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ECI



CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL  
STUDIES AND COOPERATION

CECI

2007 ANNUAL REPORT

**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."**

A Word from the President and the Executive Director

**LEARNING**, PARTICIPATING, ACTING  
**AGRICULTURE**  
**INTEGRATED** DEVELOPMENT

**AUDITORS' REPORT** and notes to the financial statements

**NON-FORMAL** EDUCATION

**WOMEN** AND DEVELOPMENT

**GOVERNANCE** AND SECURITY

**UNITERRA**

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## A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Firmly committed to women's rights!

#### I EXIST!

We met her in one of our literacy classes near the Dandeldhura region of Nepal. She didn't know how old she was, but she appeared to be at least 70. Proudly, she showed us her notebook, pointing out some Nepali characters. "Durga," she said. Her name. Then she added: "Now that I can write my own name... I exist!"

Like Durga, two-thirds of the world's illiterates are women. In Sub-Saharan Africa, less than 30% of girls enrol in high school. Inequality between men and women is still widespread. Although undeniable progress has been made in the areas of health and education, it is still too slow, concludes the United Nations Development Fund for Women. Many poor families prefer to make education for their boys a priority and to keep the girls at home for domestic tasks. The price payed is a terrible one.

One and a half billion people in the world live on less than a dollar a day; 70% of these are women. Women do between 60% and 80% of agricultural work, but they get just 1% of the financial credit available in agriculture. Women are largely excluded from the public stage. Their numbers in parliaments around the world are growing, but the global average is no more than 16%. ▶



**Pierre Racicot**  
Chairman of the Board of Directors

**Michel Chaurette**  
Executive Director

# 2007



# EQUALITY



Statistics on poverty and exclusion of women and girls are shocking. We cannot remain indifferent to them. We reject the *status quo*.

### **THE CHALLENGE OF EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN**

This is why CECI has embraced the cause of many organizations working for equality of the sexes. This includes groups like the *Coalition Droits et Citoyenneté des Femmes* in Mali, which champions improved civic recognition of women by allowing them to hold documents, such as birth or marriage certificates. The Coalition has directly contributed to the increase in the number of women who run in elections — to the point where Mali can boast more than a quarter of the deputies in parliament being women — a better standing than Canada.

In Haiti, women are often victims of violence within the context of the poverty and instability that mark the country. Associations like *Haitian Women's Solidarity* (SOFA) and the *Organization for the Defense of Women's Rights* (ENFOFANM) play a key role in defending rights and promoting equality between men and women. These groups can count on CECI's support. The same goes for FEDO, the *Feminist Dalit Organization*, which fights the double exclusion of women in low castes and minorities in Nepal.

The challenge of equality between men and women concerns not only the groups with which we forge partnerships, but also our own organization. Twelve years after adopting our first Policy on Women and Development, the issue of gender equality at CECI is still on the agenda. We are proud

of some of the progress we have made at CECI. The position of chairperson of the board alternates between a man and a woman; the board itself is made up of 11 members, five of whom are women. Sixty percent of our volunteers are women. While the number of women within the organization is increasing, it is still insufficient at 40%. There is room for improvement in management positions, especially in the field.

### **A POLICY ON EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN**

CECI's board of directors has, therefore, chosen to renew its Policy on Women and Development, which will from now on be known as the **Policy on Equality Between Women and Men**. With this policy, CECI commits itself to mobilizing its members, staff, volunteers and partners in favour of women's rights. In our programs and our organization, we advocate concrete measures that foster equality between women and men, such as the gender and development approach or affirmative action. We intend to intensify our collaborations with organizations fighting for women's rights and we will remain vigilant in the face of any possible setbacks. ●

**CECI and its partners firmly committed to women's rights!**

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

CHAIR **Pierre Racicot** · EXECUTIVE VICE-CHAIR **Chantal Havard**

VICE-CHAIR, MEMBERSHIP **Jean-François Simard** · TREASURER **Sr Gisèle Leduc**

OTHER ADMINISTRATORS **Raymond Batrie, Christiane Beaulieu, Pierre Bélanger S.J., Michel Bélisle, Michèle Jodoin, Nancy Neamtan, François Vitez**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR **Michel Chaurrette**

A

ACTING



## TO MOBILIZE

In the past three years, we've seen a significant increase in CECI's membership — the very people at the heart of the organization's governance. In the last year, Corporation members were invited to take part in several public events organized by CECI or its partners. These members, former volunteers and representatives from business and religious communities, academia, and other international cooperation organizations, became witnesses to CECI's dynamism through various activities, including the *Forum on Social and Solidarity Economy*, the *Millennium Promises Conference*, the *Salon des métiers d'art de Québec*, the *Université féministe d'été*, and the *Global Citizens for Change*.

In addition to the 100 Corporation members, *Friends of CECI* is a network that promotes commitment within the organization. Created at the annual general assembly of 2005, this group dedicated to CECI's mission now numbers over 150 former volunteers, partners, donors and former employees. Friends are kept informed of the Corporation's activities and constitute a pool from which the Corporation recruits. These people are invited to attend the three hearings on CECI's future orientations in Montreal, Quebec City, and Gatineau in September 2007.

**In early January 2007, artist, composer and singer, Luck Mervil, visited Guatemala with his daughter Jahmila, and spouse, actress Tania Kontoyanni. The family met with Uniterra volunteers assisting local partners and villagers working in fair trade and juvenile delinquency projects.**

## TO MEET

Missions undertaken by CECI's Board of Directors give members a chance to see results in the field and to better observe the scope of CECI's values and strategic orientations. In the summer of 2006 Board Administrator Christiane Beaulieu joined *Friendships and Reconstruction Guatemala – El Salvador*. The visit gave Mrs. Beaulieu an appreciation of the scope of the program, a better understanding of prevention efforts made in the region, and a sympathetic perspective of the struggle of young people seeking to extricate themselves from street gangs. "We were given a close look at the work done by our partners and an appreciation of the evolutionary structure of their action plan," she notes.

In January 2007, Chairman of the Board Pierre Racicot, represented CECI at the *International Forum on Informal Education* in Niger. Raymond Batrie and Michel Bélisle, board administrators, visited the CECI team in Guatemala where they met with CECI and Uniterra partners working in fair trade, and the prevention of juvenile delinquency. Back home, they talked of witnessing first-hand how CECI workers make enormous efforts to accompany partners on the path to development.

In February 2007, Vice-Chair, Membership, Jean-François Simard and board administrator François Vitez, traveled to Haiti. Their view was that CECI's work has had a real impact on the Haitian people. CECI, which has been working in the country for 35 years, remains an essential player with a well-known expertise in rural regions. ►

## TO REBUILD

In July and August 2006, 25 people traveled to Central America as part of the *Friendships and Reconstruction Guatemala – El Salvador* project. Initiated by CECI and the *Club des petits déjeuners du Québec* this project strives to educate young people, corporate executives, and community professionals on the realities of international development.

The group met CECI partners working in the field of juvenile delinquency prevention, community tourism, fair trade, and humanitarian aid. Mission members were exploring progress made in reconstruction efforts – enabled by \$565,000 in donations from the Canadian public – as well as the severity of the damages. During the visit, the members worked alongside the villagers helping them rebuild their homes and their lives.

## TO INFORM

In May 2006 CECI published its first electronic newsletter. In regular features of *E\_CECI*, *E\_tract* and *Pour le monde*, readers find a reliable, accessible source of information on the issues involved in international cooperation. **E\_publications** provide regular articles, updates, and reflections on international development efforts in the 15 countries where CECI is active, as well as events held for North-South cooperation and domestic solidarity. By subscribing to the newsletter, more than 1,500 people have made a concrete gesture of international cooperation – because being informed is being involved!

[www.publication.ceci.ca](http://www.publication.ceci.ca)

## TO GROW

The generosity of donors and the enthusiasm of the CECI team combined to help raise \$1,000,000 this year in CECI'S annual financing campaign. These funds give CECI the means to respond to emergencies and launch different development projects around the world.

