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CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL
STUDIES AND COOPERATION

CECI



AFRICA

AFRICA REGIONAL OFFICE

SENEGAL

Philippe Jean

Regional Director
philippej@CECI.ca

Amadou Bah

Assistant Regional Director
amadoub@CECI.ca

SENEGAL

Babacar Guèye, Director

babacarg@CECI.ca
Boulevard du Sud, Point E
B.P. 6112, Dakar-Étoile
T (221) 33.825.64.14
C (221) 77.637.34.93
F (221) 33.825.32.38

BURKINA FASO

Adama Ouédraogo, Director

adamao@CECI.ca
01 B.P. 3440, Ouagadougou
T (226) 50.36.29.92
F (226) 50.36.07.52

REPUBLIC OF GUINEA

Dian Diallo, Director

dian@CECI.ca
B.P. 1385, Conakry
T (224) 60.22.06.74
(224) 64.20.19.38
C (224) 60.21.63.01

MALI

Al Assane Sanogo, Director

aalassanes@CECI.ca
Hamdalaye ACI 2000
Bamako, Mali
B.P. 109
Rue 284, porte 237
T (223) 229.48.44
(223) 675.71.30
F (223) 490.03.92

NIGER

Yahouza Ibrahim, Director

yahouzai@CECI.ca
122, avenue du Mounio (IB-069)
Quartier Issa Beri
Commune II
B.P. 889, Niamey
T (227) 20.75.31.02
C (227) 96.99.49.85
F (227) 20.75.24.41

GREAT LAKES REGION

Lucie Laperrière

PAGOR Project Coordinator
luciel@pagor.org.rw
Gikongoro BP 68
Nyamagabe, Rwanda
T (250) 53.54.31

ASIA

ASIA REGIONAL OFFICE

NEPAL

Kathleen McLaughlin

Regional Director
Kathleenm@CECI.ca

NEPAL

Keshava Koirala, Director

keshavak@CECI.ca
135 Naya Basti Marg,
Baluwatar
G.P.O. Box 2959, Katmandou
T (977) 14.41.44.30
F (977) 14.41.32.56

TAJIKISTAN

Amar Sainju, Representative

amars@CECI.ca
Hakim Karim Street #10
735700, Khujand
T (992) 34.22.40.173
F (992) 34.22.63.104

VIETNAM

Phan Cong Tuan, Representative

tuangep@CECI.ca
Block P, La Than Hotel
218 Doi Can Street
Ba Dinh District, IPO Box 233
Hanoi
T (844) 76.28.422
F (844) 76.28.423

AMERICA

AMERICA REGIONAL OFFICE

Marilena Bioli

Regional Director
marilenab@CECI.ca
3000, Omer-Lavallée
Montreal, Quebec, H1Y 3R8
T (514) 875-9911
F (514) 875-6469

CANADA

Michel Charette

Executive Director
michelc@CECI.ca
3000, Omer-Lavallée
Montreal, Quebec, H1Y 3R8
T (514) 875-9911
F (514) 875-6469

HAITI

Guypsy Michel, Director

guypsym@CECI.ca
9, Rue M. Latortue, Musseau
B.P. 16104, Port-Au-Prince
T (509) 2942.9555, 2942 9578
F (509) 2249.9577

SALVADOR

Alan Quinn, Delegate

Bosques de Santa Elena Sur
Calle Río Grande, 5-B
Antiguo Cuscatlán, La Libertad
T (503) 2212-1740
C (503) 7706-0619
F (503) 2212-1745

GUATEMALA

Flor de Maria Bolaños, Director

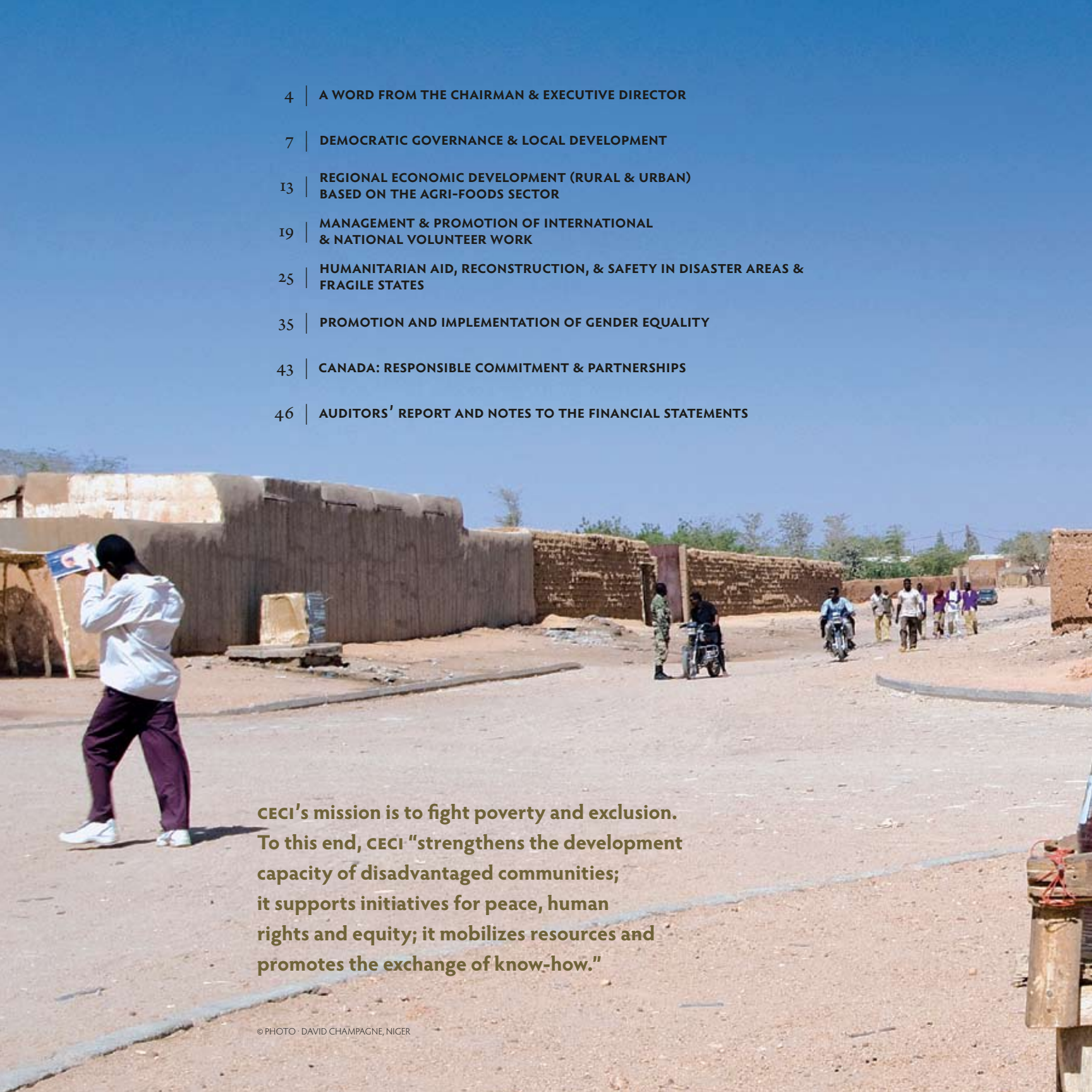
florb@CECI.ca
15 ave. «A» 19-61, Zona 13
Guatemala Ciudad
T (502) 2362-1511
(502) 2360 0326

BOLIVIA

Ximena Valdivia, Director

Ximenav@CECI.ca
Pasaje Juan J. Salgueiro # 2347
Sopocachi, B.P. 13520
La Paz
T (591) 2.241.1767
F (591) 2.241.2307

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CECI's mission is to fight poverty and exclusion. To this end, CECI "strengthens the development capacity of disadvantaged communities; it supports initiatives for peace, human rights and equity; it mobilizes resources and promotes the exchange of know-how."



STOP

WATERING
PLEASE DRINK
AND WASH YOUR HANDS
AND GO TO
WASHROOM

45
ONY
WATER

On October 4, 2008, CECI will celebrate 50 years of engagement in international development. This anniversary is a source of pride for the entire organization. For our partners and the underprivileged populations we support, it is an irrefutable sign of our commitment and solidarity. “Responsible commitment” is the theme CECI has chosen to mark this anniversary and to pay tribute to our thousands of volunteers and employees. We want to celebrate every person who has taken action to make our world a better place.

Responsible Commitment

Over the years, CECI has evolved into a true “human incubator” in Quebec and Canada in the realm of international co-operation. We have recruited and trained more than 10,000 volunteers and employees in Canada and in the 30 countries where we have worked. Recognized for their devotion and professionalism, our people serve a growing number of development organizations, both at home and abroad. In the past 50 years, we have also mobilized more than \$800 million from financiers and donors in order to support no fewer than 5,000 local organizations. We have improved the lives of 25 million disadvantaged souls in poor countries. We find this track record rewarding beyond measure.

CECI has often broken new ground and innovated as one of the pioneers in Canadian co-operation. For example, CECI laid the first foundations for

international co-operation in Quebec, integrated human rights into the bilateral programmes of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and instituted such important programmes as Rights and Citizenship of Women in West Africa and Leave for Change and Uniterra — Canada’s biggest international volunteer programme — jointly operated with the World University Service of Canada (WUSC).

In its quest for excellence, CECI has developed a solid core of skills that propel the organization’s growth and sphere of influence. Of these skills, five distinctive competencies have been chosen by CECI’s Board of Directors to be the foundation of our strategic orientations for the years to come.

First is our expertise in **local development**. CECI has distinguished itself by its capacity to encourage participation and **democratic governance** in the creation and administration of local development

plans. We also know how to combine responses to immediate needs, such as access to drinking water or construction of roads, schools, and health centres, with the attendant creation of jobs and long-term income. Local development and **social economy** are the foundations of our strategy in the fight against poverty.

Our **agriculture** track record and strategic partnership with Quebec-based Société de coopération pour le développement international (SOCODEVI) and the Union des producteurs agricoles-développement international (UPA-DI), as part of the International Agricultural Alliance, have proven to be more significant than ever as we face a worldwide food emergency and the challenge of renewing agricultural practices in developing countries. We now plan to use our acquired expertise to play a significant role in food safety in Africa and the Caribbean.

Pierre Racicot

Michel Charette



PIERRE
RACICOT
CHAIRMAN



MICHEL
CHAURETTE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Voluntary co-operation has a growing place in our organization's activities. We have renewed and updated our programmes with the creation of Uniterria in conjunction with the WUSC. Such innovations as north-south, south-north, and southern inter-country partnerships have shown results, which we measure in terms of improvement in the living conditions of local populations and the increased capacity of local organizations to take action. This sector entails working closely with partners to strengthen the capacities of organizations to work on common goals, notably through the Leave for Change programme, which enlists

volunteers from the private and institutional sectors.

