assessment on Agriculture, Science and Technology for Development) report recommended a much greater focus on small-scale agriculture and one that works in harmony with nature. The importance of poor countries and communities determining how they feed themselves cannot now be ignored.

Such a vision of development should be agreed under the auspices of the UN – bringing together Northern governments, Northern food producers and Northern consumers with Southern governments, Southern food producers and Southern consumers to implement a

transformed reality of development and globalisation.

Will the UK, so long a leading voice in global development, have the courage

The system needs to change so that it isn't biased towards the interests of the rich and powerful and fails to protect the poorest

of its convictions and admit that we face some very hard choices? As one of the world's richest, most powerful and most polluting countries, we look to our government to take the lead in challenging unjust structures, learning from our failures and facing up to our responsibilities. Will we change our bias to the rich and instead learn from poor people and communities on what this new vision should look like? For everyone's sake, I hope so.

This is an edited version of a speech by Joanne Green to the ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council) High-level Segment on Meeting the Millennium Development Goals, in New York on 2 July 2008. Joanne Green was then Progressio's advocacy manager. She is now Head of Policy at Cafod.



ENDING POVERTY

in a carbon-constrained world

We need to change our locked-in thinking about economic development and reorganise around the principles of social justice, writes **Andrew Simms**

SEVERAL YEARS AGO the International Red Cross sent me on behalf of the World Disasters Report to assess the early impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations. What I saw in

The policies designed to pursue growth have become a mask for making the rich, richer

Tuvalu, in the South Pacific, and learned from other small island states, may hold lessons for how many millions more can withstand the upheaval of global warming on our small island planet.

To survive for so long on remote shards of land, exposed to the full force and vagaries of nature, these island communities first had to respect their obvious

environmental limits. Next they evolved resilient local economies that helped them cope with extreme and unpredictable weather. These were, of necessity, based on reciprocity, sharing and co-operation, and not unlimited growth fed by individualistic, beggar-thy-neighbour competition.

Today, as collectively we face and exceed the limits of the

Pacific island communities like Tonga have evolved resilient local economies based on reciprocity, sharing and co-operation.

earth's bio-capacity, we are challenged at the global level to learn, in a few short years, lessons that such small communities often took millennia to arrive at. Our task is enormously complicated by the intricate interdependence of the modern global economy, the unbalanced distribution of power and benefits within it, and a pace of international decision making that, until the ice started to melt so rapidly, I would have described as glacially slow.

We already know that people living in poverty are hit first and worst by global warming. This and the challenge of reducing poverty in a carbon constrained world calls for a new development model which is climate proof and climate friendly. There is no either/or approach possible; the world must meet both its commitments to achieve the MDGs and tackle climate change. The two are inextricably linked.

Here we crash headlong into another, equally large problem. It is clear that conventional economic growth will happen in poor countries as a consequence of effective poverty reduction. But at a global level, the policies designed to pursue growth have become a mask for making the rich, richer, whilst leaving the poor with few benefits and abandoned to deal with growth's environmental consequences. During the 1980s, from every \$100 worth of global economic growth, around \$2.20 found its way to people living below the absolute poverty line. A decade later that had shrunk to just \$0.60c, and the actual mean income of those living under \$1 per day in Africa also fell.

There has been, in effect, a sort of 'flood-up' of wealth from poor to rich, rather than a

'trickle-down'. It means, perversely, that for the poor to get slightly less poor, the rich have to get very much richer, implying patterns of consumption which, in a world facing climate change, cannot be sustained.

It now takes around \$166 worth of global growth – made up of all those energy-hungry giant flat screen TVs and sports utility vehicles – to generate a single dollar of poverty reduction for people in absolute poverty, compared with just \$45 dollars in the 1980s.

Earnings of between \$3 and \$4 per day is the approximate level at which the strong link between income and life expectancy breaks down. So, let us ask what would happen if we agreed \$3 per day as the minimum level of income to escape absolute poverty?

Using the ecological footprint measure, if the whole world wished to consume at the level of the United States, we would need, conservatively, over five planets like earth to support them. But, under the current pattern of unequally distributed benefits from growth, to lift everyone in the world onto a modest \$3 per day, would require the resources of around 15 planets like ours. Where, you might ask, will the other 14 come from?

To tackle poverty in a carbon constrained world, then, we need a new development model, based on better measures of progress, and a shift from relying on unequal global growth to serious redistribution. If we think of the planet as a cake, we can slice it differently, but we surely cannot bake a new one.

Climate change is not the only reason that we have to learn to live with far fewer fossil fuels. Development must also contend with the high and rising price of oil, and the imminent global peak and long decline of oil production.

What, if any, guides do we have to surviving these multiple shocks?

One country, much maligned, provides a glimpse of a near future that many more may face. Almost like a laboratory example, positioned on the flight path of the annual hurricane season, since 1990 Cuba has lived through the economic and environmental shocks that climate change and peak oil hold in store for the rest of the world.

The impact of the sudden loss of cheap Soviet oil and its economic isolation was extreme. Oil imports dropped by over half. The use of chemical pesticides and fertilisers dropped by 80%. The availability of basic food staples like wheat and other grains fell by half and, overall, the average Cuban's calorie intake fell by over one third in around five years. But serious and long-term investment in science, engineering, health, education, plus land redistribution, reduced inequality and research into low-input ecological farming techniques, meant the

There has been, in effect, a sort of 'flood-up' of wealth from poor to rich, rather than a 'trickle-down'

country had a strong social fabric and the capacity to act.