There were no major natural disasters in the past year. Nonetheless, in 2006, typhoon Xangsane struck Vietnam, destroying homes and crops in its path. An outpouring of solidarity soon followed. In just three weeks, donations totalling \$200,000 were used for reconstruction of damaged homes.

The pool of CECI donors has grown this year with the arrival of the Richelieu International Foundation and the Howick Foundation. This year also saw an increase in the number of monthly and online donors. Financing activities included the hugely successful benefit evening with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra – a CECI first – starring sponsor Luck Mervil.

We must also underscore the contribution of CECI employees who, throughout the year, tirelessly organized internal fund-raising activities, such as bake sales, lotteries, and a benefit marathon. These initiatives raised funds for the annual campaign and were tangible proof of commitment to the battle against world poverty. ●



## CENTRE FOR TRAINING, STUDY AND CONSULTANCY KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE TO BE SHARED



© DAVID CHAMPAGNE

The Centre for Training, Study and Consultancy (CTSC) was created in 2001 and works primarily to develop and provide training programs, studies, and expertise. CTSC offers technical expertise services to several CECI projects and elsewhere, and has been extremely active this year, particularly in the systemization of practices and consultations. CTSC activities are divided primarily into three major fields of action.

### 1. EQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

CTSC training activities on equality of the sexes continues in cooperation with staff in Morocco's Department of Communications. These activities are part of a process to develop a four-year action plan for the Moroccan program on equality between men and women in the communications industry. "This plan follows the completion of a participative analysis of the state of gender equality in the communications sector," says H  l  ne Lagac  , CECI specialist, Gender and Development Approach. "The project aims to improve women's access to top communications positions and to achieve a significant reduction in sexist stereotypes in media coverage."

The CTSC contributes actively to course content in the new International Cooperation certificate launched in April 2007 by the Permanent Education Faculty of the Universit   de Montr  al. "We produced the course modules *Enjeux et perspectives and Rapports hommes/femmes et d  veloppement (Stakes and Perspectives, Gender and Development)*," says Th  r  se Bouchard, CECI specialist, Human Rights, Peace and Democratic Development.

The past year was also marked by the approval of the *Gender Equality and African Regional Institutions* project financed by *Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)*, and implemented in cooperation with the *Foundation for International Training of Toronto*. The goal of the project is to work toward the reinforcement of four institutions in West Africa and Maghreb.

### 2. ECONOMIC GROWTH

The CTSC team, in conjunction with the *Alliance agricole internationale*, worked on concept development and organized a national workshop in Mali in March 2007 on employment and the employability of youths in agricultural transformation

and production. The event was designed to bring together different players involved in the pilot phase of PAJEA, a project supporting young entrepreneurs in the agrifood industry, as well as institutions mandated to develop national employment strategies for young people.

Activities conducted this year included a study on the revival of the cotton sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo, an initiative financed by the World Bank. Lastly, the CTSC continued to offer its expertise to the *Agricultural intensification project in Haiti*, financed by the *Inter-American Development Bank*, and for FARMS, a project supporting cotton producers in Tajikistan.

### 3. RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT

For the past several years, CECI has developed a training course on a human rights-based development approach for the CIDA staff in Canada. The CIDA program in Egypt was the first to integrate this approach into programming as a pilot project in 2006. “From the lessons learned in that pilot project, this year we produced a training manual and facilitator’s guide that will allow local personnel to

assimilate the methodology we developed,” says Mrs. Bouchard. In the past two years, CECI has conducted a study-action project in close cooperation with Juan Albarracin-Jordin, a Bolivian anthropologist on the conditions of children working in mines in four Bolivian communities.

“The interest here lies in the fact that the children themselves analyze their situation,” says Mrs. Bouchard. “We called on social workers to lead game and leisure activities, in the course of which the children could express themselves.” The results were presented at a conference on children’s rights and international development at the University of Ottawa in June 2006. “Our presentation was very well received, notably because we learned that the children are very aware of the importance of the income they bring home. They don’t want child labour to be outlawed; they’d prefer to have better working conditions and access to health care and schooling,” notes Mrs. Bouchard.

Conclusions drawn from the study will be published in the coming year in a book on child labour from the publisher Palgrave Macmillan. CECI’s final report will be reworked to become a chapter of the English-language book. ●

R

ICE



**CECI works in many countries with agricultural organizations that are striving to reinforce local agriculture for the benefit of their communities. Here is a look at two support projects involving rice production in Haiti and Burkina Faso.**

### IN HAITI: HELPING FARMERS

For the past 20 years, the Haitian administration has pursued the dual objectives of supplying food-stuffs at the lowest possible cost and stimulating national production of rice. Market liberalization in 1987 created a massive influx of imported products, which caused prices to drop. Deteriorating irrigation infrastructures, lack of workforce, and the elimination of the national system of agricultural credits and fertilizer subsidies were among the factors that led to the present crisis.

The objective of the two-year *Projet d'appui à l'intensification agricole dans la vallée de l'Artibonite* (agricultural intensification program) is to gradually increase the production capacity of rice and rice seed and to diversify market gardening. In conjunction with the *Organisme de Développement de la Vallée de l'Artibonite*, the project, which has a budget of approximately CAN \$1.7 million, also includes plans to support the organization of farms and access to credit and factors of production. Financed by the *Inter-American Development Bank* via the *Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Ressources Naturelles et du Développement Rural (MARNDR)* of the Republic of Haiti, this 5,400-hectare area project is managed over a by three Canadian organizations: CECI, SOCODEVI (*Société de coopération pour le développement international*), and the TecSult Group, an engineering firm, together with the Haitian PRODEVA (*Promotion*

*of Self-Sufficient Development*) group, an organization dedicated to community development and education. Plots of land managed by the holders serve as grounds for training and farming demonstration techniques. Promoters note a major increase in rice yields with less fertilizer. Production of certified rice seeds is also enjoying a renewal in the valley. These results will help give a competitive edge to local rice and pave the way for marketing activities.

### IN BURKINA FASO: FIGHTING AGAINST DUMPING

Created in 2001, the *Comité interprofessionnel du riz du Burkina* (CIR-B) filled the void left in 1992 by the Burkinan government which, in order to comply with requirements of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, withdrew abruptly and completely from the rice industry, leaving the players high and dry. It didn't take long for production, distribution, and marketing problems to arise, problems which were aggravated by the dumping of poor-quality, very cheap imported rice. Concerned for the health of the Burkinabe people and the economic vitality of the rice industry, the CIR-B made it a priority to lobby the government for improved control of the quality and quantity of imported rice.

For its members, CIR-B organizes training sessions and workshops on rice transformation, as well as refinements on the traditional technique of parboiling rice. In the past two years, CIR-B's partnership with Unitertra has led to the publication of a study on marketing rice, and a market study on parboiled rice. The result of this intensive work has been a significant increase in the market share of Burkinan rice in the country's urban areas. ●

## NEPAL THREE CROPS A YEAR

*CECI's Community Groundwater Irrigation Sector Project (CGISP)* was launched in 1999 to improve the lives of poor, small-scale farmers in Nepal. Today, it has been called the most successful irrigation project in Nepal in a decade. And, in recognition of its success, CGISP is being extended by the *Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)*.

CGISP aims to increase agricultural productivity/production for farmers on a sustainable basis, and to improve small farmer income. It involves farmers in all project stages through a community-based/demand-driven approach.

CGISP is now part of Nepal's 20-year Agricultural Plan, helping to promote a comprehensive reform agenda for the agriculture/irrigation sector. "One of the most urgent tasks facing the Nepal government is the rehabilitation of the national economy, while ensuring benefits are equally shared by the poor," says Etienne Lamy, director of *Centre for Training, Study and Consultancy (CTSC)* and project manager of CGISP. "Models like CGISP, which successfully increase food security and the income of the poor, can make a major contribution to the renewed economy."