Our distinctive expertise in **humanitarian aid** lies in helping to strengthen local organizations in fragile or disaster zones in order to assist victims, as well as to work with them in reconstruction and the transition toward development. In the context of climate changes and an increase in natural disasters, we are augmenting our ability to respond to crises and emergencies. We have chosen to forge strategic alliances and to diversify sources of financing in order to be among the recognized players when it comes to responding to crises and emergencies.

Following the adoption of CECI's **gender equality policy** in 2007, we are working to consolidate our "gender and development" expertise and programming. Organizations and national and international networks lobbying for women's rights need our support more than ever before. We will be there for them.

This annual report describes the achievements of CECI and its partners in each of our five strategic sectors and provides an overview of what we can offer to meet future challenges. Our Board of Directors would like to thank all the men and women who have helped us become the world leader that we are.

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Local development is the cornerstone of CECI's strategy in the fight against poverty. It involves strengthening the capacity for governance in order to achieve participatory local development based on co-operation between state and civil society in planning, investments, public consultation, the complete participation of women, accountability to the public, and the management of risks and conflicts.

Haiti – From the Peasant to the President

This is the first time that Haitian citizens have been responsible for money allocated to rural development; the first time that farm producers have been able to effectively manage the money they've earned; the first time that development projects have moved so quickly and efficiently; the first time that Haitian producers can take pride in their full contribution to their country's development. The first time...

◆◆◆ **The above might so easily sound like a well-rehearsed speech, but it isn't.** These comments were gathered spontaneously by various people in Haiti during the mid-year review by *Projet National de Développement Communautaire et Participatif* (PRODEP, the country's primary national community development organization.)¹

Since January 2004, this project has allowed the very poorest rural and peri-urban communities to experience a participatory management methodology by carrying out small development projects. The concept is designed to reinforce community organizations in order to help them engage fully in the process of guiding and managing public resources.

Currently, CECI has two pilot projects in Haiti focused on democratic government and participatory local development that call for dialogue and citizen participation. The PRODEP was established following a

pilot project conducted in the border communities of Ouanaminthe and Anse-à-Pitres, along with the *Projet de développement local en Haïti* (PDLH) implemented in partnership with SOCODEVI, SOGEMA et the École nationale d'administration publique.

PRODEP, financed by the World Bank, supports the implementation of priority activities determined by organizations and communities, with CECI acting as one of two management agencies. "We have projects in three sectors: social, economic, and community infrastructures," explains Bernard Cloutier, project manager. "These are small initiatives accomplished by community bodies." PRODEP intends to work with 264 of these groups with the aim of helping to ease poverty in the rural Haitian population. →

1. SOURCE : www.lenouvelliste.com

*“If you want to go fast, go alone;
if you want to go farther, go with others.”*

To date, 230,000 people, on average, have been reached in the communities, particularly in connection with access to drinking water and improvements to the learning environment in school classrooms. “We are doing education and implementation of coordination structures and reinforcement of local capacities,” adds Cloutier, who has no doubts about the impact of PRODEP.

“For us, it’s an important project because it enables us to attract financial resources and to reinforce the capacities of local men and women. Haiti is still very centralized as a country, so when we are able to develop actions in rural areas, the people are open to the ideas, especially when they themselves are managing the project.”

The experience acquired in rural areas has opened the door to new initiatives. “We see the possibility of using the same approach in urban areas. We’re currently developing the participatory approach in the shanty towns of Port-au-Prince,” says Cloutier. The possibility of extending the first phase of the project is also being examined.

While PRODEP is concentrating on the “micro” aspect by supporting small organizations, the local development project is particularly targeting the “macro,” that is, working with the departments of the Interior and National Planning to create an institutional structure for implementation of policies. “There are common areas of intervention, mind you,” says Bernard Cloutier. “For example, the two projects overlap with regard to reinforcement of entrepreneurship.”

A PROMISING FIRST YEAR

The local development project (PDLH), meanwhile, is in its first months of execution. Three projects already in progress in the country have been integrated into this programme, which aims to contribute to the socio-economic development of populations at the grassroots level. “Interestingly, it’s the only project in Haiti that takes the pipeline approach — meaning, we go ‘from the peasant to the president,’” says Gérard Côté, also a project manager. “Another original aspect is that we don’t take front-line action, but rather a support function. This method doesn’t go as quickly as if we’d done it ourselves. But the locals are gaining skills, which means the project will yield more results in the long term. There’s a proverb that says, ‘If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go farther, go with others.’ That’s exactly (what we’re doing).”

Observable results to date include the formulation of two draft bills on national planning and local development with the department of planning and external co-operation. This will lead to the creation of a legal framework that will structure local development in villages.

As for the political situation in Haiti, Cloutier is optimistic. “The enthusiasm we’ve seen is extremely positive. Although the April riots spawned by the food crisis shook the country, the social climate over the past year and a half has been much calmer. Projects that make communities players in their own development allow people to find their place amidst concrete, promising actions, rather than political infighting.” ■



A PRIME EXAMPLE OF THE VALUE OF SHARING LESSONS LEARNED

The Community-Based Economic Development (CBED) project, funded by CIDA, managed by CECI and implemented by local partner NGOs, was launched in Nepal in 1992. **The goal?** To draw remote mountain communities into development processes by creating and strengthening community-based organizations (CBOs) that can provide member services — economic, health, and sanitation.

“These CBOs then grow into formal organizations (co-ops) as well as informal ones (mothers’ groups, health CBOs), depending on the nature of the services,” says Kathleen McLaughlin, CECI’s Regional Director for Asia. “In the economic area, CBOs turn into co-ops, then federations of co-ops and can eventually have influence on government services and policies,” she says. “Many such organizations have grown within our Nepal program over the last decade or more.” In the late 1990s, CBED was replicated in 250 villages in Pithoragarh and Champawat — the mountainous districts in Uttaranchal, India — to improve the social and economic well-being of poor households.

Those living in the Indian Himalayas suffer from food shortages and high unemployment rates and are often excluded from economic progress primarily due to poor infrastructure and a lack of technical skills and organizations to increase production and market products. CBED improved livelihoods through the production and marketing of off-season vegetables, when demand and prices are highest, and other micro-enterprise →

activities, and improved access to micro-finance services. “The unique model CECI developed with its partners was a holistic model for economic development,” says Norman MacIsaac, former CBED-India Team Leader. It involved not only helping poor communities to borrow more capital, but also improving their skills and knowledge of how to market their products.” Basically, finance is only one component of the local economic development program, and micro-finance institutions are separate from non-financial service providers, such as co-ops, for marketing agricultural produce.

As Uttaranchal was a new state, and open to new decentralization and service outreach, CBED was particularly successful at linking remote communities to services and markets.

“CBED-India became the first international cooperation project signed and implemented with the State Government,” says MacIsaac. “In a way, we were cooperative pioneers, building a new model and new hope, together with local communities, our local NGO partners and the Government of Uttaranchal.”

CBED worked with the Uttaranchal government to develop the new Self-Reliant Cooperatives Act, and CBED-inspired cooperatives were the first twenty self-reliant cooperatives formed and registered under the Act.

Gender-related gains were also realized. Women made up the majority of most CBED-supported cooperatives, and financial cooperatives were usually women-only. And two gender innovations were introduced: **a)** economic literacy classes to give women a “step up” in confidence, access to information, and understanding of CBED-India organizational practices, agricultural practices and microfinance; and **b)** gender theatre, where men and women developed and performed skits highlighting the themes of work-load sharing, alcoholism, education for girls, and spousal abuse.

CBED-India also constituted a “greening” for the CBED model. Farmers were offered both chemical and organic production. Almost all communities opted for organic production.


CBED’s influence continued to spread. In Nepal, the program was renewed by CECI with funding from CIDA with the launch of the Sahakarya: **Working Together for Self-Reliant Communities in the Hills of Nepal**. Following a 2003 symposium with over 130 participants from four countries sharing best practices in cooperative promotion with government officials, NGO leaders and the new co-operatives, CECI’s **Facilitating Agricultural Reform and Marketing in Sud** (FARMS) project was launched in the plains of Tajikistan.

And while the context differs, CECI also introduced CBED approaches through the **Improved Livelihoods in Mountainous Communities** project in Vietnam.

By working in partnership with community-based organizations, civil society groups, NGOs, private sector local organizations, and local and national governments, CECI has achieved the desired outcomes of development activities while guaranteeing that development processes are sustainable. ■

Ms. Janki Devi, one of over 2,000 participants in integrated economic literacy classes offered by CECI and its partners, described how her life changed: “I had never seen a bank from the inside, because we had nothing to do with it. However, having come to the group and the literacy class, now I go to deposit my savings. Finally, I understand what a bank has to offer.”





CECI and its partners are recognized for their approaches and results when dealing with issues of food safety in threatened countries. This work is more important than ever, given the worldwide food emergency and the challenge of renewing agriculture in developing countries.



Building for the Long Term in a Fragile State

..... **Agriculture is the backbone of Nepal's economy, accounting for 80% of the country's employment.** In 1999, CECI launched the Community Groundwater Irrigation Sector Project (CGISP) in 12 Terai districts of Nepal. At that time, Nepal was in the midst of an armed conflict which, after 11 years, had resulted in the deaths of 13,000 people and the uprooting of 150,000 more. Despite the fragile state of affairs in Nepal, CECI and its local partners have succeeded in adapting to the situation and in working toward the country's sustainable development.

THE MAIN OBJECTIVES WERE TO:

.....
increase agricultural productivity on a sustainable basis;
.....

improve incomes of small farmers through participatory group shallow tube well irrigation development; and to
.....

develop the capacity of Water Users Groups (WUG) and Water Users Associations (WUA) to manage resources, equipment, and inputs for irrigated agricultural development.

Key innovations included: targeting poor/marginalized farmers; providing credit for shallow →

tube well (STW) installation; promoting zero capital cost subsidy in STWs; providing a comprehensive support services package; using government as a facilitator (as opposed to the traditional role of direct implementer); and promoting water user groups and associations for sustainable service delivery.

“CGISP made an impressive demonstration of the potential of STW irrigation to reduce rural poverty through a collaborative approach between several stakeholders — governmental, non-governmental organizations, banks, and the private sector,” says Nirmal Gyalang, CGISP Project Leader. Furthermore, in 2004, the CGISP management team was awarded a recognition certificate by the Asian Development Bank and the Nepal Government. This recognition is given for “exemplary contribution to the improvement of project performance”. “It also demonstrated a means of working in conflict.” ■

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS BY THE TIME THE PROJECT ENDED IN 2007 INCLUDE:

Average productivity of agriculture crops increased by 33%;

Average farm income of project households increased by 21%;

225 Water Users Associations were formed and strengthened;

10,000 units of group shallow tube well irrigation systems were installed;

300 kilometres of farm-to-market roads were rehabilitated;

50,000 hectares of additional farm land were permanently irrigated;

18,000 farmers and project staff were trained in farming technologies, program planning, institution building, etc.; and

60,000 marginalized farm households (with approximately 350,000 family members) had benefited from project services.