At the heart of the transition after 1990 was the success of small farms, and urban farms and gardens. Immediate crisis was averted by food programmes that targeted the most vulnerable people, the old, young, pregnant women and young mothers, and a rationing programme that guaranteed a minimum amount of food to everyone. Soon, half the food consumed in the capital, Havana, was grown in the city's own gardens and, overall, urban gardens provide 60% of the vegetables eaten in Cuba. The threat of serious food shortages was

cont...

Rich countries must radically cut their own consumption to free-up the environmental space in which others can pursue the Millennium Development Goals

overcome within five years.

Cuba demonstrated it is possible to feed a population under extreme economic stress with very little fossil fuel. The approach was dubbed the 'anti-model' because it was both highly managed and led by communities, it focused on meeting domestic needs rather than exports, was largely organic and built on the success of small farms.

Currently, according to our calculations, in a given calendar year the world as a whole goes into ecological debt around October 7th – by which time we have consumed more and produced more waste than ecosystems can deal with. The results are seen in climate change, oceans emptied of fish, and desertification. Forty years ago Robert Kennedy said that economic growth measured everything apart from that which really matters. But it is

possible to assess if we are achieving human development whilst living within our environmental means.

The new economics foundation 'Happy Planet Index' compares the relative success of nations at delivering long life expectancy and high levels of well being, compared to the size of their ecological footprint. The results reveal many middle income countries performing well, with good life expectancy and well-being, and relatively low footprints. Strikingly, some of the best performers are small island states. Somehow, they have worked together to produce more convivial communities, whilst respecting environmental limits.

How can we learn from these examples, change our locked-in thinking about economic development, and reorganise around the principles of resilience, social justice, sufficiency, ecological efficiency, and the capacity to adapt?

We might begin by asking, as acid tests:

- Will what we do make people more or less

vulnerable?

- Will it move us toward truly sustainable, one-planet-living?
- Will it move us fast enough to prevent irreversible, catastrophic climate change?

When the people of Tuvalu first encountered Europeans in the 19th century, they gave them the name *palangi*. Victorian travellers translated the word to mean 'heaven bursters', a reference to their ship's guns. Now, some of our lifestyles truly threaten to burst the heavens. At the very least, to achieve poverty reduction in a world threatened by climate change, we know that the good news is that we now know, from the literature on human well-being, that making the rich, richer does nothing to increase their life satisfaction. On the contrary, numerous studies confirm that once your basic needs are met, you are just as likely to have high life satisfaction, whether your ecological footprint is large or small. My conclusion is that a new development model is needed as much, if not more, in countries like Britain and the US as the majority world. We have to demonstrate that good lives do not have to cost the earth.

Impassable ecological obstacles lie on the path down which we chase the shadows of over-consumption to deliver our well-being, expecting the poor to be grateful for any crumbs that fall from our plates. The good news is that another way is not only possible, as the philosopher A.C. Grayling writes, it is better, richer and more enduring.

This is an edited version of a speech by Andrew Simms, policy director and head of the climate change programme at nef (the new economics foundation), to the UN ECOSOC special session on climate change and the Millennium Development Goals, New York, 2 May 2008.

See www.neweconomics.org for more information.



Jeroen Oerlemans/Panos

An 'organoponico' in Miramar, Cuba: one of many large organic vegetable gardens run by local community groups as part of the 'Urban Agricultural Programme'.

A RADICAL transformation in the way that the world's population produces and consumes agricultural products is needed if we are serious about poverty reduction and tackling climate change.

The current model of agricultural production, based on the exploitation of land and water resources, the use of chemicals (pesticides and fertilisers) and hybrid seeds has not benefited the world's poorest. Modern agriculture has resulted in increased production but today more than 800 million people remain hungry.

There is enough food produced in the world to feed the population. In 2007 the world produced 2.3 billion tons of grain, 4% more than in 2006, and since 1961 the world's cereal output has tripled, while the population has doubled. But today, less than half of the grain produced in the world is directly eaten by people; most goes into animal feed and agrofuels.

Inequitable access to food – and not insufficient food production – is the main reason why people go hungry. Trade liberalisation and unfair trade rules have forced developing countries to open their markets and lands to global agribusiness for the production of global commodities. This is having a devastating effect on the world's poorest people.

In the face of a global food crisis, where spiralling food prices for cereals have resulted in people all around the globe taking to the streets to demand action from governments, change is imperative. But change in what, by whom and where?

Progressio thinks that the answer lies in a groundbreaking new report by the United Nations, the International Assessment on Agriculture, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD). For the first time, the international

HUNGRY for change

Changing the way we produce and consume food is crucial to reducing poverty throughout the world, says Sol Oyuela

community has stopped to reflect on the unintended consequences of the intensive and export-oriented model of agricultural production prevalent today.

The IAASTD report, launched in April, calls for a radical transformation in the world's farming system to give small-scale farmers a central role in agricultural production. This means recognising that farming has a diversity of environmental and social functions and that nations and peoples have a right to determine their most suitable food policies in a democratic way.