Under CGISP, farming communities form *Water Users Groups* — a powerful support network to manage and share local resources and contribute significantly to local economic growth — lay the foundation for a strong and vibrant civil society. CGISP has also underscored the important role civil society organizations play in enhancing transparency, accountability, and the effectiveness of service delivery by the government.

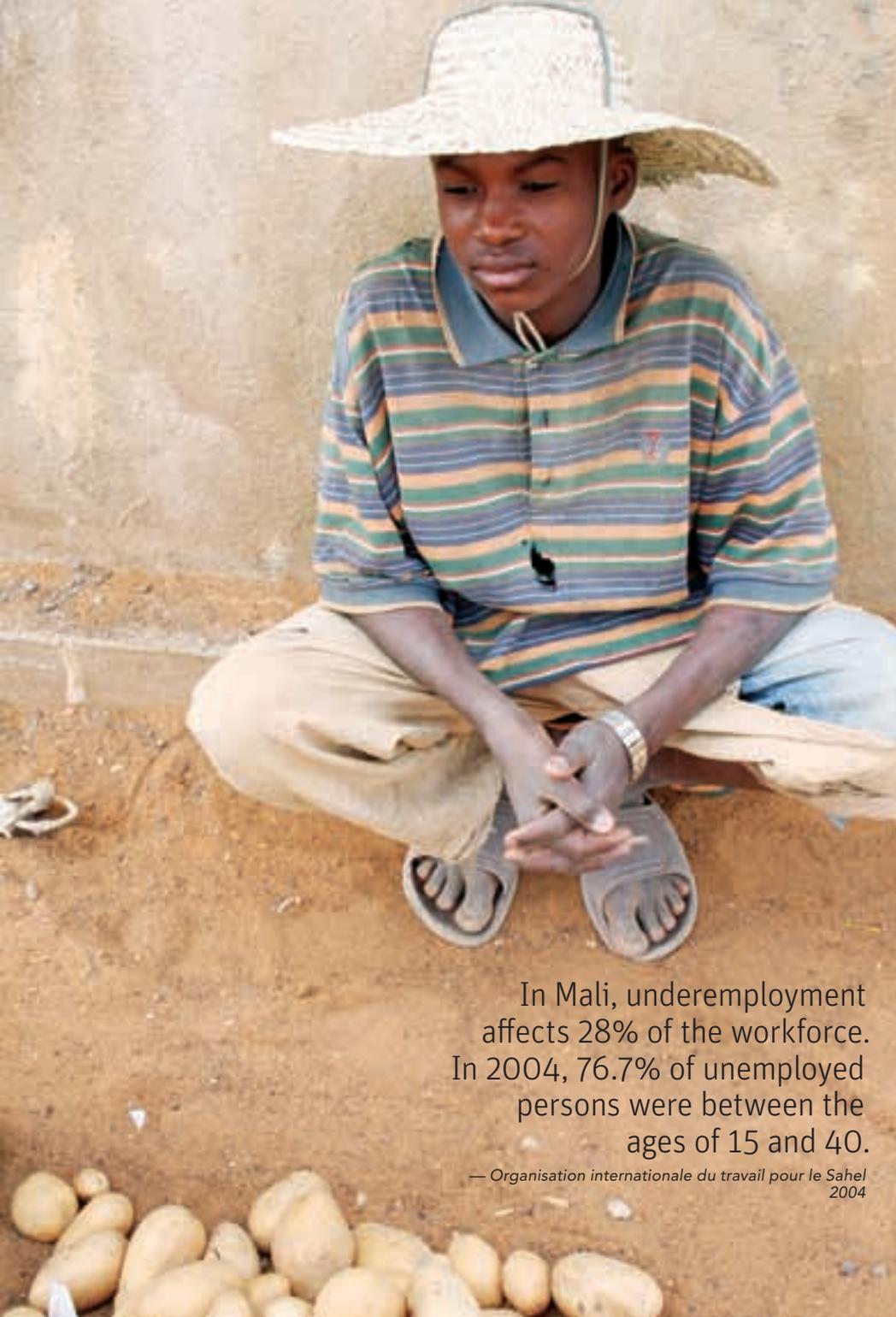
By joining a *Water Users Group* and accessing shallow tube well irrigation, a family of the Terai (lowland) area can grow three crops a year, instead of one, achieve food security, and increase cash income to

the point that education and health care are affordable. CGISP has installed 8,500 shallow tube well irrigation systems, benefiting about 45,000 hectares of land, and transforming the lives of more than 200,000 poor and marginalized people. The CGISP model is easily replicable; it could revolutionize the lives of millions. "CGISP offers a concrete alternative to improving the livelihood of Madhesis, and reinforces their sense of inclusion in the Nepali society," says Mr. Lamy. "This alone can help appease local tensions and contribute towards peace building."

CGISP, specifically designed to involve a range of stakeholders — from government agencies and financial institutions to NGOs and private sector service suppliers — also led to a change in the government's role from that of "direct implementer" to "facilitator, promoter." CECI's role in the project has been to provide technical assistance to the Government of Nepal for the implementation of project activities (funded through an ADB loan), and to support community mobilization efforts through a network of local NGO partners. CECI's participation in this project has been funded by the CIDA.

Benefits have also been derived from new collaborative public-private partnership models. Sub-contracts have been signed for social mobilization, agriculture extension, and capacity development training, and the government has worked with credit institutions to deliver credit services to targeted communities.

A study of CGISP's lessons learned and best practices is being conducted by CTSC. "This CGISP study will complement the quantitative impact assessment completed last year," says Mr. Lamy, "and will emphasize the social transformation wrought by poverty reduction through such initiatives as CGISP. ●



In Mali, underemployment affects 28% of the workforce. In 2004, 76.7% of unemployed persons were between the ages of 15 and 40.

— Organisation internationale du travail pour le Sahel 2004

## An Employment Future for Young People

### PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS IN THE AGRIFOODS INDUSTRY (PAJEA), MALI

The unemployment rate among young people has prompted a massive exodus toward Bamako, the capital, causing major economic and social upheaval. With an eye to giving young people a chance to stay in their rural surroundings, PAJEA strives to develop the employability of youths in the agrifoods sector, and to increase their access to raw materials, credits, and markets.

### THE PAJEA INITIATIVE COMPRISES THREE MAIN AREAS:

1. Support of entrepreneurship by young people through the development of skills, training, and personal guidance, as well as access to financing and investment opportunities.
2. Support in the development of the employability of young people by reinforcing the capacities of institutions and organizations responsible for national employment strategies for young people, so that their programs can be adapted to the needs of young entrepreneurs in the agrifoods sector.
3. Support in the development of a favourable national and regional environment through the creation of business networks between entrepreneurs in the agrifoods sector, and through reinforcement of the capacities for representation and dialogue on policies between economic players and regional/national authorities.

The PAJEA project is being developed within the framework of the Alliance agricole internationale, which combines initiatives by CECI, SOCODEVI (*Société de Coopération pour le Développement International*), and UPA-DI (*Union des producteurs agricoles – Développement international*). ●

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2 3



The *Sahakarya* project emphasizes the integration of community health, economic development, basic small-scale infrastructure, and the institutional development of community-based organization networks.

Working together to build self-reliant communities in the mid- and far-western regions of Nepal, using models that address specific development challenges of remote mountain communities, is the goal of CECI's *Sahakarya* project.

*Sahakarya* ("working together" in Nepali) began in 2003 as the continuation of several CECI initiatives launched in 1988. It focuses on improving the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of communities in poor remote hill/mountain areas. The project has been so well received that local partners and communities have asked CECI to propose a consolidation phase beyond 2008. When *Sahakarya* was launched, the Nepal conflict was raging, particularly in poor and remote rural areas. This forced the development of innovative approaches. CECI's plan targeted issues of remoteness, low population density, poor public facilities, and lack of access to public services and markets, etc.

