

Canadian perspectives on global justice

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# The Upstream Journal



## GRAFFITI ART

AND OTHER

## COMMUNICATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

STREET ART & SOCIAL COMMENTARY + AUSTRALIA ABORIGINEE TELEVISION + COLOMBIA RADIO + JAMAICA SHIPPING CONTAINER TURNS TECH CENTRE + 5 WORST PLACES FOR MEDIA FREEDOM + LE GRAND SAUT TECHNOLOGIQUE + WORLD BANK - NO APPETITE FOR RIGHTS RULES

\$2



*"I am trying to find  
my city's potential for more street art,  
which can attract people,  
and not let them be sorry for the clean wall."*



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## ***In this issue:***

# **Communication for social change**

*The Upstream Journal explores options for voices outside mainstream media*

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Voices of dissent - Amy Goodman and independent media</b>  | <b>6</b>  |
| <i>The role of community radio as an alternative source of information</i>  |           |
| <b>Graffiti as social protest</b>   | <b>8</b>  |
| <i>Street art challenges social and political structures when other options are limited</i>   |           |
| <b>"Talking strongly" - Indigenous media in Australia</b>   | <b>12</b> |
| <i>Protecting culture and language through media technology</i>   |           |
| <b>Media poetics and cattle - Colombia community radio, language and power</b>  | <b>14</b> |
| <i>Challenging cultural assumptions in cowboy country</i>   |           |
| <b>Container tech - Jamaican community retrofits shipping container into creative computing centre</b>  | <b>17</b> |
| <i>Technology is made local and becomes a tool of empowerment</i>   |           |
| <b>Le grand saut technologique et la "nouvelle économie" - au secours des pays en développement?</b>  | <b>20</b> |
| <i>La expansion technologique - est-elle adaptée à la situation fragile dans ces pays?</i>  |           |
| <b>The World Bank doesn't have - and doesn't want - human rights standards in its projects</b>  | <b>24</b> |
| <i>Despite changing opinion on their importance in development, the world's largest development institution has no policy on human rights</i> |           |
| <b>The financial crisis and the future for Canada's foreign aid</b>   | <b>28</b> |
| <i>Will cuts join high food prices, falling remittances and low export earnings in reversing development gains?</i>                           |           |

**Cover. Artist: Arofish.** "This was inspired by twin girls and their little brother who came to a "summer camp" for kids in Jenin Camp, West Bank." Arofish is a graffiti artist living in London who has done anti-war art in Iraq, the West Bank, and Gaza.

**Inside cover. Artist: A1one.** A pioneer Iranian street artist, A1one works with a variety of media. He considers his work to be social rather than political.

Arofish and A1one were generous in communicating about their art and allowing its use in the *Upstream*. Their work can be viewed online at Flickr. Both were also clear that they viewed graffiti with low or no artistic value as unwanted vandalism.

Intern Robin Rottweiller assisted with the production of this issue. Intern YeNa Kim did the sketch of Derek.

from the editor...



Dear readers,

Hannah Arendt considered freedom, understood as active participation in public life, to be central to politics. She considered the highest political action to be free speech, in public, about public affairs. People's freedom is thus defined by the extent to which they voice their opinions in public.

The importance of "voice" as a necessary or even defining characteristic of freedom has been central to the work we do here at the Social Justice Committee, and to the stories we carry in the *Upstream Journal*, as you readers know. Our particular focus is on freedom as it arrives through respect for human rights, especially the economic, social and cultural rights of communities on the margins.

We've pushed for greater voice of affected communities in World Bank and IMF policies, and the empowerment of people who have been impoverished and marginalized.

When Elvira Truglia, who coordinates the SJC's "Different World" project for high school teachers and students, approached me with the idea of putting together an issue with communication as its theme, it seemed a natural fit with our central purpose.

I hope you agree, and find the stories we've gathered to be of interest. Elvira took the lead in developing story ideas and contacting authors, taking advantage of her participation in a conference on communication and independent media last year in Australia. She herself has extensive experience in independent media, having served, for example, as Public Education Coordinator for the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters for five years.

These stories are about voice and freedom, from the state-supported television by and for Aborigine people of Australia to the wall paintings created under cover of darkness in Iran. We are fortunate to be able to present them to you.