To Progressio and our partners this is not new. For many years, we have been supporting rural communities in developing countries in their efforts to grow crops agro-ecologically, that is, in an environmentally and socially sustainable way. For example, in Ecuador Progressio is working with partner organisations supporting small-scale farming communities to manage their water, land and seeds in a sustainable way.

Through the promotion of seed-saving and seed-exchange, the protection of natural resources and organic harvesting of palm, corn, cocoa, plantain, yucca, peanuts and rice, these producers grow the food to feed their families and sell the surplus in the local market. This way of farming is environmentally and economically sustainable. Poor farmers do not rely on external

outputs such as hybrid seeds or fertilisers and therefore, fluctuations in the prices of these products do not affect their capacity to grow food.

The experience of our partners in developing countries shows that supporting agricultural practices that promote self-sufficiency and autonomy of poor farmers can significantly reduce their poverty. So, what should a new agricultural model look like? In the words of Edgar Gonzales, a small-scale farmer in Peru:

'My vision of the future is a traditional agriculture that is aimed at satisfying the food and livelihood needs of farmers and their families, rather than generating profit and accumulating wealth.'

Sol Oyuela is Progressio's environmental officer.



Myriam Salazar/CEA/Progressio

Women in Columbe Alto, Ecuador, selecting potato seeds.

What does development mean to you?

Fresh thoughts on development from people who care



Sylvester Kasozi is a Progressio development worker in Yemen, working as a HIV and AIDS trainer with the Women's Forum for Research and Training

For me 'development' means a shift in the way people view, see or perceive issues that affect them. However, that is only part of the journey towards development itself. The shift in perceptions has to be complemented with the ability for people to do things differently to bring about a change in their lives for the better. Only by translating knowledge into practice can development be fully realised.

From what I have seen with my own eyes in Yemen and from my interaction with locals, development to them is a meaningful democracy where their rights are upheld, and where in due course they are able to access and/or afford basic necessities for their lives such as food, medical services, education and shelter.

A vivid example would be the invitation of participants to a workshop to raise their awareness about HIV and AIDS. Although HIV

Sylvester Kasozi (far right) with fellow Progressio development workers (from left) Ronnie Murungu, Irfan Akhtar and Prachanda Shrestha.

and AIDS is a development issue – one that affects people's livelihoods – and it's therefore important that they get to know what it is all about, their attention may be drawn to what their next meal will be, or where and how they will get the school fees for their children, or the ill-health of family members they left back home.

True, we cannot provide solutions to all these problems – but they have an effect on the work that we do. Although seemingly trivial, if these issues are preoccupying the minds of some of the participants in an awareness-raising workshop, it has an adverse effect, since their attention will justifiably be elsewhere.

My personal vision for the work I am doing is to see a Yemen that is more open to HIV and AIDS as a development rather than a medical or immigration issue. A time when HIV and AIDS can be talked about and discussed in all spheres of life – homes, schools, offices and the media – just like any other development issue that affects the lives of people.

I envision a Yemen where people living with HIV can express themselves, stand up for their rights and not be despised and blamed for their status. Only then will I see my work bearing fruit. I will not myself have orchestrated this change but I will have been a part of those who made a contribution towards it. That is what development is all about. It's not about instant change but gradual, sustainable change.



Mónica Galeano Velasco is a Progressio development worker in Honduras, working on human rights and HIV and AIDS

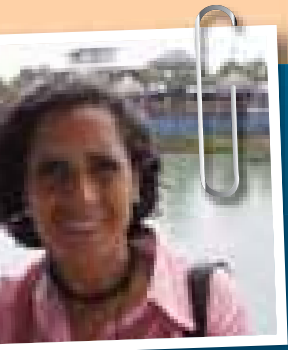
For me, development is linked to people's access to education, and particularly equal access to knowledge for men and women. When people gain knowledge, they are able to know, understand, think and analyse. This is the mental process necessary in order to understand their reality, take decisions and put them into practice.

The women with HIV with whom I work perceive development from the point of view of well-being, and the guarantee of their human rights. Development for them is having quality of life, opportunities and respect for human dignity. Discrimination because of being women and having HIV is an aspect that alters their individual development and their right to live with dignity.

I aspire to women having access to education and having freedom and autonomy to make decisions about their lives and their bodies. Prosperous and developed societies are precisely those which manage to break down the wall that represents the unacceptable inequality between a man and a woman.

I want to see the women of this country [Honduras], those who give my work meaning, making their own decisions, sure of themselves, and leading the unstoppable social processes to change the thinking that limits their freedom and development.





Marianela Gibaja is Progressio's country representative in Peru

For me, development is a process through which people's quality of life

can be improved, and is something which can only be reached by recognising and respecting diversity.

This process aspires to close the social, economic, cultural and environmental gaps that exist between people. This requires an equitable and fair redistribution of all resources, within a democratic framework in which peace, freedom, solidarity, health and education are sought for all.

For some people, development is synonymous with the generation of economic wealth, without taking into account whether this wealth generates more poverty and inequality. But for the majority,

development is any change or implementation that happens, and which brings improvement in the quality of life. What I hope to see in 10 years' time is:

- A fair redistribution of wealth and a consequent diminishing of poverty and inequality.
- That beneficiaries with whom we work are more empowered: with the power to make decisions about their lives and with strong self-esteem.
- That cultural diversity is not a reason for discrimination.
- That minority groups are not stigmatised and discriminated against.
- That beneficiaries and partners have reflected on caring for the environment and are using practices which care for water.
- That Northern countries invest more in the development of Latin America, in order to achieve a better balance.