Specifically, *Sahakarya's* "Integrated Multi-Sectoral Community Development" model emphasizes the integration of community health, economic development, basic small-scale infrastructure, and the institutional development of community-based organization (CBO) networks. Sustainable development in the context of mountainous regions requires that local CBO networks

connect with and integrate into national networks (e.g., savings and credit cooperatives), and that new partnerships between government entities and local communities be established.

"Integrating community health and economic development programs is more effective in reinforcing and optimizing the achievement of each component's results," says Marcel Monette, CECI's Program Officer, Asia Region. "Hence, the results are more sustainable." The partnership strategy of the project has enhanced local ownership of CBO networks and their national-level partners by making them the main actors in the design, delivery, and monitoring of project activities.

The project has involved 20 district-based NGOs in delivering health-related services, and 17 second-tier organizations/lead CBOs in delivering economic services. The latter are closely supported by their national level federations. In each case, formal agreements outlining expected results, actions plans, responsibilities and financial resources were signed. "Locally employed technical staff working with implementing partners turned out to be surprisingly effective in reaching remote communities in the conflict environment," says Mr. Monette. ▶



Progress has been impressive. After 3.5 years, 44,755 households (225,000 individuals) have been reached (149% of the initial objective). Work is underway in 804 mountain communities and with 126 village development committees, as compared to initial targets of 500 and 122 respectively. A total of 1,255 CBOs and eight second-tier CBO networks have had core management and service delivery capacities strengthened; linkages have been established with the *Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal* and the *Nepal Federation of Savings and Credit Co-operative Unions Ltd.*; and cooperation between CBOs and local government has also been improved.

On the health front for children under 5, diarrhea declined from 32.6% to 26.4% in the past 3.5 years, and a five-year target for reducing acute respiratory infections has been achieved (now 15% compared with a baseline of 19%). Moreover, the percentage of malnourished children under 5 is now 40.6% compared with a baseline of 46.8%. The project is also supporting the improvement of safer motherhood practices and addressing emerging issues such as HIV/AIDS and post-conflict psycho-social healing.

*Sahakarya's* support was crucial in helping people maintain their standard of living rather than falling into absolute poverty, says Mr. Monette. The health initiatives provided an additional benefit. "A focus on Dalits (so-called 'Untouchables') and other excluded groups was successfully implemented

through the health component, given the dire social conditions of groups that have been marginalized for centuries from the benefits of development," adds Mr. Monette.

Support for agriculture, irrigation, and credit led to a production increase of 53% and an average 37.4% hike in household income. Female participation in marketing products increased by 30.5%. Loans per year contracted by CBO members increased by 105%, and the repayment rate is at 98%.

*Sahakarya's* multidimensional approach, says Mr. Monette, has shown that the best development practices — transparency, participation, multi-stakeholders, social audits, accountability, demand-driven, responsive to local needs, maximizing use of local resources, inclusive, sensitive to cultural characteristics, flexible, adaptive, high level of ownership by participants and beneficiaries, people-centered — are also key elements for success in armed-conflict environments.

Some new issues are emerging in the current transition period, explains Mr. Monette. Government and donors are increasingly interested in the mid- and far-western regions. "New development projects with different implementation modalities (e.g., sustainable development versus humanitarian post-conflict relief) need more time to *Sahakarya's* staff and its partners in order to better coordinate projects to enhance cooperation and minimize contradictions between project approaches," says Mr. Monette. ●

## 20 YEARS IN ASIA

It was in 1987 that CECI's first Canadian volunteer arrived in western Nepal to work with local partners on community development initiatives. Twenty years later, CECI is sharing its lessons learned.

"We have successfully tested multi-sectoral community development models that work with and through local organizations and have established a national and regional office with a dedication to quality, commitment, and pride in its work," says Julia Sanchez, CECI's Regional Director for Asia. "And we have designed and tested a number of models that have inspired other countries, regions, and development organizations." Countries where CECI has introduced similar programs include India, Vietnam, and Tajikistan.

CECI's Nepal-based projects focus on reducing rural poverty and social discrimination, improving natural resource management and strengthening local governance.

The timing of CECI's involvement in Nepal has been significant considering the political transformation, which the country has struggled with since 1990 and the ongoing tensions between the government and the Maoists. CECI has developed conflict-

sensitive approaches that have allowed for continued support for community development efforts, says Mrs. Sanchez. These approaches are now mainstreamed in all of CECI's projects in Nepal.

CECI has also demonstrated that promoting community-based organizations (CBOs) is a sustainable way to foster development in remote rural areas, and that linking CBOs with regional federations and national bodies is what ensures sustainability.

Encouraging a new local governance model is key to ensuring that civil society plays a larger role in all decision-making processes in a new post-conflict Nepal. Resentment over a lack of participation in, and socio-economic benefits from the "democratic" system implemented decades ago fuelled the insurgency that lasted for over a decade.

Moving forward, CECI seeks to replicate successful community-development projects in more districts and to strengthen programming in the governance sector, says Mrs. Sanchez. "While local governance has been a cross-cutting theme in all our projects, the current political context makes it a particularly relevant time to work with our partners on governance issues in a more specific way." ●

# Financial statements

AND NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

March 31, 2007

## 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, 2007 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, 2007 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 7, 2007

## STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES

YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2007

	2007	2006
	\$	\$
<b>REVENUE</b>		
CIDA - Partnership	<b>6,297,972</b>	5,914,596
CIDA - Bilateral and other	<b>6,673,387</b>	10,006,887
Other funding organizations	<b>9,001,737</b>	7,985,036
Donations	<b>1,366,169</b>	1,621,548
Contributed services (NOTE 8)	<b>3,238,478</b>	3,737,812
Other revenue	<b>480,563</b>	586,146
	<b>27,058,306</b>	29,852,025
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Offices and departments	<b>6,108,718</b>	5,824,565
Programs	<b>17,091,732</b>	19,779,236
Contributed services (NOTE 8)	<b>3,238,478</b>	3,737,812
Interest on long-term debt	<b>192,494</b>	191,457
Amortization	<b>314,081</b>	316,974
	<b>26,945,503</b>	29,850,044
<b>EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES</b>	<b>112,803</b>	1,981

## STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2007

	Invested in capital assets	Restricted for endowment purposes	Unrestricted	TOTAL 2007	TOTAL 2006
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
		(NOTE 7)			
<b>BALANCE, BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	<b>1,491,581</b>	<b>8,385</b>	<b>763,936</b>	<b>2,263,902</b>	2,291,921
(Deficiency) excess of revenue over expenses	<b>(307,016)*</b>	-	<b>419,819</b>	<b>112,803</b>	1,981
Release of endowment contributions	-	-	-	-	(30,000)
Investment in capital assets	<b>244,244</b>	-	<b>(244,244)</b>	-	-
Reimbursement of long-term debt	<b>140,050</b>	-	<b>(140,050)</b>	-	-
Disposal of capital assets	<b>(7,544)</b>	-	<b>7,544</b>	-	-
<b>BALANCE, END OF YEAR</b>	<b>1,561,315</b>	<b>8,385</b>	<b>807,005</b>	<b>2,376,705</b>	2,263,902

\* Including amortization of capital assets of \$314,081, amortization of deferred contributions related to the capital assets of \$6,130 and a gain on disposal of capital assets of \$935.