Here at the Social Justice Committee, we have a pretty strong ability to express our voice. Our communications capacity is good – a dozen computer work stations with modern programs and high-speed internet, filled with volunteers of exceptional motivation and ability. The Canadian political ethic largely honours citizen input. The SJC is independent, and we do not self-censor to keep funders happy but rather aim to provide a complete and balanced look at issues of rights protection or abuse.

The SJC is the main NGO in Canada advocating reform of the IMF and World Bank to provide adequate voice and empowerment to communities in the Third World, and providing public education so that citizens in Canada can have their voices heard on these issues too. We are also a strong voice for human rights protection in countries like Guatemala, and for corporate social responsibility.

You too have opportunities to communicate your opinion, and participate in public affairs. When it is appropriate, *Upstream Journal* stories include the names and contact information for key policy makers. Through our web site you can sign up for the SJC email bulletin, which occasionally sends out action alerts on situations where your voice would be helpful.

Most people in the world do not have your level of freedom, but isn't it admirable what many of them do to claim their public voice, whether through the air waves or the art of the streets?

Sincerely,

Derek MacCuish    1-514-933-6797    [editor@upstreamjournal.org](mailto:editor@upstreamjournal.org)

# Communication breakdown

*Editor's note: The stories in the Upstream Journal are usually written by volunteers, who are asked to speak directly with key individuals and include their perspectives. I think the story on graffiti is a good example of successful interviewing, but often it is not easy or, as Nisha here describes, frustratingly impossible, to reach people in difficult circumstances. For more info on WOZA, visit [wozazimbabwe.org](http://wozazimbabwe.org).*

Four months ago Jenni Williams and Madodonga Mahlangu, leaders of the activist group Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), were arrested – again – for staging a peaceful protest calling for government action on the shortage of food. They spent three weeks in prison.

Impressed by WOZA's empowerment of women and their deep devotion in creating a new Zimbabwe, I was interested in writing a follow-up to the story about WOZA that ran in the December 2005 issue of the *Upstream Journal*.

For the story, I needed an interview with one of the women. However, communication with the WOZA activists proved difficult, and then impossible.

When I first emailed Mrs. Williams in November about my interest in talking to her, I got a response back the next day highlighting her enthusiasm. Over the next few weeks, I repeatedly emailed her to no avail. I was able to get in touch with other WOZA activists by phone, but the connection was terrible and conversation impossible. I was able to make out only one message that reflected the mood in Zimbabwe: "There is no solution for the future."

For days afterward I called at various times, but after that first short call Zimbabwe's failing electrical and internet systems meant I wouldn't get in touch with them again.

I had to give up the story. After a month of trying, I was at a dead end.

- Nisha Moorlah

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The Social Justice Committee appreciates the generosity of the late Rev. Gerry Sinel for his donating of a bequest. This is the first time the SJC has received a gift through a will.

This gift provides welcome assistance, especially now as many people feel the effects of the global financial crisis and have to reduce their charitable giving.

Although Canadians are among the most generous in intent - 23% of Canadian workers reported they expect to leave a bequest to charity - 7 in 10 do not have a will.

We greatly appreciate Rev. Sinel's thoughtfulness in providing for the SJC in his will.

## **The SJC is pleased to welcome two new staff members**

Leah Gardner is now Coordinator of Social Rights Education Programs, and Tine Manvoutouka is Coordinator of Economic Rights Education. Both positions are half-time.

Leah and Tine are both former interns, and have demonstrated a high level of commitment and ability in their work. They replace Cathy Giuletto, who had a full-time position as education programs coordinator until mid-October.

For information about our education programs, email Leah or Tine at [info@sjc-cjs.org](mailto:info@sjc-cjs.org), or call 514-933-6797.



Photo: Michael Keel. Courtesy of Democracy Now!

# Voices of dissent

## Amy Goodman and independent media

*Amy Goodman gave the keynote speech on “Independent Media in a Time of War and Elections” as part of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Symposium held on November 7, 2008. Her talk was broadcast live from McGill University on CKUT-FM, a Montreal campus/community radio station.*

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BY ELVIRA TRUGLIA

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**M**edia are the most powerful institutions on earth, says Amy Goodman, host of Democracy Now! radio, and attempts to repress independent media undermines democracy.

Since 1996, Democracy Now! (DN) has been reporting on the issues of the day with a slant on human rights struggles in the US and abroad. The one-hour magazine-format news hour interviews guests whose views are not often heard in the media – independent and international journalists, ordinary people affected by government

policy, community leaders and independent analysts.