Ernest Cañada is a Progressio development worker in Nicaragua, working in communication for development with Fundación Luciérnaga

At this stage in history, it is obvious that the concept of 'development' has been overused and played around with too much. It has served to justify external intervention in poor countries, to serve the interests of rich countries and their local allies.

'Development' is therefore, firstly, a concept to be reclaimed, to recover, in the interests of the oppressed. It simply means taking action so that people can live dignified, better lives, thanks to their own efforts. It therefore has nothing to do with economic growth, access to international markets or monetary income. Development is to do with the real options of the people to come up with and construct their own future.

For people in Nicaragua, development is the desire for access to antiretroviral medication, to be treated well in hospital or by the public

authorities, to be able to sell their harvests for a good price and educate their children, to have access to drinking water and electricity every day, to have an influence on public affairs without risking their lives. For these people, development is very specific, but also very complex: the hope of being able to live with dignity.

My hope is that we can reclaim a vision of development which grows from the concerns and needs of poor people, and not from dull, grey officials who have chosen to work in development in order to be well paid, or in order to serve the economic and strategic interests of donor countries. I wish for working for development to be a life choice of commitment to poor people and against inequality.

My hope for the future is to see a real empowerment of people's groups capable of defending their rights and having an effective influence on their living conditions. We can support them, and facilitate processes, but they must always be the protagonists. Without an organised popular movement, with proposals and the capacity to influence public policies, there will never be development.



Jenny Cosgrave lives in London and works for The Passage, a day centre for rough sleepers or people who are threatened with homelessness. She is involved in the *livesimply* challenge

Development is living in solidarity as a world community, working for equality and social justice.

Development does not mean hegemony, rather a process of mutual and sustainable learning and change that strives to create a just world. I think it is important to move as far away as possible from the colonial vision of 'them' and 'us' – as if the West is the authority that must teach everyone else how to live. What development should mean is eradicating the inequality in world resources whilst at the same time reflecting our own cultural and historical identity – diversity in our world is so exciting to me!

War, violence, the disregard for human life and the arrogance of the human race to think we can continue to live in the way we do make me angry. I have not lost hope though! For me this was truly realised when I did a hitch-hike from Manchester to Morocco (it was to raise money for a charity called LINK Community Development). The kindness that we were shown by complete strangers was extraordinary and really moving. I believe that people are good and no amount of pessimism will change that conviction!

Opening up our vision

While governments pursue their own agenda, people are increasingly determined to follow a different approach, Progressio development worker Diana Torres tells **Michelle Lowe**

HERE AT THE PEOPLE'S SUMMIT [held in Peru in May], it is very obvious that people have a desperate need to express themselves. When the presentations finish, people don't have questions, what they need is to be listened to. It makes you reflect on the grave lack of opportunities to participate and have a voice when, as soon as there is an opportunity to speak, people need to talk and talk and tell what is happening to them and how it is happening.'

Diana Torres was reflecting on the alternative People's Summit held in Lima, Peru, in May to coincide with the official 5th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean. Diana, a Progressio development worker with Educa, the Institute for the Promotion of a Quality Education, is working in the very deprived district of San Juan de Lurigancho on the outskirts of Lima,

promoting participation in local development. For Diana, the summit highlighted the lack of real mechanisms for participation for marginalised groups in Peru:

'This [alternative] summit is a place where you can hear the voices which have ended up being silent because nobody listens to them. It is absolutely vital that NGOs including Progressio and its partner organisations should be here. I think these kinds of events are crucial for us to be able to continue re-thinking the work we do and improving it.'

Although the alternative People's Summit provided an opportunity for people to talk and be heard and learn from each other, the contrast with the official summit reflects the lack of real dialogue between governments and their people: 'You can see the fragmentation in which the state is acting in one sphere and the people are acting in another, and you wonder where is the dialogue

and space for conversation between the two.

'I think the official summit responds to the needs of a specific economic model and so the proposals they make are going to respond to that model – and by that I mean they are not going to resolve the gap between rich and poor. They are working within the perspective of an economic model which continues to fragment society, making the poorest poorer and the richest richer.'

She sees the contrast between the lavish party laid on for delegates at the official summit in Miraflores, one of the richest parts of Lima, and the 'people's party' held in another plaza miles away, as emblematic of the inequality and division in Peruvian society:

'Alan Garcia [the president of Peru] can continue saying that we are in "a time of abundance", but abundance for who? In Miraflores, there will be a big party – who will be at that party? And who will be at this party? It shows how divided we are: the state is on one side and civil society is on another.'

The Peruvian government has openly attacked dissenting voices, calling them 'traitors' who are against development, but at the alternative summit the view was put forward 'that protest appears because it is so difficult to sustain the neoliberal model – it is almost a natural consequence of the unjust model'. Diana says: 'Repression of protest is a symptom of an inability to sustain the system. I think that understanding that reflection might help us to find ways to act and respond.'

For Diana, the alternative summit helped 'to open up my vision': 'It allows you to understand other aspects of the national reality which you cannot find out about through the media, which don't really represent these other worlds and other realities. It allows you to know what is happening for all the groups which are called "minorities" but which are actually sustaining the country.