# BALANCE SHEET

AS AT MARCH 31, 2007

	2007	2006
	\$	\$
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Current assets		
Cash	4,937,171	3,702,330
Accounts receivable (net of deferred contributions of \$305,840; \$449,070 in 2006)	804,048	793,850
Advances to partners	1,007,738	639,254
Prepaid expenses	312,507	217,676
	<b>7,061,464</b>	5,353,110
Capital assets (NOTE 3)	4,510,269	4,586,715
	<b>11,571,733</b>	9,939,825
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	1,420,718	936,450
Deferred contributions (net of accounts receivable of \$1,484,723; \$1,291,455 in 2006)	4,825,356	3,644,339
Current portion of long-term debt (NOTE 5)	145,641	139,955
	<b>6,391,715</b>	4,720,744
Deferred contributions related to capital assets (NOTE 6)	123,359	129,489
Long-term debt (NOTE 5)	2,679,954	2,825,690
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Invested in capital	1,561,315	1,491,581
Restricted for endowment purposes (NOTE 7)	8,385	8,385
Unrestricted	807,005	763,936
	<b>2,376,705</b>	2,263,902
	<b>11,571,733</b>	9,939,825

IV  
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V

# STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2007

	2007	2006
	\$	\$
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Excess of revenue over expenses	112,803	1,981
Adjustments for:		
Gain on disposal of capital assets	(935)	-
Amortization	314,081	316,974
Amortization of deferred contributions	(6,130)	(6,129)
	<b>419,819</b>	312,826
Changes in non-cash operating working capital items (NOTE 9)	<b>1,191,772</b>	(326,861)
	<b>1,611,591</b>	(14,035)
<b>FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Increase in long-term debt	-	383,580
Reimbursement of long-term debt	(140,050)	(536,607)
	<b>(140,050)</b>	(153,027)
<b>INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Disposal of capital assets	7,544	-
Acquisition of capital assets	(244,244)	(149,501)
	<b>(236,700)</b>	(149,501)
Increase (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	<b>1,234,841</b>	(316,563)
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	<b>3,702,330</b>	4,018,893
<b>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS, END OF YEAR</b>	<b>4,937,171</b>	3,702,330
<b>SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION</b>		
Interest paid	<b>192,839</b>	190,319

# NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2007

## 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) Capital assets

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%

### d) 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.

### e) Investment in joint ventures

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

### f) 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.

### 3. CAPITAL ASSETS

	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Accumulated amortization</b>	<b>2007 Net book value</b>	2006 Net book value
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>TANGIBLE ASSETS</b>				
Land	<b>869,445</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>869,445</b>	869,445
Buildings	<b>3,245,623</b>	<b>404,824</b>	<b>2,840,799</b>	2,895,527
Furniture and equipment	<b>1,559,249</b>	<b>1,311,012</b>	<b>248,237</b>	248,459
Library	<b>542,607</b>	<b>189,910</b>	<b>352,697</b>	379,827
Audio-visual equipment	<b>35,719</b>	<b>35,013</b>	<b>706</b>	881
Automotive equipment	<b>363,545</b>	<b>207,314</b>	<b>156,231</b>	128,910
	<b>6,616,188</b>	<b>2,148,073</b>	<b>4,468,115</b>	4,523,049
<b>INTANGIBLE ASSETS</b>				
Software	<b>147,592</b>	<b>105,438</b>	<b>42,154</b>	63,666
	<b>6,763,780</b>	<b>2,253,511</b>	<b>4,510,269</b>	4,586,715

### 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

	2007	2006
	\$	\$
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	<b>889,525</b>	934,375
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	<b>351,188</b>	375,377
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	<b>1,358,006</b>	1,414,729
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	<b>208,126</b>	216,164
Loan payable in annual instalments of \$6,250 plus interest, maturing on December 15, 2009, bearing interest at 3% in 2007, 4% in 2008 and 5% in 2009	<b>18,750</b>	25,000
	<b>2,825,595</b>	2,965,645
Current portion	<b>145,641</b>	139,955
	<b>2,679,954</b>	2,825,690

VIII  
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IX

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

	\$
2008	<b>145,641</b>
2009	<b>152,355</b>
2010	<b>159,195</b>
2011	<b>160,247</b>
2012	<b>167,815</b>

## 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:

	2007	2006
	\$	\$
Balance, beginning of year	129,489	135,618
Amortization for the year	6,130	6,129
Balance, end of year	123,359	129,489

## 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 represents the value of contributions made by participants to volunteer cooperation programs. This value was revised following a CECI study conducted in 2006. The study takes into account the changes in the volunteer cooperation 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

	2007	2006
	\$	\$
Accounts receivable	(10,198)	477,791
Advances to partners	(368,484)	326,587
Prepaid expenses	(94,831)	(139,325)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	484,268	161,899
Deferred contributions	1,181,017	(1,153,813)
	1,191,772	(326,861)

## 10. COMMITMENTS

The Centre is committed under renewable, non-cancellable leases for equipment that expire until January 2012. The total amount payable of \$104,607 is detailed as follows:

	\$
2008	<b>24,264</b>
2009	<b>22,657</b>
2010	<b>22,657</b>
2011	<b>22,657</b>
2012	<b>12,372</b>

## 11. CONTINGENCIES

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, 2007, the signed agreements totalled approximately \$116,000,000 and expire through January 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.

## 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.

### Interest rate risk

The majority of long-term debt bears fixed interest rates. Consequently, the cash flow exposure is not significant.

### Fair value

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

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

The fair value of long-term debt approximates its carrying value due to its recent negotiation.

## 13. COMPARATIVE FIGURES

Certain comparative figures have been reclassified to conform to the current year's presentation.

A



BC

## INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON INFORMAL EDUCATION AND LITERACY

Basic education and literacy continue to be the poor cousins of budget allocations around the world. A great many projects supported by CECI include a literacy component, as this constitutes an essential condition to the elimination of poverty, the reduction in infant mortality, and gender equality. Literacy training contributes in a concrete way to development, peace, and democracy.

“Governments and civil society must find leaders to champion this priority, increase budgets, and facilitate access to literacy programs,” says Pierre Racicot, CECI Chairman of the Board. “Otherwise, we’ll continue to see failures that will be attributed to a lack of democracy and inferior governance, which are prevalent in any case in an uneducated population. An educated society is better able to develop its collective capacity to deal with the challenges of modern life. Education fosters participation in civil society, which can put pressure on governments to expand health-care and education services and to meet other basic human needs.”

CECI organized the *International Forum on Informal Education and Literacy* (FORIENF) in Niamey, Niger, in conjunction with the *Education for All network of Niger*, and the *Department of Basic Education of Niger*, held from January 8 to 11, 2007. The event was a major contribution by CECI to the *United Nations’ Literacy Decade 2003-2012*, and the “*Education for All*” world-wide campaign. “After years of work in international development, I came to understand that development is impossible if people are illiterate,” says Mr. Racicot. “During the Forum, this struck me as patently obvious.

It is deplorable that since 30 years, so little has been achieved. Education budgets devoted to non-formal literacy are less than 1% in most of the countries represented at the Forum, when in fact some 75% of their populations are illiterate.”

FORIENF convened more than 100 literacy professionals from several African countries (Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Guinea, Morocco) along with Canadian partners, the *Fédération canadienne pour l’alphabétisation en français*, the *Regroupement des groupes populaires en alphabétisation du Québec*, and the *Richelieu International Foundation*. Information exchanges between participants raised debates about the strategic, political, and financial stakes involved in basic education and prompted knowledge-sharing on innovative literacy practices.

The CECI team presented its “contract out” concept, in which the State mandates civilian partners (non-profit operators, or NGOs) to deliver literacy services. Says Yahouza Ibrahim, Director of CECI Niger: “Noteworthy progress has been made since the implementation of the ‘contract out’ strategy; registrations by women at literacy centres, which had been low, have been completely reversed, drop-out rates have eased off, and success rates have increased significantly.”

A brochure and film were produced after this international gathering, which benefited from organizational support from the Uniterra programme and financial support from UNICEF and CIDA. ●

To obtain copies, please contact the CECI publications service at: [publication@ceci.ca](mailto:publication@ceci.ca)

Reading, writing, and counting...  
800 million people in the  
world lack these basic skills;  
two-third of them are women  
and 104 million are children.