In her public talk at McGill University in November, Goodman denounced the arrests of reporters during the recent U.S. election campaign, calling them unprecedented “preemptive raids on community media.”

Goodman herself was handcuffed and arrested for asking police to release two DN staff producers who were covering the anti-war protests outside the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minneapolis on September 1, 2008. The producers, who were wearing official media credentials, were arrested on suspicion of rioting.

What happened in St. Paul motivates Good-

man to continue carving out a niche for the “voices of dissent” that she believes are so badly missing from the mainstream media.

She has won numerous awards for her work, such as the co-produced documentaries on a massacre in East Timor and on corporate corruption in Nigeria. Most recently, she won an award for developing an innovative model of independent political journalism.

From a community radio tradition, she was the news director at WBAI, a local station of the Pacifica Radio Network, for ten years (1985-1995). Her popular news program was on the air at WBAI from 1996-2000 before she was shut out of the studios as a result of an internal conflict.

Goodman set up Democracy Now! in a make-shift studio in a converted firehouse in New York’s Chinatown in 2000. It is now distributed on more than 750 stations, including community, college and public radio as well as cable and satellite television in the U.S. and around the world. Podcasts, news columns and blogs are available on its website, [democracynow.org](http://democracynow.org).

Goodman uses a movement-style approach to build her audience and create alliances. She does speaking tours, encourages local organizers to lobby public stations to carry her broadcast, rallies audiences to “free the media” from corporate control, and helps fundraise for community radio stations like Montreal’s CKUT.

She was in Montreal as part of celebration to mark 25 years of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), which was founded in Montreal.

AMARC President Steve Buckley says that the founding of AMARC, was an act of remarkable optimism. “It rested on the passionate belief that community broadcasting can make a difference. This visionary group had the audacity to title their

small gathering, a world assembly of community radio broadcasters - and they invited the world to take part.”

At the time of AMARC’s creation in 1983, community broadcasting was not very well known outside the Americas, a handful of European countries and Australia, and state broadcasting was the norm in Africa, Asia and much of Europe until the early 1990s.

“Today AMARC is at the heart of global social movement,” Buckley said. “It is present in more than half the countries in the world, counting thousands of radio stations involving millions of people and serving audiences in the hundreds of millions.”

Jim Ellinger, AMARC Vice President for North America, a long-time community radio activist based in Austin, Texas, is particularly concerned about the quality of news reporting that Americans receive.

“Probably most radio stations in the United States play little or no news of any sort. It’s strictly canned and there really is no local content, let alone content of a progressive, or liberal, or activist nature. There is a wealth of stories not being covered by commercial networks. Americans are realizing that what they hear on NBC news may not be the whole story. It may not be the story at all.”

“When you hear someone speaking from their own experience, whether it’s a Palestinian child or an Israeli grandmother, a Venezuelan aunt or a Lebanese uncle, people hear the humanity and they identify,” Goodman said. “That’s the power of community media.”

***“Americans are realizing that what they hear on NBC news may not be the whole story. It may not be the story at all.”***

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*Elvira Truglia is a writer, broadcaster and consultant in communications and development. For four years, she has been the Project Director for “A Different World,” an SJC educational program for high schools. She was Public Education Coordinator for the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters from 1996-2002.*

*“I want to make them think more, and get back what they have been as Iranians, without the thought control that stops their power and kills their minds.”*



# GRAFFITI AS SOCIAL PROTEST

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BY ANDREA PARÉ

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**“Graffiti in its very presence threatens and undermines that sense that the authorities are in control,”** says Jeff

Ferrell, a cultural criminologist with Texas Christian University. He has been researching graffiti for more than a decade and even spent time with a graffiti crew in Denver, Colorado in the early 1990s.

“There is a kind of deeper battle for how we read our environment. Graffiti forces a re-reading of it, which of course also threatens people

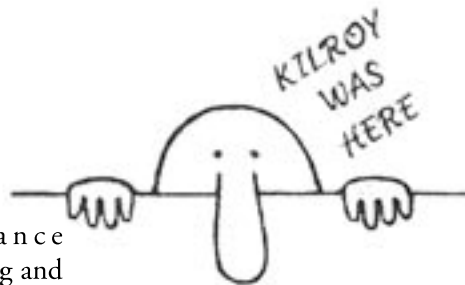
in power.”

On the other side of the globe, in Tehran, Iran, graffiti artist A1one is using his paint to protest and educate. More than anything, A1one wants his images to make Iranians open their minds to see the repression around them.