MRS. JAMUN KHATUN, OF JALPAPUR, described how CGISP changed lives. “Before, we grew only enough rice and wheat for six months,” says Khatun. “Now, we have enough for the whole year and sell some. We started to meet in groups. The project also gives training in farming — how to get rid of diseases, and how to sell our vegetables in the market. The biggest realization is that we do not need to stay in our houses, we can go outside and speak with men. I have gone to sell vegetables in the market. I am very happy. Before, men sold vegetables and put the money in their pockets so we had to beg it from them. Now I sell the vegetables and have my own money to use for my family. I would like to go to other countries to see how they grow vegetables.”

AGRICULTURE: VITAL AGAINST HUNGER

The **Alliance agricole internationale** was created in Canada in 2004, when **Union des producteurs agricoles/ Développement international** (UPA-DI), **Société de coopération pour le développement international** (SOCODEVI) and CECI decided to join forces to support the development of the agricultural sector in Africa.

In 2008, the partnership agreement was extended for another three years. By making a priority of agricultural development in Africa through their combined areas of expertise, Alliance members will henceforth take similar action in the Caribbean.

By joining the skills of three organizations in agricultural production and transformation, the Alliance offers to guide local Southern partners in three major projects aimed at achieving food sovereignty, particularly in West Africa: an increase in production, the adaptation to world markets, and an increase in international investment.

Philippe Jean, regional director for Africa, explains the partnership: "Our alliance lends us additional credibility and legitimacy, particularly in the eyes of the Canadian government and funding organizations. By joining forces, we can work with Africa and Canada."

Massive withdrawal of investments in the African agricultural sector over the past 15 years is confirmation to Alliance members that there is still much work to be done. Aid funds allocated to agriculture have dropped from 20% to 3%, while 70% of family income is dependent on farming. The **Alliance agricole internationale** has managed to establish a support project for young entrepreneurs in the agri-foods sector, aiming at modernizing the Malian farming industry through skills transfer and promotion of youthful potential. Also in **Mali**, we are working with the

local government on a support project to increase rice and market gardening production through the introduction of modern technologies. "We still have a way to go; the partnership is in its early stages and the challenges with regard to food crises are significant," says Philippe Jean.

Michel Charette, executive director of CECI and president of the Alliance wrote in an open letter to Montreal's daily newspaper **La Presse**: "If nothing is done to safeguard Africa's local production agricultural practices, it will be more vulnerable to food crises, and will remain in that position."

He adds, "The Alliance, with its Southern partners, calls on the public and the Canadian government to mobilize the means required not only to ease the effects of the food crisis but also its deep, underlying causes." ■



FROM THE FIELD TO THE MARKET

Through decades of work in West Africa, including more than 20 years in **Burkina Faso** and **Guinea**, CECI has developed extensive expertise in the agricultural industry. In the early 1980s, however, came the realization that improving production was not enough; action had to be taken before and after (input and output). CECI then began to take what we call the “pipeline” approach: henceforth, CECI and its local partners took continuous action in the production process: from access to input — all products required for agricultural practices — to product merchandising. Through this new approach to co-operation with local players, the stage was set for success in many projects.

COTTON ON THE IVORY COAST

One success story: the cotton pipeline was established in 1988 in M'Bengué, north of Khorogo. At the time, producers were facing numerous problems. In addition to debt, they were feeling the backlash of the State's implementation of a major restructuring programme, which led to the overnight disappearance of technical guidance for farmers. Co-operatives were unable to meet the challenge; the situation was chaotic.

In its first interventions, CECI helped members of some 20 producers' co-ops, grouped into unions, to better manage their input and co-operatives. Committees were established in villages, and guarantee systems were created for loans. “We practically eliminated producers' debt and helped them with their loan repayments. This helped increase their credibility with various pipeline players,” says Chantal-Sylvie Imbeault, then project manager and now assistant executive director with CECI. The project was so successful that the Canadian government asked CECI to extend it to seven unions comprising 150 co-operatives. Along the way they would bring all of the unions together, in co-operation with the **Union régionale des entreprises coopératives de la zone des savanes de Côte d'Ivoire**, thus accounting for

90 percent of national cotton production.

The results were tangible. Along with a better quality of life, the producers were now able to negotiate cotton prices and enjoy the economic benefits. Chantal-Sylvie Imbeault recalls: “We saw mud houses (a mix of soil and hay) replaced by cement homes. People were buying scooters and better-performing materials. A palpable economic effervescence reigned over the northern part of the Ivory Coast.” Producers became such valuable players that no political decision affecting agriculture would be taken without first consulting the co-operative unions. The cotton pipeline would in the end, directly or indirectly, better the lives of three million people.

An exceptional achievement was celebrated in 1998: for the new positioning of agricultural co-operatives in the country, Chantal-Sylvie Imbeault received the distinction of the **Chevalier de l'ordre du mérite agricole** (Knight of the Order of Merit) by the Ivory Coast.

PROMISING PIPELINES

Other than cotton on the Ivory Coast, other pipelines — for fruits and vegetables in West Africa, rice in **Burkina Faso** and **Haiti**, and coffee and alpaca wool in the Americas — have benefited from CECI's know-how and the expertise of hundreds of volunteers who shared their knowledge over the years. In Senegal, onion production was greatly improved, primarily through the establishment of co-operative unions. Philippe Jean is regional manager in Africa. “Our goal is to establish viable small businesses. We encourage them to join forces in co-operatives, which helps them develop better services for members and more room to manoeuvre in the purchase of input or warehousing, for example.”


With the pipeline approach showing such concrete results, CECI has naturally continued to establish the system elsewhere. One of the organization's ambitions is to create a shea butter pipeline,

which is already working very well in **Burkina Faso** and **Mali**, and is just starting up in **Niger** and **Guinea**. Several successful approaches are already being used, such as organic and fair-trade certification of products, which allows women producers to enjoy income up to five times higher than they once earned from the sale of conventional shea butter.

For its involvement with and support of shea butter producers, CECI was awarded the distinction of the **Chevalier de l'Ordre du Mérite Burkinabé** in 2005. "Twelve years ago in Burkina Faso, we had worked on improving production, but we needed to go upstream," says Philippe Jean. "We concentrated on protecting the resource itself: when to harvest, how to protect the shea tree to extend its useful lifespan, etc. We were also included in the nation-wide recognition of this economic activity, which has been traditionally and exclusively done by women." The CECI team, composed of local experts and Canadian volunteers, also reinforced the producers' capacity to control the transformation phases and improve the quality of shea butter to such an extent that today, these women are able to export their product. And while producers once made shea butter for personal use, production has quickly turned into a commercial activity. In 10 to 15 years, the women have begun to earn income that they use primarily to educate their children and improve nutrition for their families. "For 2008-2013, shea butter is a pipeline we will continue to pursue. The potential in Guinea, for example, is enormous," explains Philippe Jean.

In Northern countries, shea butter is available in butter, pomade, or soap form. CECI teams in Africa hope that one day, Southern women will have the technical means to process their products themselves. "We are keeping that in mind for the long term," says Philippe Jean "The resource is there; the rest depends on political willingness to invest." In addition to the revenues generated by women, which constitute a significant financial contribution to West African families threatened by food shortages, this niche seems promising — particularly with Western consumers being increasingly interested in finding natural cosmetic products. ■





Voluntary co-operation is a vital and growing part of our organization. Our aim is to increase opportunities in international volunteer work to meet demand and to remain a world leader in international and national volunteering due to the diversity of opportunities we make available and the quality of results obtained.

For a Risk-Free Childbirth in Bolivia

Miriam Rouleau-Perez arrived with her spouse and two children in Curahuara de Carangas, Bolivia, in July 2006. Since then, she has supported local organizations working on an increasing number of initiatives to reduce the risks inherent in childbirth and to prevent infant illnesses.

●●●● **Her mandate, defined by Bolivian health care partners, is very important**, as Bolivia has the highest mortality rate among women in childbirth and newborns in Latin America. Miriam, a community organizer at the *Centre de santé et de services sociaux (CSSS) Sud-Ouest-Verdun*, took a sabbatical to participate in the Uniterra voluntary co-operation programme, jointly established by CECI and WUSC. A health care specialist, her mission in the high Andean plateaus was to help meet the goals set by local organizations: to improve the health and quality of life of the population by reducing the mortality rate of infants and mothers in childbirth.

An assessment of the situation, done by the traditional midwife/healer, the municipality, the Health Centre and Miriam, revealed that one of the biggest problems was the under use of the Centre by women about to give birth, and the impossibility of dispensing health care to new mothers and newborns. The statistics were alarming. In June 2006, barely 9% of births were attended by professional health care workers, either in the home or in a medical facility.

To address this problem, Miriam supported her partners in establishing the project *Un Aguayo* for Risk-Free Childbirth (an *aguayo* is a colourful Andean cloth used to carry babies on women's backs). This project was inspired by community health care models in Quebec, which are familiar to Miriam due to her employment with the CSSS. This model was adapted by her Bolivian colleagues to the reality of the community in Altiplano.

A particularly important initiative is a pilot project involving the creation of a birthing centre similar to those in Quebec. Culturally adapted so that midwives might be present at the births, the room is a more comforting environment for women unaccustomed to conventional physicians. Qualified doctors are readily available, however, should a problem arise during childbirth. The project also covers education on hygiene for infants and babies and on conventional medicine and inter-cultural health. To encourage mothers to visit the health centre for pre- and post-natal checkups, the centre offers an *aguayo*, pyjamas for babies, cotton diapers, baby food and other incentives. →

A POSITIVE IMPACT

The results say it all: five times more women are giving birth at the health centre. Furthermore, conventional medicine is gaining recognition and health care workers are more respected for their contributions to the well-being of the population. Proud of these accomplishments, the municipal government, which now considers health care a priority, has provided 60% of the financing for the project. Today, neighbouring

communities are also interested in *Un aguayo* and have begun to adapt it to their specific needs. Lastly, close partnerships have been forged between Canadian and Bolivian organizations, leading to the emergence of an expertise and exchange network for the health care field. It is an excellent way to ensure the sustainability of these great ideas and to help reduce inequalities between women and men with regard to access to health services. ■

Building Bridges Between Canada and Haiti

In 2007-2008, Haiti welcomed no fewer than 75 Canadian volunteers. They worked with Haitian partners in the *Programme de coopération volontaire d'appui à la gouvernance en Haiti* (PCV), a CECI initiative with three Canadian partners: *Fondation Paul-Gérin Lajoie*, the Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO), and the World University Service of Canada (WUSC). This partnership aims to strengthen public administration and civil society, fosters the economic renewal of the private sector, and supports those working in the field of primary and post-secondary education.