'Sometimes you can feel that communities are tired – that there are small efforts in the communities but that they aren't enough. But here in this summit you can see that there are people who are really fighting and achieving important things – and that's encouraging.'

Michelle Lowe worked as a Progressio development worker in Peru and Ecuador.



Participants in a forum at the People's Summit on natural resources and mining.

'THE LANDSCAPE SUFFERS where the people suffer.' So says Progressio development worker Ingrid Hartmann, who arrived in Somaliland in August to work on a new soil and water conservation project.

As her plane descended over Somaliland, she was, she says, 'a little worried about where to find the soils I was supposed to conserve'. Looking down, she saw 'nothing but stones and gravel, only sometimes interrupted by small strips of brownish maize plots. I thought, if that is now the skin of Somaliland, Somaliland must be deeply wounded.'

Somaliland is predominantly a nomadic pastoral society that traditionally depends on livestock and agriculture. However, over the last 10 years soil erosion has become a major problem, due to extreme climatic variation such as prolonged drought and short and very intensive rainfall on steep slope landscape. This has resulted in flooding, erosion of topsoil and sedimentation, leading to decreased soil fertility and ground water retention as well as accelerated desertification of land.

This has prevented the area from being self-sufficient in food production (both livestock and crops). As a result, the living standard of small-scale farmers and herders over the past two decades has decreased, with many more people now falling under the poverty line. According to the 2002 UNDP Somalia/World bank Socio-Economic Survey, about 73.4% of Somalilanders have an income of less than \$2 per day.

This is the situation into which Teklu Erkossa, a Progressio development worker from Ethiopia, stepped earlier this year. Teklu was working on a short-term placement with the Faculty of Agriculture and Environment at Amoud University – the first faculty of its kind in Somalia and Somaliland – to help set up a pilot project to test the suitability of using vetiver grass for soil and water conservation.

Vetiver grass is a cheap, easy to implement and effective means of soil and water conservation that provides an alternative to more expensive and less sustainable mechanical procedures. It has been used successfully to prevent soil erosion elsewhere in Africa and Asia (more than 120 countries worldwide), but never in Somalia or Somaliland.

The grass has a massive root system reaching down to 2-3 metres in its first

Helping the grass grow

A new Progressio project in Somaliland aims to find a sustainable method for boosting soil fertility and conserving water, writes Caroline Pankhurst

year, strengthening earth structures, stabilising soil during extreme rainfall, replenishing groundwater reserves and also removing contaminants. Aside from this, the cut grass has many uses, for example, thatching houses, for pest control and for medicinal purposes. It is also unnecessary to plant the grass from seed – cuttings can be taken from other plants, making it an affordable and sustainable means of conservation.

Test plots have been planted at the Faculty's nursery and Ingrid has now arrived to work on the next phase of the project. The plan is to train 40 small-scale farmers in four different locations in the use and benefits of the grass. If the grass proves successful, these farmers will also be trained as 'trainers of trainers' who will each be able to pass on the technical information to around 20 other farmers so that the project can be replicated in neighbouring communities.

The next step is to introduce the vetiver grass method to the farmers. Most of the farmers are relative beginners, having switched from pastoralism to agriculture due to the reduction of the grazing base. However, Ingrid says, 'their awareness of soil conservation is very high and their current practices of soil protection very sophisticated.'

'Almost every farmer uses at least four different methods of soil conservation, most of them stone bunds, earth bunds, ridges, some of them terraces which they renew every year, some do fencing with aloe vera or stop water flow with branches from shrubs and trees.'

But their initial response to vetiver is positive: 'Almost every farmer immediately could identify a place where vetiver grass could be planted, mostly eroding riverbanks, sometimes gullies, sometimes they suggested replacing



Teklu Erkossa with a colleague at the vetiver grass test plot at Amoud University.

earthbanks with the vetiver, since for the earth bunds they had to sacrifice the topsoil.'

Once the vetiver in the nursery is sufficiently established, cuttings can be transferred to the farms, and its suitability can be tested in the field. There is still work to be done, but if it succeeds, the project could play a key role in improving agricultural livelihoods in the near future.

Caroline Pankhurst is Progressio's funding manager. The vetiver grass project is funded from Progressio's partnership agreement with the Department for International Development.

interactnow

Read more at Ingrid Hartmann's weblog
The Skin of the Earth
<http://progressio.typepad.co.uk/theskinoftheearth/>

CHANGING MINDS

Between hope and fear

The future of Zimbabwe and its beleaguered people still hangs in the balance, writes **Steve Kibble**

SINCE MARCH THIS YEAR Zimbabweans have lived through cycles of fear and hope, from the 29 March elections through massive state-directed violence to Robert Mugabe's declaration of himself as president following the presidential 'run-off'.

Optimism rose again during negotiations on a power-sharing government under the somewhat tarnished guidance of President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa. A memorandum of understanding (MOU), signed on 21 July, committed the parties to an end to violence, the lifting of the ban on NGOs

We are still in stasis politically amid massive economic decline, precipitated by an all-pervasive governance crisis

distributing vital humanitarian aid, respect for the rule of law, freedom to pursue political activity, and recognition of the need for a new constitution and for outside reconstruction assistance.