“I want to make them think more, and to get back what they have been as Iranians, without the thought control that stops their power and kills their minds. The limitations are killing the people’s minds, and making them static,” he says.

The 26-year old uses the alias “A1one” because of the solitary nature of his work. He explains that the word might also mean “one with god” and





“colourful” in Arabic.

And he believes that he is alone in what he does on the walls of Tehran.

“I have enemies and imitators. I am not okay with this - especially when I see that most of the pioneer street artists in other countries were like me and had many problems with the newcomers. They envy and imitate instead of working and inspiring others,” he says.

According to A1one, many of these copycats paint scrawls about American themes, such as MTV or skateboarding, which A1one sees as unoriginal.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, there are the propaganda murals of Tehran, the so-called ‘legal’ graffiti that showcases images of the Ayatollahs, Mullahs and martyrs of the wars with Iraq.

Somewhere between both extremes are A1one’s images. His graffiti portfolio includes pieces of bombs with children’s faces on them, haunting faces of Iranian women donning head scarves and men bombing the golden arches of McDonald’s.

“In the past I liked to make them question who made this if it is not by the government,” he says. “Now they know it is graffiti. But they see many dirty scribbles around my works or other stencils, and I need to show them the difference.”

A1one would like to see promotion of the arts by the government, which he believes would improve the country’s image.

“Our government is not wise enough to use this opportunity as a good way for showing free speech and not dictatorship to the world.”

He began writing graffiti,

freelance painting and creating posters about six years ago, after he quit his job as a graphic designer at the Iranian entertainment magazine *Film Report*. He says he quit the magazine job when he grew tired of not being able to freely express himself. Since then he has also created a website, [www.tehranwalls.blogspot.com](http://www.tehranwalls.blogspot.com), where he posts photos of his street artwork.

“The experience of free speech was the first motivation, but it made a new path in my mind when I saw the diversity of possibilities in the web,” he says.

Though he has chosen a rebellious path, he is aware that Iranians live with a pressure to obey. He says that censorship is commonplace in Iran.

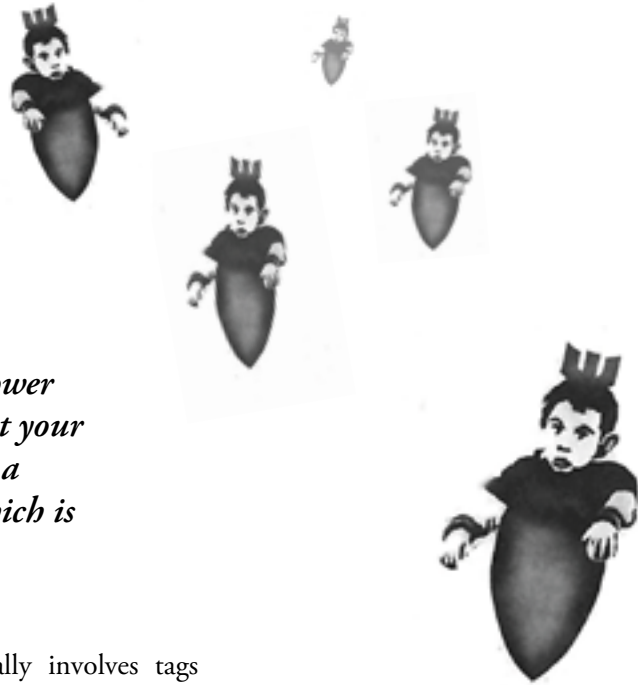
*“To pour your soul onto a wall and be able to step back and see your fears, your hopes, your dreams and weaknesses really gives you a deeper understanding of yourself and your own mental state.”*

“You are not allowed to express what you like. Just follow what the every day rules say. They even say this clearly on TV and in the news.”

Graffiti as a term has roots in the Italian word *graffiare*, meaning “to scratch.” and has been a means of communication for hundreds of years. “Kilroy was here” was a popular graffiti in the US in the 1940s.

Modern graffiti is defined somewhat differently. It is often viewed as an element of hip-hop, insignia of gangs or a pastime for





*“Graffiti is a way to gain visual power and make a statement not only about your politics, but about who you are. It is a real affirmation of your presence, which is otherwise erased or ignored.”*

destructive pranksters. It usually involves tags (stylized signatures), throw-ups (more complex filled in letters) and pieces (elaborate multicoloured murals with images and lettering).