Some volunteers offering technical assistance were in Haiti on their second term. "One of PCV's strengths is the remarkable engagement of the volunteer consultants and advisors," says Odette McCarthy, project manager. "A high degree of participation is maintained after a mandate ends. Some volunteers go back for a second mandate; others stay in touch with partner organizations in Haiti and continue to

support local partners from a distance." The results are clearly measurable, which is encouraging for both volunteers and partner organizations. "The mandates are the fruits of exchanges and reflection between North and South on what we're able to offer to meet the needs expressed within solid partnerships. It's these exchanges and the resulting new knowledge, for volunteers and locals alike, that motivate," said one group of volunteers based in Haiti. And an evaluation of CIDA did, in fact, show positive results based on satisfaction and demand by local organizations for the programme.

This year, the volunteers worked namely with *Enfofanm*, an organization recognized for its interventions on issues of equality between women and men. Two volunteers lent support in their areas of expertise (law and communications), allowing *Enfofanm* to improve the quality of its tools and organizational communications. "The organization is better equipped to fulfil its role as an advocate for

concrete measures to fight violence against women and injustices related to poverty, which affect women and their children particularly,” says McCarthy.

EDUCATION: A PLEDGE FOR THE FUTURE

In other areas, there is an ongoing partnership between the *Centrale des syndicats du Québec* (CSQ) and the *Confédération nationale des enseignants d’Haïti* (CNEH) for the improvement of working conditions for several thousand CNEH members. A new association between the CNEH and the *Fédération des enseignantes et enseignants de cégep* was formalized and consolidated. Support provided by volunteer consultants specialized in union action and training, enabled the Confederation to reinforce its capacity for negotiation. “It will be able to better defend the professional interests of its teachers/members and position itself when the department of education reopens negotiations on not only improving conditions for teachers, but ultimately, the quality of education for students,” explains McCarthy. It was a similar story for the partnership between Lawyers Without Borders of Quebec (ASFQ), and the *Plateforme des organisations haïtiennes des droits humains*: a lawyer chosen by the ASFQ is now in Haiti working on legal support.

From a perspective of networking and strengthening of partnerships, 20 volunteers from Haitian partners came to Canada in 2007-2008 for two to three weeks. “During their stay in Canada, the South-North volunteers described the socio-economic realities of Haiti in the media and their immediate circles. This year, several Quebec-based organizations collaborated on training internships for Southern volunteers. These efforts demonstrate the tangible engagement of Quebec organizations and institutions with regard to Haiti,” says McCarthy. ■

*Vreman vre,
yon sèl dwèt pa
manje kalalou!*

(It’s really true, one finger cannot eat gumbo.)

— “It takes several arms to accomplish work efficiently,” says Guerty Aimé, director of *Enfofanm*.



UNITERRA

A CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME

For CECI, sending volunteers to Southern countries has always been a priority. In the beginning, mandates involved teaching in schools and dispensing care in hospitals. Today, CECI's voluntary programmes have evolved into a focus on building skills. Volunteers no longer take on their assignments for partners in the South, but rather with them.

This shift in approach is an indicator of the evolution of Southern countries, says Sylvain Matte, director of the Uniterra voluntary co-operation programme, implemented jointly by CECI and the WUSC. "Progress is being made, and therefore the nature of our work has also moved forward. We are adapting. We don't simply send competent individuals, but also systems and procedures to reinforce the capacities of our local partners."

Uniterra was conceived four years ago to address the current context of international solidarity and today's development standards. The programme aims to support the achievement of the **Millennium Development Goals**. In 2007-2008 alone, the programme can pride itself on having sent 422 volunteers to Southern countries, for a total of 46,000 days of volunteer work. That said, Matte notes that what matters most is seeing concrete results from the development work done by volunteers. "What interests us is knowing if the Southern co-op partner has really been successful in marketing its products after a visit from a Northern volunteer. How many people have

been able to learn to read and write due to new literacy techniques taught by a volunteer from the North?"

Matte adds: "Uniterra has developed measurable development indicators. Our actions must have a real impact. And we must devote our efforts to specific areas of intervention. It's not enough to have just two volunteers per country; the effort is dispersed and the impact diluted." As such, Uniterra ensures that it has 30 volunteers per year in each of the 13 target countries in Africa, the Americas, and Asia. Today, postings are of varying lengths — from a few weeks to two years — and are accomplished by volunteers from Canada and Southern countries alike.

When needs are far-reaching — information technologies, sales and merchandising, access to credit, business start-up and management, communications, professional training, the environment, health care, education — the mandates are always specific and always developed by local organizations for which the volunteer will work.

GETTING BUSINESSES INVOLVED

Leave for Change is a very innovative Uniterra initiative. In co-operation with the private sector and institutions in Canada, the programme sends volunteers to Southern countries on mandates of two or three weeks, with the financial support of their employers. During that time, the volunteers have very clear objectives to meet.

422 VOLUNTEER 46,000 DAYS OF VOLUNTEER HELP

The Leave for Change project has become increasingly popular with each passing year. In 2007-2008, Uniterra recruited new private and public partners. They now number about 20 in Canada and provide financial incentives to their employees to embark on international cooperation ventures during their annual vacations. The latest companies and entities to sign on include Addenda Capital, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, CGI and Lassonde, which have agreed to participate in Uniterra's solidarity efforts to reduce poverty in the world.

Uniterra's contemporary formula has attracted attention. In 2008, Sylvain Matte was asked to speak at a conference in Australia, where he explained how the programme takes its inspiration from the principles of efficient aid that have earned consensus internationally. "There is definitely recognition for the Uniterra programme. We've reached our cruising speed," says Matte. In fact, an external evaluation requested by CIDA in March 2007 praised Uniterra for its programme as a whole. The positive feedback noted that: "Uniterra programming is better aligned with CIDA's effort to reinforce the effectiveness of aid and, consequently, is more target-specific, more in tune with partners, and better able to achieve superior results in sustainable development efforts and report on them."

"With Uniterra, we are broadening the traditional

formula of international co-operation, which formerly entailed volunteers from the North going South. Today, volunteers from the South take on mandates in other Southern countries. For example, shea butter producers in Union de Léo, Burkina Faso, are lending their support to new cooperatives in Niger and Guinea. This translates into training on transformation techniques and processes for improving product quality. Canada also hosts volunteers from the South in the framework of partnerships between Southern and Canadian organizations working in similar sectors," says the project manager. This formula meets today's realities, as it fosters a sharing of expertise on comparable realities and success stories. In 2007-2008, a volunteer from Senegal came to Canada to give training on a literacy technique that was unknown here. Matte adds: "It's about building relations of mutual reinforcement between organizations and countries. Uniterra turns individual volunteering into collective volunteering."

To top it all off, CECI received the **Hommage bénévolat-Québec 2008** award from the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale in the "**organization in action**" category for the Uniterra programme. The award is given in recognition of the capacity for innovation of non-profit organizations, which are able to establish strategies to guide, support, and promote volunteer engagement. ■





CECI is renowned and in high demand for its focused efforts on strengthening local capacities to aid victims, as well as in reconstruction and the transition toward development in fragile or disaster zones. Given the context of climate changes and the increase in natural disasters, we are augmenting our ability to respond to these crises and emergencies.

Have You Met Jeanne, Stan and Xangsane?

In Japan, a country that has mastered the art of building earthquake-resistant homes, Typhoon Man-Yi (2007) left 41 injured and one person missing. In poor countries, however, a typhoon of the same force will cause hundreds of fatalities and destabilize the local economy for many months. The poorest populations are those that are most vulnerable to natural disasters.

◆◆◆ This was the case in Vietnam after Typhoon Xangsane in October 2006, with tens of thousands of hectares of agricultural land — mostly rice paddies — devastated, and hundreds of fishing boats carried away. More than 240,000 homes were destroyed, leaving thousands of children, women and men without shelter or any means of subsistence. Almost two hundred people were killed, thousands left homeless, health centres closed, with nearly \$800-million (2006 USD) in damages. But, even in the midst of such devastation, the Vietnamese have made changes and are now better equipped to deal with natural disasters and to reduce their impact.

Since 2001, CECI has worked with vulnerable communities in Vietnam on risk reduction plans and strategies focused on everything from improving sewage and aqueduct systems, to paving alleyways, and, perhaps most importantly in this case, establishing emergency evacuation plans. When

Xangsane struck, residents in 60 villages implemented CECI-inspired evacuation plans, saving many lives.

After Typhoon Xangsane, CECI focused its attention on rebuilding using disaster-resistant housing techniques. When typhoons struck central Vietnam in 2007, none of the houses built using those techniques — including deeper foundations, steel-enhanced house framing, and reinforced roofing — were damaged. Other strategies also showed results. A flood shelter/community house was built in the Ngu Hanh Son district of Danang, a highly vulnerable area (below sea level). The building is used year-round for community activities. During floods it becomes an evacuation centre. “In the 2007 typhoon, 100 people spent two nights in that shelter and stayed safe,” says Kathleen McLaughlin, CECI’s Regional Director for Asia.

Today, local officials hold meetings in the centre before flood season to review disaster preparedness/ →



evacuation plans with residents, including evacuation procedures, how to store seed or other necessities, and how to reinforce roofs with sandbags.

“They were trained by the project on how to conduct these meetings, and now have some simple materials they can use to prepare residents,” says McLaughlin.

Increasing settlement of vulnerable areas by poor populations is a growing concern worldwide as climate change, coupled with environmental degradation from deforestation and, in some cases, mineral exploitation, exacerbate natural disaster effects in vulnerable coastal and mountain communities.

“Asian countries that otherwise have economic growth potential will have difficulty achieving millennium development goals due to the number of poor living in highly vulnerable zones exposed to repeated disasters,” says McLaughlin. “In this context, our Asia program will increasingly focus on providing

humanitarian assistance and supporting communities to reduce vulnerability to disasters.”

CECI’s disaster mitigation projects are diversified. They begin with community-based disaster risk management training and participatory analysis and planning with local governments and community members. Armed with more understanding of disaster causes and ways of reducing vulnerability in different facets of community life, participants then develop a Safer Community Plan (SCP). SCPs help residents and local governments prioritize actions with short-term and long-term measures — everything from evacuation plans, to building water pump access and building or reinforcing small embankments to protect houses for river overflow — that reduce risks and improve socio-economic conditions.

Over the past several years, SCPs have been incorporated with CECI’s help in three coastal



communities in Vietnam. Last year, CECI introduced this approach in Lao Cai and Kon Tum in Vietnam's mountainous provinces through the Building Community Resilience to Flash Floods project.

Materials were developed to raise region-specific awareness of disaster protection, from not cutting trees, reinforcing roofs against wind, building shelters for animals and preventing forest fires, to methods of identifying and organizing villagers for evacuation to safer areas during floods, says McLaughlin.

Information about this project is presented in visual form since many don't speak or read Vietnamese, and local languages are more oral than written. This includes a first-ever hazard map for Lao Cai and Kon Tum, identifying the areas most vulnerable to landslides and flash floods.