As I write, a power-sharing deal has just been agreed, but questions remain over the division of ceremonial and executive power between Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Questions to be resolved include who will control the economic and security ministries and how long a power-sharing government should last before elections.

Whilst Mugabe's ZANU-PF still controls the apparatus of the state and security, it has no solution to the crisis and is aware that only through the MDC

will a deal be found acceptable to outsiders willing to reconstruct and pour in massive needed aid.

The background to the long drawn-out nature of the talks lies with the hardline Joint Operations Command around Mugabe. They had been refusing to entertain any deal that would bring in transparent governance and economic transactions, as this would undermine the patronage system by which they are enriched and enabled to buy the allegiance of those such as the militias and 'war veterans' who carry out their campaigns of violence and intimidation. They are also worried by threats of prosecution for human rights abuses.

Already by late August militias were harassing people in Matobo near Bulawayo where there will be a by-election (date not yet decided). Given the nearly equal balance of power in parliament ZANU-PF considers it vital to win this by-election, which happened because the MDC MP for the seat was elected as Speaker of the House.

We are still in stasis politically amid massive economic decline, precipitated by an all-pervasive governance crisis which has seen the economy shrink by 80% since 1999 – a record for a country not at war. The crisis has been marked by a series of disastrous land reform policies, the adoption by the ZANU-PF government of draconian measures curbing civil and political liberties, the plundering of the economy, and the collapse of social services. The country faces a devastating HIV and AIDS epidemic, and widespread hunger and dependency. Life expectancy has dropped from 61 years in 1990 to 34 for

women and 37 for men in 2006, and five million Zimbabweans will shortly be in need of food aid. Despite the lifting of a ban on humanitarian and relief agencies carrying out food distribution, NGOs will still be profoundly restricted and hence people will be in danger of starvation.

The 85% unemployment in the formal sector has driven millions abroad. The economy has declined by 60%. The foreign currency shortage remains critical. In late July 2008 ten zeroes were removed from the currency but inflation continues to mushroom.

Despite Mugabe playing his trademark card of undermining and weakening the somewhat divided opposition, there are some encouraging signs. The peoples of the region and internationally have signalled their distaste for ZANU-PF. Trade unionists in South Africa refused to unload arms from a Chinese ship destined for Harare, and demonstrations against Mugabe's presence at the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

Despite Mugabe playing his trademark card of undermining and weakening the somewhat divided opposition, there are some encouraging signs

summit were held by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu). Regional church leaders have issued strong statements against the illegality of the elections and continuing repression. The Zimbabwean Catholic Bishops' Conference and its Justice and Peace Commission said in early August that few of the conditions of the MOU have been met. Civil society and churches have been strong in their demands for a say in the negotiations.

Whilst we await the details of the power-sharing agreement, ordinary Zimbabweans attempt to survive in what has become a barter economy, with great need for as much international solidarity as they can get. The international community will need to be ready to help with recovery programmes once it is clear that progress towards normality and democracy is sustained.

Steve Kibble is Progressio's advocacy officer for Africa.

MY COUNTRY currently has 80% unemployment. Inflation is running at 11,250,000% while month-on-month inflation has accelerated to 840%. It's hard to make sense of numbers like this. What do these figures mean in reality? What is daily life in Zimbabwe like?

I live in Harare with my wife and have three children aged 9, 14 and 18. My daily life has changed immeasurably in the last 18 months. Everything that we used to take for granted – food, electricity and water – we can no longer ignore. Things that were just part of an ordinary day – like going shopping, or grabbing lunch – have taken on far greater significance.

The day starts early. Normally I'd have taken a hot shower and had some breakfast before leaving for the office. That's not always possible now. We often don't have water, or electricity, so I can't take a shower. We just get what water we can in buckets and wash with that.

There's no doubt that living without electricity is better than living without water. If there's no electricity, it can be a problem cooking food. People gather firewood and cook outside. You don't have the TV, radio or your computer. But you can manage.

Living without water however is no joke. You don't know when the water will go off or for how long. Sanitation becomes a problem. Imagine that for a family of five in a warm country. We've learned always to keep a large container of water to flush the toilet.

I'm in a fortunate position: I can still drive to work. Many people simply can't afford to travel to work: the cost of petrol virtually doubles every day. There are far less buses and cars on the roads than there used to be and far more people. Many people now walk for hours to get to work. They arrive late and leave early.

Once I'm at the office I might not necessarily be able to work because of the lack of electricity. I can't even turn my computer on.

A lot of our work focuses on people living with HIV and AIDS. Although the prevalence rate in Zimbabwe has dropped from a high of 33 per cent to 15 per cent of the population, it's still a real concern.

Gaining consistent access to anti-retroviral drugs can be very difficult for patients because the government doesn't have enough money to import

Behind the headlines

Kevin Ndemera, Progressio's new country representative in Zimbabwe, describes the reality of daily life in Harare

the much-needed medication. So I meet lots of people who have had the drugs, but have missed a few days or weeks of medication and so acquired a resistance to their medication.

Having a poor diet really doesn't help either – and eating well is difficult when 80% of the population is unemployed. Food prices have rocketed and often there isn't any food in the shops. People are inventive. They grow what they can and trade between themselves. But the economics of the country really affects people in all sorts of ways. I see it every day.