## LITERACY: BRIDGES BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH

The purpose of the *Basic Education Programme in Niger* (PRODEF) is to provide basic education to 65,000 people throughout the country by 2008. The program is founded on north-south and south-south alliances in order to generate discussion on problems, models, and success stories. The *Réseau international et solidaire d'opérateurs et d'acteurs en alphabétisation*, with which CECI works closely, collaborates on this initiative.

Exchange missions are also held between Canadian and African organizations. The results have been encouraging and inspiring for northern and southern participants alike, says Martine Fillion of the Montreal-based organization *Atelier des lettres*, and representative of the *Regroupement des groupes populaires en alphabétisation du Québec*. "In spite of very different interventions in the field, our battles are the same: poverty and exclusion," says Mrs. Fillion.

"Furthermore, we share the same principles and values. Whether we are in Niamey, Dakar or Montreal, literacy is not an end in itself but rather a tool with which to take action. When this was proved to me, it became obvious that we could work together — that is, to share our know-how." ●





# RI GHTS

## WOMEN AND UNTOUCHABLES IN NEPAL

### A Long Battle for Equality

One-fifth of the population of Nepal is made up of the Untouchable caste, the Dalits. Although both male and female Dalits are discriminated against, women face two-fold discrimination. “Nepalese culture is patriarchal. Furthermore, Dalit women live with conjugal violence and sexual harassment, along with such traditional practices as forced marriages,” explains FEDO director, Durga Sob.

Based in Kathmandu, the *Feminist Dalit Organization* (FEDO) is present in 27 districts in Nepal. The organization lobbies government authorities and social services agencies for the social inclusion of Dalits. Its activities and projects are varied, all with the aim of battling more effectively against the social exclusion and poverty of women. For example, a micro-credit program allows women to start up a small business. “We know that prejudices will not be erased overnight,” says Mrs. Sob. “The caste system has been in place for centuries. We are asking people to think about their actions and their repercussions on marginalized communities.” The collaboration of a Uniterra volunteer specializing

in social inclusion and gender equality allows FEDO to offer complete training to its employees in Kathmandu; those staffers will then train workers, both male and female, in other districts. “The support of Uniterra allows us to expand our network and obtain support from other international organizations fighting for the rights and citizenship of women,” adds Mrs. Sob.

FEDO has been very active in a year that has seen the adoption of a new constitution and parliamentary elections in Nepal, the first since 1999. The *Jana Awaaj* project — “the voice of the people” in Nepalese — fosters the participation of excluded communities, women in particular, in the process of forming the new parliamentary assembly. From national to local structures, the actions undertaken within the framework of *Jana Awaaj* aim to influence the content of the constitution so that it be fair and inclusive. “The new constitutional document must take into consideration the rights of Dalit men and women and stipulate that discriminatory behaviour will not be tolerated,” explains the FEDO director. ●

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## WOMEN SHEA BUTTER PRODUCERS IN WEST AFRICA

### Focus on Sharing and Exchange

For 15 years, CECI has worked with the women who make shea butter in Burkina Faso. Today, the *Union des groupements de productrices des produits de karité of Sissili/Ziro* (UGPPK) and the Songtaaba Association boast more than 4,000 producers/members. CECI has also supported shea butter producers in Mali since 2001, and those in Niger and Guinea for the past two years. To foster exchanges between the groups, inter-

Africa meetings were held in 2006-2007. Élise Guiro, a UGPPK collaborator, travelled to Guinea in 2006 to share her expertise with her counterparts. In March 2007, a group of eight consultants and producers from Niger visited the UGPPK to learn more about the union’s organizational structure and to take inspiration from the principle of ‘one-shop layout’ in distribution centres. ►

This exchange trip was made possible with assistance from Quebec's Department of International Relations and the Uniterra programme.

The delegation from Niger made the most of the occasion to attend co-development meetings for the *Initiative Karité* in Ouagadougou on March 26 and 27, 2007, a joint initiative of CECI and seven Canadian international cooperation volunteer agencies. A market study of six countries in West Africa was presented at this meeting; its aim to help producers determine the best way to market their products locally, as exports, or through certified fair-trade networks.

Mali, Guinea, and Ghana were also at the table. "Each group of producers brought its products and compared them with the others," explains Philippe Fragnier, CECI coordinator of the shea butter program. "This allowed them to exchange information on transformation techniques and to see new product packaging from the Siby cooperative in Mali, created with the help of volunteer Amélie Binette." The latter worked on strategies to help the cooperative market its butter in Bamako supermarkets. "Thanks to Amélie's marketing know-how, the income of Siby shea butter producers increased by 500% in one year," says Élisée Sidibé, secretary with the *Association Conseil pour le Développement*. ●

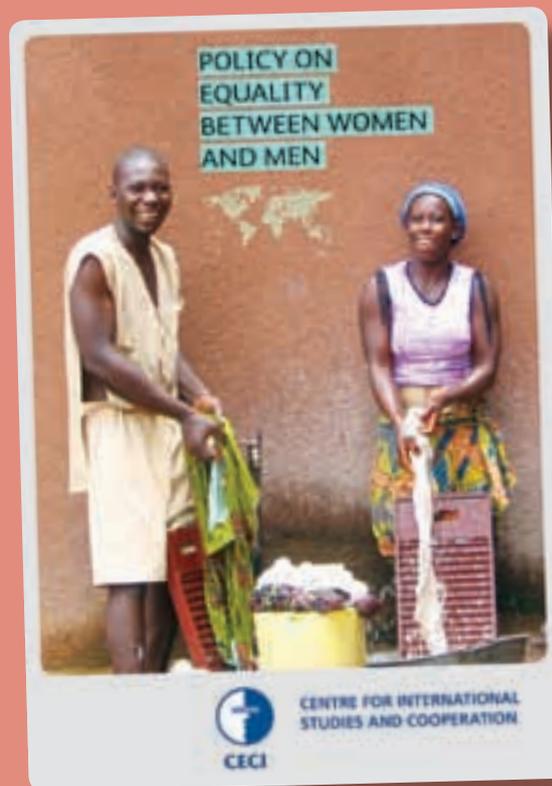


Inequality between women and men continues around the world. Within the past year, CECI updated its 12-year-old Policy on Women and Development. The result of a process of consultation within the organization and out in the field, the new *Policy on Equality Between Women and Men* was finalized in March 2007. The key words are open, active and vigilant.

“The promotion of women’s rights is at the very core of CECI’s priorities,” says H  l  ne Lagac  , with CECI’s Centre for Training, Study, and Consultancy. With the revised policy, CECI’s intention is to act within the current context and deal with new challenges of gender equality. The policy’s objective is to contribute to changing inequitable relations between the sexes and to ensure that CECI’s interventions benefit women as well as men. For example, the policy involves establishing specific measures to facilitate the significant participation of women and excluded persons along with consideration of their needs and interests.

“No development can be possible if it does not foster the autonomy of women and men alike,” says Mrs. Lagac  . To ensure CECI staff are cognizant of this policy of inclusion from the outset, the organization has established several mechanisms. “Among other things, we have to circulate information, provide analysis tools, both internally and in the field,” adds Mrs. Lagac  .