"It means they can focus their resources on landslide prevention, like tree or vegetation planting or resident

resettlement, all depending on land type," says McLaughlin. The project has also provided radio equipment allowing clusters of vulnerable villages to report floods/landslides and get help. Previously, no one knew about disasters in these areas until days later when someone walked to the commune and reported it. Communities in the most vulnerable areas are also now equipped with ropes, shovels, and loudspeakers to aid rescue efforts when people are buried by landslides or cut off by swollen rivers. "Poor people living in flood-prone countries suffer the most from impacts of climate change," says McLaughlin. "And developed countries have a responsibility to help them adapt, given that climate change is a global problem."

CECI has also started the SCP process in the highly flood-prone plains of Nepal, where increasing flash floods and landslides make it difficult for the indigenous peoples who live there to cope. Nepal's →



natural disaster threats are linked to exposure to glacier melt and heavy rains, which are increasing water levels in the Ganges River in the south, and landslides in mountain areas.

The Upakar Project, implemented in partnership with the District Disaster Relief Committees and the District Public Health Offices, was initiated by CECI-Nepal following severe flooding in the central Terai region in July 2007. The project provided post-disaster support to flood victims, including distribution of food, household necessities and health kits. The project also ran health camps to prevent the outbreak of diseases. A final phase involved reconstruction and

rehabilitation activities that focused on improving health conditions, and improving or maintaining household and community livelihoods in 10 highly-flood affected areas in the Dhanusha and Mahottari districts, in conjunction with the local Village Development Committees.

“Nepal will become more vulnerable to climate change in the future and, as a poorer country working to emerge from conflict, it has less capacity to cope than other countries,” says McLaughlin. “While the project has now ended, small-scale measures for disaster mitigation were introduced to help prepare for next season,” says McLaughlin. ■

WORKING WITH THE VICTIMS FROM THE OUTSET

In September 2004, Hurricane Jeanne hit the Caribbean region. In Haiti, it caused 3,000 deaths and left 900 missing. CECI, responding to victims' pleas for assistance, implemented a programme of humanitarian aid in the city of Gonaïves, capital of the Artibonite Department. CECI has been active in Haiti since 1971, and has a solid background in emergency assistance in the country and elsewhere in the Americas. Still, CECI learned some important lessons from the experience.

The city of Gonaïves, which lies below sea level, was particularly ravaged by the hurricane, as its lower regions were swamped by floods. Rivers swelled by the heavy rains caused major mudslides and swept away everything in their path.

To accomplish an emergency front-line intervention, the CECI-Haiti team moved quickly to the site after the hurricane had passed. Already active on neighbourhood committees through a project of school canteens in the stricken area, CECI experts met with residents to draft a list of needs and worked with other organizations that had also responded to the appeal. These committees also decided which of the most vulnerable families needed an emergency first-aid kit. This method of transparent joint action guaranteed the safe arrival of emergency supplies and a set of criteria for the selection of needy recipients. An action plan was then established with CECI's Haiti managers and head office.

In the first phase of the programme, CECI-Haiti distributed survival kits containing, among other items, hot plates, pots and pans, and sanitary products. To finance this initiative, CECI held a fundraising drive to collect donations from private businesses and the general public; the Quebec government also helped finance the cause. CECI alone raised more than \$1.4 million. On site, a team coordinated distribution with assistance from the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), state police, and religious organizations. To the extent possible, the contents of the survival kits were bought locally to stimulate the Haitian economy.

The emergency operation was a success, coming to the assistance of 40,000 victims. First-aid kits containing various sanitary products were distributed to 6,830 families — 33% more than anticipated. In spite of difficult and unsafe conditions, the CECI teams adapted and met the challenge.

FROM EMERGENCY AID TO SUSTAINABILITY

The second phase of the operation involved going beyond emergency aid and focussing on sustainable development. Together with the community, CECI set the objective to clean up and deal with the isolation of the Asifa quarter, which was particularly disadvantaged. The method used to achieve this was as important as the desired results. CECI encouraged the participation of local peoples through the creation of a citizens' management committee. It was responsible for getting recipients involved in the work and supervising the project's progress along with the CECI team and an experienced foreman. Roads, small bridges and other works were done according to the original plans, in spite of a delay of several months.

The lessons learned from the humanitarian assistance operation in Gonaïves proved useful and will be again in the future. First, before deciding to intervene, an extensive analysis of the situation and needs must be done, even when fast action is crucial. Planning must be done in co-operation with other NGOs, the government, controlling forces and, most of all, the victims. And lastly, in this case, there was the valuable involvement of CECI sponsor Luck Mervil, who brought credibility and visibility to the project by travelling to the Gonaïves area immediately after the disaster along with television crews to observe the extent of the devastation. Mervil gave regular updates to the media and donors as the operation progressed. ■

AFTER THE CRISIS

MOBILIZING TO REBUILD HOMES AND LOCAL ECONOMIES

In October 2005, Hurricane Stan raged through several Central American countries. **Guatemala** and **El Salvador** were the hardest hit. Waves of mud swept away hundreds of people and devastated villages. CECI and its local partners answered the call of the Guatemalan, El Salvadorian, and Mexican diaspora in co-operation with the City of Montreal.

CECI's first move was to organize a fundraising campaign in Canada to meet emergency needs in Guatemala and El Salvador. Then, in keeping with its concept of sustainable development and partnership, the organization developed several actions to rebuild infrastructures and farms for people who had lost everything. In El Salvador, the focus was on homes, while in Guatemala, the emphasis was placed on farmland. "I thank you for having given me this chance, because my home had been destroyed by a tree during Hurricane Stan," says Graciela Romero Montes, who lives in the San Nicolás quarter in the Zaragoza municipality. "Today, I am happy, because I no longer walk on a dirt floor. It is made of concrete, and the house of bricks, with a waterproof roof."

Since April 2008, CECI has participated in Guatemala in the Pro-Habitat programme developed by the local government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Pro-Habitat strives to rehouse people who have lost their homes and assists them in establishing economic and other activities to limit the impact of future natural disasters.

NEW HOPE FOR COMMUNITIES

CECI coordinates the programme in the Mayan communities of Nueva Esperanza and Xecotoj from the municipality of San Andrés Semetabaj on the banks of Lake Atitlan. Homes have been designed to make them more resistant to natural phenomena, particularly earthquakes, while being respectful of the lifestyles and habits of the communities. In all, 161 families will have new homes and at least 80 more have access to income to support the development of economic activities. By March 2008, 88% of houses planned for Nueva Esperanza had been rebuilt.

More than 80 families in Nueva Esperanza helped with the construction of homes. Men were trained in brick laying, metalwork, carpentry and electrical work. Along with taking part in rebuilding their own homes, local people gained the benefits of professional training and experience — skills that are in demand in neighbouring villages.

Because the hurricane did severe damage to farmland and forced people to leave their properties, the land had to be restored. These initiatives stirred the entrepreneurial fibre of women who formed organized groups and launched themselves into market gardening in greenhouses or on small lots of land near their new homes. Not only did this help improve the food supply to the village, it also allowed the women to earn money through the sale of part of their harvests. Other women learned how to smoke and cure meats, which became a huge hit at the market. And still others became interested in the production of **Hongo Ostra** — a highly prized mushroom — and weaving courses. Several of the groups plan to continue their production activities by creating microbusinesses.

Many trees were planted by youths to curb the risk of future landslides and the resulting mud flow. After discussions with the people, the road to Nueva Esperanza was paved and one of the bridges remodelled for access in the event of torrential rains. And an emergency evacuation plan was developed with city hall; the entire village was involved and residents now know what to do should a natural disaster occur. ■



UNITED AGAINST YOUTH VIOLENCE

In El Salvador, criminal street gangs are estimated to number between 12,000 and 30,000 members, some involved in international trafficking of all kinds. To foster good governance and prevention policies, CECI collaborated on the creation of the Central American Observatory Against Violence and is staging a major prevention project in Central America.

Although the region is gradually becoming wealthier, social exclusion, poverty, and emigration prompted by wars are also a reality. One of the consequences is escalating violence, perpetrated mainly by street gangs. Gangster activity by young members is causing social upheaval, and each day the region sees dozens of fatalities, gun crimes, and the deaths of innocent bystanders.

"El Salvador ended a civil war 15 years ago, but certain aspects were not adequately covered in the peace accords — particularly the psychological impact of the war," says Oscar E. Bonilla, chairman of the National Public Security Council (CNSP). "Furthermore, youths have been shunted aside and people are living in miserable conditions. All of this has contributed to the rise in delinquency." Women and children are the primary victims. Citizens lose their faith in public authorities and tend to make their own laws. In the end, this spells a loss of credibility for the democratic process.

Governments have attempted to deal with this problem, mainly with zero-tolerance policies that have had little effect. Some initiatives have had better results, however, when institutions have worked together to share information on the best prevention policies and practices. Based on this observation, the CNSP was appointed by the government to create a Central American Observatory Against Violence (OCAVI). Through regional forums and study trips, the CNSP drafted a report on the situation, promoted more effective practices, and made interventions with youths in the poorest neighbourhoods in the city of San El Salvador. CECI and the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC) — an international organization based in Montreal — supported the CNSP from the very start by collaborating on the Observatory's website (www.ocavi.com) and through the establishment of indicators of violence and risk. The work continues to this day with the support of the El Salvadorian government, the Uniterro programme, and the ICPC. As well, ties have been made between the Observatory and the project to prevent violence and crime, with the support of USAID and the collaboration of RTI International, a major American NGO.

The Observatory is officially recognized by the heads of state of eight countries — Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, Dominican Republic — and the Central American Integration System. Its goal is to help improve our understanding of violence and its underlying causes, and catalogue and analyze prevention actions and their impact. This analysis and information work strives to move beyond traditional policies of law enforcement. A decrease in violence is not simply a political issue; active participation by communities, local elected officials, civil society and the private sector is another crucial condition in the reduction of violence and restoration of confidence in the democratic process.

And after years of collaboration, the government of El Salvador and the CNSP are now official members of the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime. This has increased the sustainability of Uniterro's interventions, as the partnership will continue in the years to come independently of CECI.



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To counterbalance policies that are merely repressive, CECI, through the Uniterra programme and in co-operation with the CNSP and local NGOs, also encourages the prevention of juvenile delinquency by supporting other projects that tackle the underlying causes of violence. "We intervene at various levels: through information for the general public, with at-risk groups on the verge of delinquency, and with young delinquents undergoing rehabilitation," says Alan Quinn, CECI's representative in El Salvador. In addition to involving communities and various local authorities, the project is being pursued by eight countries in Central America as well as in Mexico, the United States and Canada, which makes exchanges all the more valuable.

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CECI also recently aligned itself with the Research Triangle Institute to develop a new project with the El Salvadorian government. Reiterating previous successful practices, the partnership, with the support of USAID, aims at preventing community violence. Ten municipalities have been identified as part of a national crime prevention plan. The project follows public security projects led by CECI since 2001. Created with OCAVI, with the participation of civil organizations, the project's objective is to enable governments and municipalities to implement and evaluate prevention measures. "Over time, we've seen a significant decrease in violence and delinquency in certain communities, whereas in neighbouring towns where we haven't intervened, violence continues unabated or has even increased," concludes Quinn.