We just used to pop to the shops to buy what we needed. Now that's impossible. When we go shopping it's a three-day round trip to Botswana. I have to take time off work to buy what the family needs to survive. My wife and I go once a month, and we're lucky that we can do this. For most people in the country it isn't an option and I'm always mindful of that.

It's hard to know what my daily life is going to be like in a year's time. It could go so many different ways. Zimbabwe's always surprising. We have a long history – much longer than news headlines would lead you to believe. If we have a

Things that were just part of an ordinary day – like going shopping, or grabbing lunch – have taken on far greater significance.

real political settlement that recognises the will of the people things could improve rapidly. All the ingredients are there. But also, without that settlement, things could get a lot worse.

It's hard to think how they could be worse. But they could. At the end of the day I'm just focusing on my children, not on myself. I want them to have a future in Zimbabwe. I want them to feel secure. That's my focus every day.



Kevin Ndemera pictured during a recent visit to Progressio's head office in London.

EAST TIMOR: WHO CARES?

The ugly truth: UK arms sales to Indonesia

The arms trade is shrouded in secrecy, prone to corrupt practices and highly profitable. The UK has a long history of selling arms to Indonesia, and despite the insistence of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that none of these arms would be used to repress human rights within Indonesia, extensive evidence collected in East Timor has shown UK-manufactured jets, tanks and arms being used in Timor between 1975 and 1999.

The UK licensed the sale of Hawk jets or other major arms to Indonesia in 1978, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1991, 1993, 1995 and 1996. The value of the UK's arms exports to Indonesia during the period 1997 to 1999 alone is estimated to be in the region of £287.75 million pounds. Throughout this period reports of major human rights abuses in East Timor were being documented and ignored by the UK government.*

The UK has given £1 million to the World Bank's Trust Fund for East Timor, but recently announced it had no further plans to contribute to this programme. Although it funds other agencies and programmes in the area, even the most optimistic funding estimates over the last 10 years would be less than 10% of what the UK earned in arms sales to Indonesia between 1997 and 1999.

Progressio is asking the UK government to acknowledge its role in the occupation and repression of the East Timorese people by funding comprehensive capacity-building and rehabilitation programmes to help East Timor move into a peaceful future. Currently, the UK government isn't stepping up to the proactive and constructive role it could play to promote meaningful progress.

* All figures courtesy of *Arms to Indonesia CAAT-TAPOL Factsheet*, December 2005, retrieved August 21, 2008 from <http://caat.org.uk/publications/countries/indonesia-0604.php>

Snapshot: East Timor



Official name: The Democratic Republic of Timor Leste

Languages: Tetum, Portuguese

Comparative area: roughly two-thirds the size of Wales

Climate: tropical, hot, humid with wet and dry seasons

Terrain: mountainous

Natural resources: petroleum, natural gas

Arable land: 8.2%

Population: 1,108,777 (but other estimates are as low as 800,000); 35% of the population is less than 14 years old

Refugees and internally displaced persons: 100,000 (estimated)

Infant mortality rate: 42 per 1,000 live births

Life expectancy at birth: 67 years

Religions: 98% Roman Catholic

Literacy: 58%

Population living on less than \$1 per day: 40%

Unemployment: 50% (estimated)

A brief history of the conflict

Nine days after declaring independence from Portugal in 1975, East Timor (Timor Leste) was invaded by Indonesia, marking the beginning of a bloody, repressive and violent occupation that would last for the next 24 years.

The Indonesian military forcibly displaced thousands of East Timorese from their homes and livelihoods and forbade them from leaving resettlement camps, despite lack of food or adequate hygiene facilities. All human and civil rights were suspended.

Some women were forced into marriages with Indonesian soldiers, raped or abused, often as retribution for being related to members of Fretilin (the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor). Pro-independence activists were persecuted, tortured or killed, and basic freedoms – such as freedom of speech, movement or association – were non-existent.

During this time, the world community, including the UK, turned a blind eye to the atrocities occurring in East Timor. Recently, declassified documents from the 1970s show the UK knew of atrocities and human rights abuses occurring within East

Timor but made a conscious decision to ignore this and state publicly that they had no knowledge of any abuses to preserve stability and support Indonesia as a regional anti-communist power. More audaciously, as reports of human rights abuses trickled into British diplomatic missions in the region and were ignored, the British government made agreements for future arms sales to Indonesia: thereby tacitly supporting the occupation.

The occupation was marked by several high profile massacres of citizens in addition to the general climate of fear and repression. In 1991, a peaceful protest prompted by the last-minute cancellation of a Portuguese parliamentary delegation to East Timor resulted in the massacre of hundreds of demonstrators, an event caught on film by British journalist Max Stahl (later released as a documentary entitled *In Cold Blood*). It marked the beginning of an international movement in support of independence for East Timor, culminating in a UN-mandated vote for independence in 1999.

After the popular consultation in which the people of East Timor voted overwhelmingly for independence, Indonesian-backed militias went on the rampage throughout the country,

punishing the general population for defying the wishes of their powerful neighbour. During the occupation it is estimated that between 100,000 and 250,000 people died.

East Timor today

Since independence, the nation has struggled to come to grips with its troubled past. Breaking entrenched cycles of violence and moving towards peace is a slow process and there have been many bumps in the road. In Indonesia, the military perpetrators of human rights violations continue to rise through the ranks and obtain positions of political influence with no fear of prosecution.