Some examples of how the policy is being translated into actions include: training for new CECI personnel and volunteers; information sheets containing specific issues linked to gender and development stakes, including a series on equality and HIV/AIDS launched recently on the CECI website; and the development of a gender and development analysis grid. The grid, for example, is an integral part of CECI’s information management system and ensures



that each project manager identifies and clarifies the stakes that particularly affect women in their project. “With this policy, CECI is reaffirming its institutional desire to work ‘resolutely for women’s rights,’” says Mrs. Lagac  . “The organization as a whole is thus renewing its commitment to this vision with the Board of Directors at its helm, and the gender and development committee taking charge of daily follow-up.” ●

P



EACE

## CIVIL SOCIETY AT THE HEART OF DEMOCRACY AND PEACE

**A balanced democracy, both before and after elections, requires the establishment of a well-organized civil society able to assume its role as a representative of the people. In Haiti, in the Great Lakes of Africa, and in Nepal, CECI teams and their partners work toward civilian participation and the reinforcement of local organizations.**

After years of conflict, Nepal this year took a new step toward social peace and democracy. If that peace is to be lasting, says Thérèse Bouchard, CECI specialist, Human Rights, Peace and Democratic Development, the people must be part of the peace process. “Local people want to be heard. A great many citizens feel that they’ve always been kept on the fringes. Now, they want to be heard and participate in building a new constitution and electing their representatives.” The challenge is to find a way to reach out to the remotest corners of the country and to educate the people about their civic rights and duties.

“Marginalized communities are hard to reach, and yet they are interested in being part of the national agenda,” adds Mrs. Bouchard, noting that CECI works with *Federation of Community Forestry Users, Nepal* (FECOFUN), a CECI partner and the national association that has the greatest reach, particularly among poor and marginalized communities. Educating voters on their duties and civic rights is a major challenge, but education is an essential condition to lasting peace and sustainable development. Through training activities, public consultations, and discussion meetings, the *Jana Awaaj* project — which

means “voice of the people” in Nepalese — supports the participation of those who are excluded from the democratic process.

Since 2002, CECI has supported *Action citoyenne pour la paix* (ACIPA), which manages projects aimed at raising awareness of concrete commitments to be made for peace and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. ACIPA conducts its activities in Burundi, Rwanda, and the provinces of North and South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo. ACIPA works with women, young people, local decision-makers and entire communities to help promote peace through education about democratic values, respect for human rights, and access to diversified, objective information.

From the initiatives developed by the communities, social, and political changes have gradually emerged as foundations for the stabilization and development of the region. Furthermore, ACIPA has allowed civilian organizations to improve their own structures and, most of all, to get to know each other and work together toward a strengthened democracy.

The creation of national committees in the three countries who have joined forces in the *Dynamique de la société civile sur l'action commune* (DYSCAC), has helped strengthen civil society and allowed it to develop common advocacy, thus influencing political decisions. DYSCAC has become a key local participant in the work being accomplished by the *International Conference for Peace in the Great Lakes Region*, initiated by the United Nations and the African Union. ►



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In Haiti, poverty and uncertainty imperil development initiatives. The country has always experienced social tension and armed violence. There has always been a general climate of distrust between civilian organizations and government authorities. The project *Promotion de la paix et Éducation à la citoyenneté démocratique en Haïti* works to promote the principles of citizenship, individual rights, and negotiation by dialogue for conflict resolution.

In the communes of Ouanaminthe, Mont-Organisé, Capotille and Carice, CECI activities have managed to encourage more active participation by citizens who are informed and involved, particularly women and young people. The project's aim is to create concrete conditions that will foster a culture of civic participation, which is so essential to equitable, sustainable development of the region. ●

## CRISIS PREVENTION: A KEY TO DEVELOPMENT

**In Vietnam as in Niger, prevention and active participation by communities are essential to long-term safety and sustainable development.**

Food safety is defined as “continuous access for all persons to the foods required for a healthy, active life.” In the grip of cyclical crises of famine, Niger faces a major challenge with regard to food safety. The country has experienced strong population growth and unstable production conditions that have had serious consequences.

### IN NIGER

This year, CECI and its partners undertook the first phase of a more global intervention with a view to reinforcing Niger's food safety. Monitoring committees and food safety plans have been established in 25 villages in the communes of Tebaram and Aboukou-nou in the region of Tahoua — the area most affected by the food crisis. These groups draft their own food safety plans and create community food banks, which are managed by local committees.

The vicious circle of food emergencies demonstrates the importance of post-crisis action in order to decrease the vulnerability of people to production conditions and other problems, such as droughts and natural disasters. CECI, whose expertise and experience are founded on strengthening its partners' capacities and on the principle of sustainable development, strives to create preventive strategies and mobilization of resources for lasting solutions. ►





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## IN VIETNAM

CECI has been a presence in Vietnam for 10 years, operating in some 60 communities especially vulnerable to seasonal phenomena — weather that is increasingly severe due to climate changes. Since the terrible flood of 1999, CECI has assisted the poorest segment of the population of central Vietnam, in the regions of Hué and Danang, with their preparations for natural disasters. CECI workers bring together local authorities and inhabitants of at-risk communities to establish emergency plans. Many projects have led to the development of action and evacuation plans to minimize the damage caused by natural disasters. Open consultations on the use and occupation of the territory have enabled many families to be better prepared and equipped to deal with natural disasters.

Early last October, hurricane Xangsane — “elephant,” in Lao — struck Vietnam, wreaking the brunt of its devastation on the regions of Hué and Danang. Over 240,000 homes were destroyed and hundreds of fishing boats were swept away by the waves. Many thousands of hectares of farmland were ravaged. Thousands of children, women, and men suddenly found themselves without shelter or any means of subsistence. Still, the relatively few fatalities would seem to indicate that, in spite of everything, these people were able to better protect themselves from this natural disaster.

CECI’s emergency assistance program is focused on: distribution of food, rice seeds, and vegetables; and reconstruction of homes for the most devastated. To respond to the challenges wrought by the terrible effects of climate change on the most impoverished populations, CECI advocates the active participation of the first potential victims by ensuring that they are involved in the decision-making process and in the implementation of the evacuation, risk-minimization, and adaptation plans. ●

## ACTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE RESULTS IN CONFLICT ZONES

**CECI has developed significant expertise over the years in staging interventions in conflict zones. The organization particularly illustrated itself during the course of three projects conducted in 2006–2007.**

In January 2007, in Nepal, CECI held the *International Conference on Sustainable Development in Conflict Environments: Challenges and Opportunities*, convening participants from Nepal, Canada, the United States, Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, Iraq, Kashmir and Pakistan. The main themes of the conference dealt with development challenges in conflict zones, the importance of collective participation, and the promotion of human rights from a perspective of social change in favour of peace. The conference was a forum for many moments of significant exchanges of information. Participants soon discovered that in spite of different contexts, the groups involved are faced with common development challenges on the road to a more equitable, human world.

In February 2007, CECI organized a meeting between Canadian and Salvadoran organizations working with delinquent youths on the occasion of a visit from its Salvadoran partner, the *National Public Security Council* — a major player in the prevention of juvenile delinquency and rehabilitation in El Salvador. The groups discussed young people involved in street gangs as well as approaches to prevention and rehabilitation. In northern and southern countries alike, exchanges of expertise reinforce the practices of organizations working with young people. “There are many similarities in the situations seen in Guatemala, El Salvador, and North America,” notes Sylvain Flamand, director of intervention for the Montreal organization *Dans la rue*.

Included in last year’s highlights were the first ceremonies marking the destruction of weapons as part of

the *Projet sous-régional sur les armes légères et de petit calibre*. The gun destruction operation took place in the border zones of Guinea-Bissau, Senegal, Gambia, and Guinea. The melted metal from the weapons was recovered and used to build a sculpture on the theme of the battle against arms proliferation. “These were moving moments,” says Suzanne Dumouchel, project manager for CECI–Africa. “It was a way to proclaim, loud and clear that people are taking their own safety in hand and dare to speak openly about the problem of weapons in their community.” ●



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NORTH

SOUTH

Uniterra is a five-year programme. At midway of its commitment, Uniterra has strengthened the capacity and contributed to the development of 1,050 organizations. The past year has seen stronger than ever efforts from a force of 409 volunteers.

For the past three years, the Uniterra programme has brought together citizens, Canadian and southern partner organizations, and private businesses working to meet the *UN Millennium Development Goals*. In Africa, Asia, and South America, Uniterra volunteers from the North and South work daily to combat poverty and exclusion by supporting organizations in the field.