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CECI has acquired a reputation in the area of co-operation between women and men. Significant national and regional organizations and networks in Africa, in Asia and in the Americas working for women's rights have CECI's full support.

When Women Meet at the Top

In spite of considerable progress worldwide, more than one billion people live in poverty, and the majority of them are women. They have limited access to education, food, health care, land ownership and many other basic human rights.

●●●● **Nepal is one of the world's poorest countries; one-third of its population lives below the poverty line.** Patriarchy and the caste system exclude Nepalese women from the democratic decision-making process and from social development. For women living in remote mountain villages, the lack of access to resources adds to the obstacles on the path to emancipation.

The Women's Trek for Development and Peace, a project organized by CECI and its voluntary Uniterra programme, took place in March 2008. The initiative brought together 20 Canadian and 12 Nepalese women from various backgrounds, and took them on a 10-day walk through the heart of the Himalayas. Encounters with other women in successive villages were designed to show the Canadian and Nepalese participants the reality, dreams, and hopes of these women.

Several local organizations contributed to the successful outcome of this great adventure: Empowering Women of Nepal, the Federation of Community Forest Users Group, the Feminist Dalit

Organization, the National Indigenous Women's Federation, and the Himalayan Indigenous Women Network, as well as two trekking outfitters, 3 Sisters Adventure Trekking and Adventure Sisters.

During the **thematic** walk, which took participants through the remote mountains in three regions (**Jumla-Health, Myagdi-Leadership** and **Sankhuwasabha-Indigenous Women's Economic Activities**), the participants observed some progress with regard to the quality of life of women and their families. For example, thanks to initiatives taken by the women themselves, the government, and such development organizations as CECI, maternal and infant mortality rates have dropped significantly in Nepal. Volunteers in the community health care sector have been trained to dispense information on health, and to educate the populace, and provide awareness-raising services to communities. Community development programmes for education, health, and income-generating activities have improved the lives of women who are poor, socially disadvantaged, and marginalised. →



The physical challenges and lack of creature comforts and habitual distractions during the walk allowed the participants to engage in exchanges and truly meaningful experiences. It also gave the women a chance to share positive and similar aspects of their lives and to discuss their roles in the consolidation of peace and sustainable development. In a gesture of solidarity, they joined forces for women's empowerment with a view to building healthier,

better educated, more peaceful and more prosperous societies. "I found the same vitality (in the trek) as I'd seen at the March 8th (International Women's Day) walks when I was in university," says Josée Blanchette, journalist and spokesperson for the Women's Trek, on the first day of the adventure, which began on March 8. "Women in Nepal have so much to accomplish; they are only just taking their first steps. The obstacles they face are immense, but they are filled with hope!" ■



MOVING FROM TRADITION TO MODERNITY: WOMEN AT THE FOREFRONT

An example of a resoundingly successful CECI endeavour is the project **Droits et citoyenneté des femmes en Afrique francophone** (DCF). The Women's Rights and Citizenship in French Africa project was established in 1998 in **Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Mali**, and was expected to run for five years. But DCF was so successful in its goal of increasing respect for women's rights and their participation in the democratic process that the project earned two additional years of support from CECI and an expanded budget from CIDA.

The originality and effectiveness of DCF strategies to promote women's rights have also been acknowledged by civil society, local leaders, and government authorities. More than 28,000 women in the three countries have acquired identification papers, which facilitate travel and access to credit. The initiative was undertaken with the co-operation of local government, which agreed to reduce the cost of the official papers. It generated revenues of \$26,000 for the community in Burkina and \$8,000 in Mali. In Guinea, "violence observatories" were created in schools after students, teachers, and parents were made aware of the violence to which girls are subjected. Before then, nobody talked about the problem, but after the observatories were established, young women dared to speak up. →



UNITED WE STAND

Project manager Suzanne Dumouchel helped set up DCF. "The project followed the pilot project **Promotion de la démocratie et des droits de la personne** (Promotion of Democracy and Human Rights) in 12 countries from 1993 to 1997. DCF was created together with organizations using lessons learned from the pilot project."

In addition to the creation of networks, cohesion between the different structures contributed to the project's successful outcome. "Concerted action between organizations has become very solid." This enabled the players to go beyond mere awareness-raising and to address legal and political aspects," says Dumouchel.

"We supported the organizations, both from a financial and technical standpoint," she continues. "It has all been done gradually. Rather than players acting on their own, they grouped together and established strategies; their subsequent actions were implemented individually and collectively." Four years after the launch of the project, the groups gathered by CECI decided to make their collaboration official. "In 2008, the coalitions, which by then had become autonomous, celebrated their fifth anniversary as a formal network."



The coalitions are still very active in their respective countries. "They have important status now," says Dumouchel. "In Guinea, for example, the coalition led the fight for a change of government because it was at the front lines."

Philippe Jean, director of CECI in Africa, also recognizes the importance of DCF. "Support ended with the project, but results are still being seen. Women's organizations have become very important in the defence of women's rights in their respective countries. We've actually turned to them for technical support, and they are recognized by various financial lenders."

"By supporting organizations that have continued to develop, we've remained active in that field," he adds. "This recognition has enabled us to conduct other projects, such as support for equality between men and women in Mali." This project helps promote more equitable gender relations in Mali in the fields of law, health, reproduction, and governance. In concrete terms, CECI supports several Malian departments so that they may incorporate gender equality into their policies. "We are now in the process of mapping our strategic objectives for 2009-2013, and the issue of gender equality is one of the most important. It will remain a key element in CECI's interventions," says Jean. ■

POLICY ON EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN: FROM WORDS TO ACTION

From his office in **Senegal**, Jean participates in CECI and Uniterra efforts to reinforce the capacities of local partners active in the country, as well as in **Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso and Niger**.

"The objective of tackling the issue of equality between women and men underlies all CECI interventions. We make sure that there are activities addressing this problem in all projects we undertake with our partners. In the past two years, we've identified resource people and there is currently at least one female consultant in gender and development assigned to each country. It's dynamic, active, and information is circulating," says Jean.

Several actions were tackled at the same time. CECI has held awareness-raising sessions in all of the countries on women's participation in the Senate, the National Assembly, and government departments. In Senegal, the issue of land rights was on the agenda. While most land is owned primarily by men, women are the ones who work it. CECI is also working to ensure that measures are put in place so that women will enjoy the fruits of their labour and equality in terms of inheritance rights. "The regulations are there, but many women are not aware of them," says Jean. The programme strives to make often obscure and formal bureaucratic jargon easier to understand, and helps women through the administrative processes that will enable them to become landowners.

Meanwhile, representatives of women's organizations from across Guinea met at similar meetings in Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Senegal. They came together to examine the status of women's rights. What steps forward and backward have we taken? they asked themselves. After the encounter, they

decided to work together to form an action plan defining the priorities for the years to come. In July 2008, they met again in Dakar.

TOWARD CONCRETE ACTIONS

Today, CECI has a strong mix of projects specifically aimed at achieving women's rights and recognizing all of the elements involved in programming the challenges of equality between women and men. This, says Jean, is the result of CECI's years of experience in the realm of gender equality. "In the 1990s, these specific programmes eased off somewhat. We realized that there had to be actions targeting women while ensuring that that aspect be included in every CECI intervention. Otherwise, the results are too diffuse and things don't move forward quickly enough," he says. "And we want concrete results."

Jean adds: "Before, we were more timid talking about the issue of Gender and Development (GAD). It was better accepted by the men. Since last year, CECI has used a more incisive term: equality between women and men. It shocks more and arouses hotter debates. There are still taboos about women's place in African society. We must use caution and not be too radical. Having said that, CECI wants to act, and that requires working on male attitudes and behaviours. This is why education is so important and necessary to the reinforcement of women's capacities."

It was from this perspective that CECI reviewed its own policy on women and development in 2006, resulting in the guiding principle of equality between women and men, which is better adapted to today's reality. This policy was launched in 2007,

the same year CECI adopted the theme of rights and citizenship for women.

Hélène Lagacé, coordinator of the CECI GAD committee and specialist in equality between women and men, is pleased to see how successful this revision has been, as it includes more of the concerns of women today. "Now, different CECI units are taking on more responsibilities and have their own initiatives regarding equality. For example, the **Women's Trek for Development and Peace in Nepal**, which took place in March 2008, was an idea initiated by the regional team in Asia. It was actively supported by the CECI communications team. The event brought together some 20 Canadian and Nepalese women from various backgrounds and they trekked to meet women in remote villages in the Himalayan Mountains. The GAD committee is a sort of policy watchdog, but we are not called upon to intervene as much internally because several employees are carrying the torch in their respective sectors," says the specialist.

CECI has also offered external consultations on issues of equality through its Centre for Training, Study, and Consulting (CTSC). "Along with our internal actions, this year we've offered, for the third time since 2004, institutional support to the Moroccan department of communications, as well as monitoring of past interventions," says Lagacé. Since autumn 2007, CECI has also been present at Université de Montréal, where Lagacé and colleague Thérèse Bouchard have jointly taught an intensive three-weekend course on relations between men and women and development. The course is part of a new certificate in international co-operation established with CECI's collaboration. ■



It is 2008

We are at the dawn of the third millenium, with all the dreams and hopes that go with it. Still, the horizon is clouded with the outcry over famine over famine and demands for the respect for human rights. Environmental disasters are leaving climate refugees; safety issues are of concern worldwide in developed and developing countries. The gap between rich and poor is widening at a frightening pace; we have rampant over-consumption coupled with rising prices, and shortages of such basic staples as rice, water and wheat are wreaking havoc. Debatable political decisions based on unfettered GDP growth are made. How can we counterbalance all this? We can't allow ourselves to become cynical; we must remain convinced that we, the citizens of the world, have a voice and recourse to action on a global scale.


How to deal with these responsibilities, which we've so often shunted aside? How to do one's part, get involved, have the feeling of building a better world or, at least, make it possible to envision a more equitable, fairer, better-organized world? As an engaged citizen, I dream that more of us will express our conviction, knowledge, and solidarity to our brothers and sisters around the world.

Dear friends, wherever you are, know that your engagement is appreciated, necessary, and that you are not working in vain. More than ever, our world needs you and that mutual spirit of human solidarity. Rest assured, your engagement does not go unnoticed.

In my capacity as CECI sponsor, I had the opportunity to visit Nepal this year and meet communities in the Terai region that were stricken by floods in August 2007. The women, men, and children who benefited from your donations and the work of expert teams from Canada and Nepal asked me to convey their thanks. Even people here at home, touched by your sustained efforts, tell me regularly how much they appreciate your co-operation work and it is a pleasure to pass along these sentiments.

For the past 50 years, you've given your time, shared your lives with the poorest people on Earth. No words can express the pride I feel when I promote who you are and what you represent. And I also take great pleasure in telling how anyone, like you, can be part of the community of people united against poverty and exclusion. Competent candidates able to make a social engagement are always welcome! Remember, partnerships are the very core of our operations; giving is another form of involvement, and there is no such thing as a small donation.