In East Timor the consequences of justice undelivered have fed a culture of enmity and violence between former political and ethnic rivals, leading to a spiral of violence which is preventing the country from moving towards a peaceful future. Despite the assurances of both the East Timorese and Indonesian governments that justice and forgiveness has occurred for past atrocities, the assassination attempt on President José Ramos-Horta in 2008 is further evidence that, in practice it remains a long way off.



ARE YOU WATCHING?

EAST TIMOR: WHO CARES?

Progressio is asking all our members and supporters who believe in justice and truth to stand up and tell decision-makers that they care about the future of East Timor. As a tiny nation, far away from our daily lives, it's easy to forget the problems and struggles of our brothers and sisters in Timor. Politicians and decision-makers in the UK will continue to ignore their obligations to this tiny island nation unless you help.

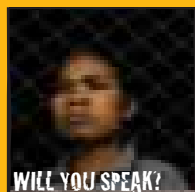
Our new campaign leaflet features a poster asking campaigners to complete the sentence 'I care about Timor because....' and includes a letter to send to UK MPs. You can download it from our website from 14th October, or pick up a copy at our AGM in London on the same day at Central Hall, Westminster.

We're also asking campaigners to photograph themselves holding the poster, and either email, upload or send a hard copy of the photo. We'll present these photos to UK MPs, to show them the human face of our support for East Timor.

For more information on the campaign, keep your eye on www.progressio.org.uk, sign up to Progressio's campaigners' newsletter *Proactive* (you can subscribe at the 'Take action' section of our website) or join Progressio's new Facebook group (see our website for details).



ARE YOU LISTENING?



WILL YOU SPEAK?

Thirsting for change

The struggle to put water rights on the public agenda in El Salvador is just beginning, says Progressio development worker **Marcos Sanjuan**

CAN YOU IMAGINE what it would be like not to have any water? Every time you wanted to wash, cook or simply have a drink, you'd be forced to find water wherever you could. There's no tap to turn on at home. You may spend several hours each day collecting water. You might even have to pay as much as one-tenth of your income on water. This may stop your children from going to school, or you from going to work.

This is the situation for over two million people in El Salvador – some 42% of the population.

Water is not a basic human right in El Salvador. It's not pumped to every home. Your chances of having a water supply are higher if you live in a town – 73% of urban dwellers have a water supply. But only 31% of rural dwellers do. And having a pipe connection does not mean having water on tap: the precious liquid is only available a few hours a day in most households, and in some households not even every day.

That's just water. There isn't a sewage system. Sanitation is a tragedy. The combination of lack of water and poor sanitation means that 32 children die every day in El Salvador from diarrhoeal diseases. That's 21,000 preventable deaths every year.

There have been moves recently to privatise the water supply, putting it even further out of reach of the poorest people.

That's why Progressio partner organisation UNES (Unidad Ecológica Salvadoreña) is campaigning on this issue. March 2009 sees El Salvador's general elections. Campaigning has already begun. So, we are using this moment when politicians want people's votes to lobby them about the need to improve the country's water supply.

We are aiming to bring together a broad coalition of NGOs and institutions who want to see change. We intend to

hold meetings with parliamentarians and politicians later this year.

But in El Salvador, nothing is simple. The civil war has left a polarised, divided society. Groups from the Right and the Left will not speak to each other. And UNES is trying to bring them together to lobby about water provision.

It's not easy. Long-standing mistrust dies hard. However, progress is being made and it is vital that it is. The world's most powerful leaders have committed to changing this situation. One of the Millennium Development Goals is to halve the number of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015.

Fine words need to be changed into a finer reality. Promises need to make a difference to the daily lives of people in El Salvador.

Last year civil society groups organised a march in the capital, San Salvador, demanding more investment in water resources and for the protection of people's right to water. An estimated 25,000 people attended. This was a

Women and children march for water rights.

huge event for El Salvador.

As I watched the procession go by, one woman told me why she'd come that day. She said: 'We women have to spend four hours a day looking for water and this means that our work is put at risk. 'We face tiredness and a lack of safety on the journey and do not have time for other things like education.'

As the protesters marched past the Metrocentro shopping centre, they passed a sprinkler watering the grass under the midday sun. It enraged a young man who was taking part in the march. He said: 'Look how they're wasting the water. 'In my community, we only get water for two hours every four days ... but the water bills always turn up on time. We are paying for the air in the pipes.'

El Salvador's elections next March represent a pivotal moment for this beleaguered country. By lobbying now, UNES is hoping to galvanise the political elite to take water seriously and provide this basic right for its people.

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Progressio advocacy on water

Water will be the focus of Progressio's environmental advocacy work until 2012. The decision follows detailed consultation with partner organisations, many of whom are working with small-scale farmers to improve their access to water resources for food security. We will work on three areas:

- the impact of climate change on water resources and what donors and multilateral institutions can do to help poor people cope with increased variability in the availability of water
- water footprint: how Northern consumption patterns (especially regarding agricultural products which take a lot of water to produce) are having an impact on access to water for poor people in developing countries
- alternative agriculture: promoting agricultural production methods that use water in a socially and environmentally sustainable way and making sure that small-scale sustainable agriculture is prioritised in the policies of donors and multilateral institutions.