In Canada, the programme conducts awareness-raising activities on stakes involved in international development and supports groups that lobby for increased Canadian budgets for international aid and fairer trade regulations. Uniterra is the result of a partnership between CECI and *World University Service of Canada* (WUSC).

Uniterra is a five-year programme. At midway of its commitment, Uniterra has strengthened the capacity and contributed to the development of 1,050 organizations with the support of volunteers and partners in Canada and in the South. The past year has seen stronger than ever efforts from a force of 409 volunteers. “As a result of different formulas, we have more participants than expected. Overall, Uniterra was able to support more organizations,” says Sylvain Matte, Uniterra programme director.

“We are also fostering exchanges between southern partners. The sharing of knowledge and solutions allows for the creation of strategies suited to their realities,” says Mr. Matte, adding that with partners defining their needs more clearly, the organization is able to find the most competent people for the tasks at hand. “For example, an organization in the

agrifoods industry wants to improve its quality-control system. Our challenge is to recruit a volunteer with those specific skills.”

Other themes are potentially fruitful for partnerships between Canadian and southern organizations. “Here, I’m thinking mainly about the issues involved in literacy, which is a problem in Canada and in partner countries,” says Mr. Matte. “Working relationships are created between literacy organizations in Canada and in the South. The *International Forum on Non-Formal Education and Literacy in Niger* was a highlight last year. Our work consists in not only spreading the word about the stakes in the South, but also involvement and action in Canada.” Exchanges between organizations in Nova Scotia and Malawi, in the agricultural sector, or the health-care partnership between Malian organizations and the *Réseau québécois des intervenantes et intervenants communautaires*, are other concrete examples.

During the last year, Uniterra continued its support of national and international social economy networking activities and initiatives, particularly the *Intercontinental Network for the Social and Solidarity Economy* (RIPESS). “Social economy is an entrepreneurial response to the global battle against poverty and social issues. It is a means to take charge of communities with the development of their sustainable, integrated management in mind,” says Mr. Matte. “The *Sommet de l’économie sociale au Québec*, held in November 2006, was an occasion to showcase the know-how developed here at home, and to reiterate the contribution we can make internationally.” ▶

The Uniterra programme paved the way for participation at the Summit of southern representatives and a chance to think actively about international solidarity. “I learned a great deal during my stay, from contacts within organizations and discussions with people I met at the *Social Economy and Fair Trade Salon*,” says Bissan Hawa Coulibaly, President of the *Association pour la valorisation des textiles*, and secretary responsible for the handicrafts section of *Réseau d’appui à la promotion de l’économie sociale et solidaire* in Mali.

A three-week stay in Quebec in November 2006 gave her a clearer understanding of the tastes of Canadian consumers and an opportunity to develop contacts and partnerships with organizations with a view to marketing textile products made in Mali. Mrs. Coulibaly was part of a delegation of four southern volunteers within the Uniterra programme who attended the *Saison de l’économie sociale*, and the AQOCI’s *Journées québécoises de la solidarité internationale*.

#### **DIFFERENT VOLUNTEERING FORMULAS FOR DIFFERENT NEEDS**

To meet its partners’ needs with even greater efficiency, Uniterra uses innovative, diversified, and flexible approaches adapted to the situations of its volunteers and partners. “Depending on the context, a volunteer can go into the field several times

for a year or two; others will take on a mandate of two years, and still other formulas are possible. Our concern is to determine the best response to needs,” explains Mr. Matte.

*Leave for Change* is another eloquent illustration of Uniterra activities. Employees on vacation from northern countries put their professional skills to use in a development project in the South. Through its participation in *Leave for Change*, and its support of an employee who wants to donate two or three weeks to the international cause, a participating company is making a socially responsible gesture. The results garnered by *Leave for Change* are fast, concrete, and useful, while giving volunteers an introduction to international cooperation.

“I had an unforgettable experience that I’d repeat in a heartbeat,” says Stéphanie Boucher, human resources consultant with *Samson, Bélair/Deloitte & Touche* in Montreal. Mrs. Boucher spent two weeks in Bamako, Mali; her mandate was to give human resources training to appointed officials of community health centres Uniterra’s partners. “The people I trained were very satisfied with the new knowledge I gave them and told me that my presence was beneficial. I hope they will put what they learned to good use. Also, I met very interesting people who helped me discover Malian culture. I came back home with many wonderful memories and new friends I plan to keep in touch with, even though they are thousands of miles away.” ●



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**WORKING TOWARD  
MILLENNIUM  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

**Eradicate extreme poverty  
and hunger**

**Achieve universal primary  
education**

**Promote gender equality  
and empower women**

**Reduce child mortality**

**Improve maternal health**

**Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria,  
and other diseases**

**Ensure environmental sustainability**

**Develop a global partnership  
for development**



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## AGRICULTURE

As part of CECI's partnership with the *Fédération de la relève agricole du Québec*, seven 20-something adults specialized in agriculture were commissioned to help young market gardeners in Mali with their daily work growing potatoes and onions, and also to organize plots of land equipped with an irrigation system adapted to off-season crops. The interns also led training workshops on the diversification and intensification of crop production and on the operation of associations and cooperatives. Their two months in the field ended with the creation of a support program that took into consideration the constraints of working with limited resources.

Naturally, this leave involved cultural exchanges based on the realities of Quebec and Malian living environments. Volunteer **SAËL GAGNÉ-OUELLET**, a student in an international studies program, says, "Being in the field gave me a better understanding of international cooperation." The leave was made possible through the Uniterro programme and *Québec sans frontières* (QSF), a programme operated by the **ministère des Relations Internationales du Québec**. CECI has just renewed a three-year agreement with that ministry to organize postings in Africa.

## VOLUNTEER, EDUCATE, ADVOCATE

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT**

“I’ve been in Guinea for six months. Time goes by fast. I haven’t been able to see everything yet, but enough to know that Guinea is a country of contrasts. As a volunteer for *Guinea’s fishermen’s union*, I’ve had the chance to meet people who, in spite of the daily battle they face to feed their families, find time to improve living conditions for others. The way CECI-Guinea works in the field is very stimulating for the partners. Each of them, in tandem with CECI, has a part to play in combating poverty. Some gestures can be made on their own, but others have more impact when combined.”

**CLAIRE ROBITAILLE**

Micro-financing Advisor

**SOCIAL ECONOMY**

“I want to thank you for your marketing evaluation. Your networking advice helped me attract new customers.”

**CARLOS BORGES**, President of the Guatemalan Exporters Association, to Marc Pelletier, Uniterra volunteer in Guatemala, marketing and productivity support.

**WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT**

“Our collaboration with Audrey Baril, volunteer consultant, was a great help in our lobbying efforts to fight violence against women in Haiti. Mrs. Baril assisted us in fine-tuning our update report on cases of violence reported among our 21 women’s shelters (*Douvanjou*). Complementary data processing tools were supplied, which helped us improve the presentation of our report. The SOFA team was also able to take a more collective approach to the production of the report.”

**OLGA BENOIT**, Coordinator, Axe de lutte contre les violences faites aux femmes, SOFA (Solidarité Fanm Ayisyen)

“My cooperation experience in Haiti was extremely inspiring. I had the chance to discover a country, a culture, a special work environment and interesting, passionate people. The time I spent in Haiti opened my eyes to the world. In a document produced in 2002, SOFA estimated that eight out of ten Haitian women are victims of violence. The contributions made in the battle against violence have been crucial. My work with SOFA was designed to support the organization’s female workers in streamlining certain aspects of their lobbying activities. The report on cases of violence recorded in SOFA’s shelters and on the team’s guidance efforts was improved, both in terms of presentation, structure, style and content. Concrete recommendations on improving the production and dissemination of the report are also in the hands of SOFA. I return from Haiti with much more knowledge about interventions and intercultural relations.”

**AUDREY BARIL**, Women’s Interventions Advisor

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