**Being informed is also taking action!
Happy 50th anniversary!**


Your colleague in **CECIS**hip,
Luck Mervil, Artist & Humanist



FUNDRAISING

A VITAL AND NECESSARY COMMITMENT

That CECI has been able to support communities in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, to combat inequalities, and fight poverty, is due in part to the faithful support of donors. Each year, our donors support projects aimed at reinforcing the capacities of women, improving nutrition for children under five, intensifying agricultural production to fight hunger, running literacy projects and much more. This year, financial contributions of more than one million dollars have allowed CECI to sustain its efforts around the world and helped ensure the organization's continuing usefulness.



EMERGENCY FUNDRAISING

Half of the funds collected are from emergency fundraising efforts during humanitarian crises after natural disasters or conflicts. On August 8, 2007, CECI rallied the general public to come in aid of the Nepalese after the terrible floods in the Terai region. On August 16, it was Peru, where the CECI team and local organizations took action to help Peruvian communities dealing with the devastating aftermath of an earthquake. And this past March, Bolivia suffered massive flooding. Each time, CECI has been able to count on the generous support of donors.

HOW DONATIONS ARE USED

To ensure the utmost transparency in the way donations are used, CECI regularly makes available to its members a variety of information tools on the progress of its projects; these tools include the print newsletter "**El Mundo**," the annual report, and our **E_ publications**, including the electronic newsletter **Pour le Monde**, which is devoted to humanitarian crises. Donors can track the use of donations at any time and receive information on the causes they are supporting as well as the results obtained.

A COMMITTED TEAM

We must also praise the work of CECI employees, who have participated in many fundraising activities by CECI's social committee. These activities have helped raise close to \$13,000. CECI thanks its employees for their engagement, interest, and time. CECI would especially like to underscore the contributions of all donors, which have allowed us to take action on behalf of populations whose needs are constantly growing.

A CRUCIAL YEAR OF REFLECTION FOR THE NEXT FIVE-YEAR PERIOD

CECI ENGAGES IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

CECI has mobilized to define the five major strategic directions that will guide its responses and actions over the next five years. Pierre Lessard, director of CECI's Studies, Consulting and Training Centre, co-ordinated this important exercise. The participatory approach involved corporation members, the board of directors, employees in Canada and in overseas offices, CECI's Northern and Southern partners, and volunteers.

INFORMATION AT THE HEART OF THE ACTION

Throughout the year, members and supporters were able to follow CECI's and Uniterra's projects through **E_publications**. These online newsletters made it simple to keep up with the news from Haiti or Senegal, to stay abreast of humanitarian aid operations, or to follow the exchanges between 20 Canadian women and their Nepalese sisters — so vivid, it's almost like listening and seeing them live! In March 2008, more than 25,000 people visited the CECI website to read about the **Women's Trek for Peace and Development**. And CECI can count on more than 10,000 "hits" from visitors around the world every month. **E_publications** are important reference tools in the

sphere of international development. Furthermore, subscribers can receive regular **E_Tracts** inviting them to events, receptions or campaigns to fight poverty and exclusion in the world. **To subscribe:**
www.publication.ceci.ca

CONFERENCE: WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND CITIZENSHIP

At CECI, 2007 was guided by the theme of equality between women and men. A number of activities were organized to deal with gender equity. On September 27, 2007, 120 people attended the conference "**Women's Rights: Today's Issues, Tomorrow's Hopes**" in the old chapel at Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf in Montreal.

The subjects covered during the conference included violence against Haitian women, women's rights, and the issues involved in the caste system in Nepal. Christiane Pelchat, chairman of the **Conseil du statut de la femme** in Quebec, spoke on women's rights and the challenges that exist to their political participation. The two other panel members were Guerty Aimé, manager of Enfofamn (Haiti), and Durga Sob, founding member and president of the Feminist Dalit Organization (Nepal).

FAIR-TRADE MEET & GREET

On December 5, 2007, Uniterra marked **International Volunteer Day**. More than 100 participants met with partner organizations from the North and South involved in Uniterra's

voluntary co-operation programme. The evening's theme was the stakes involved in fair trade and the crucial role it plays in development. On this occasion, participants viewed a video, "**Artisans of the Sahara Desert**," which profiled GIE DANI, a co-operative of Touareg artisans and a CECI partner in Niger.

8 MARCH, 8 WOMEN, 8 OBJECTIVES CAMPAIGN

To mark **International Women's Day** on March 8, 2008, CECI and its partner WUSC presented the Canadian public with the works of eight women Uniterra volunteers — Canadians as well as counterparts from the South — working to reinforce women's autonomy. Two of the eight were Patricia Smedley, who spoke about her engagement in the **Coin de Rue** schools (street corner schools) project in Senegal, which promotes primary education for all girls and boys, and Nanfadima Magassouba, president of the **Coalition nationale de Guinée pour les droits et la citoyenneté de la femme** (CONAG-DCF), who spoke about Guinean women. She works to defend their rights and mobilizes her fellow citizens to become politically engaged and make their voices heard. This campaign, in large part relayed by the Canadian media, conveyed the scope of the work required to achieve equality between women and men and showed how people can take concrete action to defend those rights here in Canada as well as abroad.

FONDATION RICHELIEU A NETWORK ENGAGED IN INTERNATIONAL ACTION THROUGH UNITERRA

After participating in the International Forum on Informal Education in Niger in January 2007, the relationship between CECI and Fondation Richelieu evolved into a more formal agreement founded on action. As a result, this year, all 275 service clubs in Canada and francophone countries were invited to participate in Uniterra campaigns in Canada. Moreover, Fondation Richelieu played host to literacy partners from Senegal at an exchange and information meeting.

On October 5 and 6, 2007, more than 300 delegates attended the Fondation Richelieu International Convention in Bathurst. During a presentation, Uniterra described the major stakes in international co-operation and invited Fondation members to get involved as volunteers. In Canada, for instance, they could work in public engagement campaigns to educate the general public on issues inherent in international development — such as gender equality around the world — or as volunteers in Africa, Asia, and the Americas, particularly through the **Leave for Change programme**. During the convention, more than 55 young people from Fondation Richelieu made a commitment to work for the annual campaign — **A World**

Without Poverty (October 17, 2007 — a day to stand up against poverty around the world).

CITIZENS OF THE WORLD IN ACTION

WHEN FORCES COME TOGETHER FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CECI is part of the coalition of voluntary co-operation agencies, better known by the acronym “VCA”. The coalition comprises nine Canadian organizations: Canadian Crossroads International (CCI), CUSO, World University Service of Canada (WUSC), Canada World Youth (CWY), Oxfam Québec, Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO), SUCO, VSO Canada, and CECI.

The coalition takes action on several issues, for example, through the **Global Citizens for Change** (www.citizen4change.org), whose mission is to stimulate public engagement. The goal of Global Citizens for Change is to support voluntary co-operation, increase its visibility as an effective means of fighting poverty, and support voluntary co-operation organizations in their dealings with volunteers returning to Canada, so that the latter might educate their respective communities about the stakes involved in world poverty and development.

In 2007-2008, CECI was actively involved with the VCA coalition,

which also undertook many activities, including the mobilisation of volunteers back home with the **Stand Up Against Poverty** campaign; training sessions for the Campaign; and the distribution of promotional material such as postcards, T-shirts, information kits, etc. to more than 25,000 volunteers returning from missions through the nine organisations.

The VCAs also worked with the media to promote the engagement of Canadian volunteers, such as Chantal Bernatchez, a Uniterra volunteer, who was interviewed by several Quebec-based media. This gave marvellous visibility to the importance of volunteer work in the area of shea butter production. The global media coverage of the VCAs reached more than 3 million people, particularly through the publication of promotional inserts on international volunteering in **The Embassy, La Presse**, and the **Globe and Mail** newspapers.

CECI's work, accomplished in tandem with colleagues in other organizations working in voluntary co-operation, provides a forum for exchanges on the best practices in the field and an opportunity to take joint action to demonstrate the important contribution of volunteers.

AUDITOR'S REPORT & Notes to the Financial Statements

March 31, 2008

AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF THE CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND COOPERATION

We have audited the balance sheet of the Centre for International Studies and Cooperation as at March 31, 2008 and the statements of revenue and expenses, changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Centre's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In our opinion, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Centre as at March 31, 2008 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

Samson Bélaire / Deloitte & Touche s.e.n.c.r.l.

SAMSON BÉLAIRE/DELOITTE & TOUCHE

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

JUNE 13, 2008

STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES • YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2008

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
REVENUE		
CIDA - Partnership	7,358,904	6,297,972
CIDA - Bilateral and other	8,273,116	6,673,387
Other funding organizations	10,448,607	9,001,737
Donations	911,597	1,366,169
Contributed services (NOTE 8)	3,871,210	3,238,478
Other revenue	476,222	480,563
	31,339,656	27,058,306
EXPENSES		
Offices and departments	6,402,642	6,108,718
Programs	20,445,274	17,091,732
Contributed services (NOTE 8)	3,871,210	3,238,478
Interest on long-term debt	180,651	192,494
Amortization of capital assets	318,666	314,081
	31,218,443	26,945,503
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	121,213	112,803

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS • YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2008

	Invested in capital assets \$	Restricted for endowment purposes \$ <small>(NOTE 7)</small>	Unrestricted \$	TOTAL 2008 \$	TOTAL 2007 \$
BALANCE, BEGINNING OF YEAR	1,561,315	8,385	807,005	2,376,705	2,263,902
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	(312,694)*	-	433,907	121,213	112,803
Investment in capital assets	197,843	-	(197,843)	-	-
Reimbursement of long-term debt	145,727	-	(145,727)	-	-
Disposal of capital assets	(324)	-	324	-	-
BALANCE, END OF YEAR	1,591,867	8,385	897,666	2,497,918	2,376,705

* Including amortization of capital assets of \$318,666, amortization of deferred contributions related to the capital assets of \$6,130 and a loss on disposal of capital assets of \$158.

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Current assets		
Cash	4,262,590	4,937,171
Accounts receivable (net of deferred contributions of \$161,191; \$305,840 in 2007)	911,290	804,048
Advances to partners	1,943,479	1,007,738
Prepaid expenses	413,988	312,507
	7,531,347	7,061,464
Capital assets - tangible and intangible (NOTE 3)	4,388,964	4,510,269
	11,920,311	11,571,733
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	1,760,838	1,420,718
Deferred contributions (net of accounts receivable of \$853,649; \$1,484,723 in 2007)	4,864,458	4,825,356
Current portion of long-term debt (NOTE 5)	152,355	145,641
	6,777,651	6,391,715
Deferred contributions related to capital assets (NOTE 6)	117,229	123,359
Long-term debt (NOTE 5)	2,527,513	2,679,954
NET ASSETS		
Invested in capital assets	1,591,867	1,561,315
Restricted for endowment purposes (NOTE 7)	8,385	8,385
Unrestricted	897,666	807,005
	2,497,918	2,376,705
	11,920,311	11,571,733

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Excess of revenue over expenses	121,213	112,803
Adjustments for:		
Loss (gain) on disposal of capital assets	158	(935)
Amortization of capital assets	318,666	314,081
Amortization of deferred contributions	(6,130)	(6,130)
	433,907	419,819
Changes in non-cash operating working capital items (NOTE 9)	(765,242)	1,191,772
	(331,335)	1,611,591
FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Reimbursement of long-term debt	(145,727)	(140,050)
INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Disposal of capital assets	324	7,544
Acquisition of capital assets	(197,843)	(244,244)
	(197,519)	(236,700)
(Decrease) increase in cash	(674,581)	1,234,841
Cash, beginning of year	4,937,171	3,702,330
CASH, END OF YEAR	4,262,590	4,937,171
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION		
Interest paid	165,533	184,488

1. Description of the organization

The Centre for International Studies and Cooperation is incorporated under Part III of the **Companies Act** (Quebec).

The Centre takes part in activities to promote economic, social and cultural development in Third World countries. It does so through training, by sending volunteers and technical assistants to these areas and by undertaking projects, conducting research and publishing specialized works.

2. Significant accounting policies

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles ("GAAP") and reflect the following significant accounting policies:

a) Revenue recognition

The Centre follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions. Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured. Endowment contributions are recognized as direct increases in net assets.

b) Foreign transaction recognition

The Centre accounts for expenses using the following accounting practices:

- i) Capital expenditures incurred for overseas activities are charged as operating expenses, with the exception of the capital expenditures of regional offices, which are capitalized.
- ii) Gains or losses due to changes in exchange rates are charged to the programs to which they are related.
- iii) Other contributions for technical assistance to the Volunteers and Partnerships Program represent the share of living allowances and volunteer housing of overseas partners.

c) Financial instruments

Financial assets and financial liabilities are initially recognized at fair value and their subsequent measurement is dependent on their classification as described below. Their classification depends on the purpose for which the financial instruments were acquired or issued, their characteristics and the Centre's designation of such instruments. Settlement date accounting is used.

CLASSIFICATION

Cash	Held for trading
Accounts receivable and advances to partners	Loans and receivables
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	Other liabilities
Long-term debt	Other liabilities

HELD FOR TRADING

Held for trading financial assets are financial assets typically acquired for resale prior to maturity or that are designated as held for trading. They are measured at fair value at the balance sheet date. Fair value fluctuations including interest earned, interest accrued, gains and losses realized on disposal and unrealized gains and losses are included in other revenue.

LOANS AND RECEIVABLES

Loans and receivables are accounted for at amortized cost using the effective interest method.

OTHER LIABILITIES

Other liabilities are recorded at amortized cost using the effective interest method and include all financial liabilities, other than derivative instruments.

EFFECTIVE INTEREST METHOD

The Centre uses the effective interest method to recognize interest income or expense which includes transaction costs or fees, premiums or discounts earned or incurred for financial instruments.

d) Capital assets - tangible and intangible

Capital assets are recorded at cost and amortized using the following methods and rates:

Buildings	Straight-line	4%
Furniture and equipment	Declining balance	20% and 30%
Library	Straight-line	5%
Audio-visual equipment	Declining balance	20%
Automotive equipment	Declining balance	30%
Software	Straight-line	25%

e) Foreign currency translation

Monetary assets and liabilities are translated into Canadian dollars at the exchange rates in effect at year end, whereas non-monetary assets and liabilities are translated at historical rates. The market values are translated into Canadian dollars at the exchange rates in effect at year end. Revenue and expenses are translated at average rates prevailing during the year. Resulting gains and losses are reflected in the statement of revenue and expenses.

f) Investment in joint ventures

The Centre has elected to record its investments in joint ventures using the equity method.

g) Use of estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian GAAP requires management to make certain estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosures of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

h) Future accounting changes

FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

In December 2006, the CICA issued Section 3862, Financial Instruments - Disclosures and Section 3863, Financial Instruments - Presentation. Both Sections will be applicable to financial statements relating to fiscal years beginning on or after October 1, 2007. Accordingly, the Centre will adopt the new standards for its fiscal year beginning April 1, 2008. Section 3862 on financial instruments disclosures, requires the disclosure of information about: **a)** the significance of financial instruments for the entity's financial position and performance and **b)** the nature and extent of risks arising from financial instruments to which the entity is exposed during the period and at the balance sheet date, and how the entity manages those risks. Section 3863 on the presentation of financial instruments is unchanged from the presentation requirements included in Section 3861.

The Centre is currently evaluating the impact of the adoption of these new Sections on its financial statements.

3. Capital assets - tangible and intangible

			2008	2007
	Evaluation cost	Accumulated amortization	Net book value	Net book value
	\$	\$	\$	\$
TANGIBLE ASSETS				
Land	869,445	-	869,445	869,445
Buildings	3,330,811	536,337	2,794,474	2,840,799
Furniture and equipment	1,590,566	1,376,093	214,473	248,237
Library	542,607	217,040	325,567	352,697
Audio-visual equipment	35,719	35,154	565	706
Automotive equipment	422,226	257,638	164,588	156,231
	6,791,374	2,422,262	4,369,112	4,468,115
INTANGIBLE ASSETS				
Software	165,065	145,213	19,852	42,154
	6,956,439	2,567,475	4,388,964	4,510,269

The fair value of buildings, determined using the income approach, as at January 7, 2005, is approximately \$6,000,000 for the buildings. Using the comparable transaction analysis, the fair value is essentially the same.

4. Bank loan

The Centre has an operating line of credit of an authorized amount of \$2,400,000, bearing interest at the prime rate, secured by a movable hypothec on the universality of accounts receivable and is repayable on demand.

5. Long-term debt

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
Loan secured by a first-rank hypothec on a building, for a maximum authorized amount of \$1,121,250, payable in monthly instalments of \$3,738 until December 2016 with a final instalment of \$448,500 in January 2017 plus interest calculated at 6.65%, renewal on January 15, 2012, maturing on January 15, 2017	844,675	889,525
Loan secured by a second-rank hypothec on a building, payable in monthly instalments of \$4,050 plus interest calculated at 6.7%, renewal on February 15, 2010, maturing on February 15, 2017	325,389	351,188
Loan secured by a first-rank hypothec on a building, payable in monthly instalments of \$12,248 plus interest calculated at 6.5%, renewal on September 29, 2019, maturing on December 29, 2021	1,297,719	1,358,006
Loan secured by a first-rank hypothec on a building, payable in monthly instalments of \$1,821 plus interest calculated at 6.5%, renewal on August 24, 2010, maturing on March 24, 2022	199,585	208,126
Loan payable in annual instalments of \$6,250 plus interest, maturing on December 15, 2009, bearing interest at 4% in 2008 and 5% in 2009	12,500	18,750
	2,679,868	2,825,595
Current portion	152,355	145,641
	2,527,513	2,679,954

Estimated principal payments required in each of the next five years are as follows:

	\$
2009	152,355
2010	159,195
2011	160,247
2012	167,815
2013	176,367

6. Deferred contributions related to capital assets

Deferred contributions related to capital assets represent contributions received to acquire capital assets. They are amortized using the same methods and rates as the related capital assets. Changes for the year are as follows:

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
Balance, beginning of year	123,359	129,489
Amortization for the year	6,130	6,130
Balance, end of year	117,229	123,359

7. Net assets restricted for endowment purposes

Net assets restricted for endowment purposes are as follows:

- a) An amount of \$4,305 is subject to external restrictions requiring that any resources be maintained permanently in the Fonds Pelletier. The related investment income is used to finance projects aimed at education and training for women and girls.
- b) An amount of \$4,080 is subject to external restrictions requiring that any resources be maintained permanently in the Fonds Jean Bouchard. The related investment income is used to finance projects aimed at basic human needs.

8. Contributed services

Contributed services represent the value of contributions made by participants to volunteer co-operation programs. This value was revised following a CECI study conducted in 2006. The study takes into account the changes in the volunteer co-operation programs and volunteer work conducted in Canada and is based on recent data from Statistics Canada. The contributions in the form of services rendered by the Board of Directors have not been reflected in this data.

9. Changes in non-cash operating working capital items

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
Accounts receivable	(107,242)	(10,198)
Advances to partners	(935,741)	(368,484)
Prepaid expenses	(101,481)	(94,831)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	340,120	484,268
Deferred contributions	39,102	1,181,017
	(765,242)	1,191,772

10. Commitments

The Centre is committed under renewable, non-cancellable leases for equipment that expire until October 2012. The total amount payable of \$89,719 is detailed as follows:

	\$
2009	24,536
2010	24,536
2011	24,536
2012	14,252
2013	1,859

12. Financial instruments

Currency risk

The Centre carries out several transactions in foreign currencies and is, therefore, exposed to foreign exchange fluctuations. The Centre does not actively manage this risk, as the exchange gains and losses are included in program costs.

The balance sheet includes the following amounts expressed in Canadian dollars with respect to financial assets and liabilities for which cash flows are denominated in the following currencies:

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
US Dollars:		
Cash	2,091,399	1,665,817
Accounts receivable	175,257	278,010
Advances to partners	588,274	225,978
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	37,963	66,112
CFA Franc:		
Cash	813,918	1,503,359
Accounts receivable	-	130,874
Advances to partners	-	452,602
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	-	13,195
Other currencies:		
Cash	712,109	1,298,887
Accounts receivable	43,024	38,968
Advances to partners	1,355,205	329,158
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	30,435	35,353

11. Contingencies and commitments

The Centre is subject to litigation in the normal course of business. Management believes that this litigation will have no significant adverse impact on the Centre's financial position. Therefore, no provision has been made in the financial statements.

The Centre has signed partnership agreements with other organizations for the purpose of carrying out projects. Under these agreements, the Centre is jointly and severally liable with the other organizations to lenders. As at March 31, 2008, the signed agreements totalled approximately \$127,000,000 and expire through March 2012. Management is nonetheless of the opinion that there is no significant risk, as all partnerships for projects are subject to a contract between the organizations, and these contracts clearly specify the respective financial liabilities of the partners.

Fair value

The fair value of accounts receivable, advances to partners and accounts payable and accrued liabilities is approximately equal to their carrying values due to their short-term maturities.

The fair value of long-term debt is determined using the present value of future cash flows under current financing agreements, based on the Centre's current estimated borrowing rate for loans with similar terms and conditions. The fair value of long-term debt is approximately equal to its carrying value.

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DONORS!

The following list includes every donor that contributed \$500 or more, save those who wished to remain anonymous.

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COORDINATION • Myriam Fehmü, Carine Guidicelli

WRITTEN BY • Kiran Ambwani, Pauline Comeau, Myriam Fehmü, Marie-Julie Gagnon, Carine Guidicelli, Sarah Poulin-Chartrand, Melina Schoenborn, Maeva Vilain

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