The stereotype of the graffiti writers as destructive youth may have some grains of truth in it, but there are also the protest painters - like Montreal's Roadsworth and London's Banksy - who use graffiti to paint socio-political dissent on the walls.

Ferrell dispels the stereotype of graffiti artist as a street thug as he describes the members of his Colorado crew. He says that all of the artists he painted with had “a sensibility about art and politics.”

Their graffiti included murals of Jack Kerouac, protest poems to the mayor of Denver, and messages critiquing the city administration, which was engaged in an anti-graffiti campaign at the time.

“It was a wonderful five years, some of the best times in my life in terms of excitement, of being engaged with the streets and with artistic adventure and politics. Very unusual, but very interesting,” Ferrell says.

Although most of his research is on graffiti in the US, Ferrell sees the links with artists like A1one in other parts of the world.

“Hip hop graffiti, with its roots in the American struggle for justice and ethnic equality and ethnic identity and pride, has become part of a broader discourse or language, a grammar for

marginalized groups around the world,” he says.

One graffiti movement he finds particularly moving is the Sandino stencil movement in Nicaragua. During times of dictatorship, citizens protested with stencils of their revolutionary hero Augusto Sandino.

These stencil writers risked being beaten or put to death for spraying these images, Ferrell says, but people in corrupt and repressive regimes still take the risk.

“It is an affirmation of who you are, it is an affirmation of your politics and political aspirations and it is a way to gain visual power and make a statement not only about your politics, but about who you are. It is a real affirmation of your presence, which is otherwise erased or ignored.”

As for A1one, he refuses to be ignored.

“I express myself more in a social sense, not political. Now I am trying to find my city's potential for more street art, which can attract people and not let them be sorry for the clean wall.”

The images:

Arofish did the art on the front cover and inside back cover:

A1one did Back cover, page 2, 8:

The stencil of Sandino is artist unknown.



**Graffiti** is a form of expression for individuals or groups, often the most marginalized, seeking to proclaim their existence and announce their identity or cause.

**In Zimbabwe**, women use road painting, a form of graffiti, to express dissatisfaction with the socio-political landscape. This past August, nine women were charged and arrested for “malicious damage to property” for their road painting which read “Woza Moya”, which translates to “Come, healing wind” in English. Members of Woza (Women and Men of Zimbabwe Arise), a solidarity rights group for Zimbabweans, have since proclaimed that they “ will continue with our graffiti road writing our messages until the politicians hear us loud and clear.”

**In Palestine**, the graffiti of rebel politicians, likened to the so-called “homeboys” in New York, includes simple messages, phrases and slogans and images. These include the v-sign, the Palestinian flag, a map of Palestine, fists or rifles. Much of the graffiti is from Palestinian and Muslim history, religion and culture, such as the Dome of Rock, from which Mohamed is believed to have ascended into heaven. Representations of land also pop up often in graffiti images, and slogans such as “Allah” and “al-maktub”, the word for “the written” serve as identity and territorial markers in a place where there has been a loss of national identity.

**In Lebanon**, memories of war still remain in graffiti slogans. Much like in Palestine, they display slogans of political parties and factions, and the identities they sought to distinguish themselves and their beliefs.

In the last few years, this graffiti has become more modern and stylized, with more inclusive messages such as “Beirut Never Dies” by writers attempting to unite the masses, rather than divide them with politics. After Prime Minister Rafik Hariri was assassinated two years ago, graffiti became rampant on the walls of Beirut. Messages about the Syrian presence in Lebanon, once a taboo subject, became street art slogans. After Lebanese Industry Minister Pierre Gemayel was killed, a group of graffiti artists known as “the space invaders” began stenciling “Public Space” across the city, signaling their attempt to take back the streets of Beirut.

*Andrea Paré is a journalism student at Concordia University, with a Bsc in Environmental Geography. She is a native Montrealer with a special interest in social justice, environmental issues and the arts.*



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# “Talking strongly”

## Indigenous media in Australia

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BY MICHAEL MEADOWS

---

**I**n November 2004, aboriginal people on Palm Island in north Queensland, stormed and burned down a police station on the island following the death in custody of a young local man. Mainstream media branded the incident a ‘riot’ — despite the fact that no one was hurt, but on the indigenous airwaves people spoke about ‘the resistance’ in the Cairns-produced and nationally-broadcast talkback program, Talk-Black, providing listeners with views other than those of state politicians and the police.

As one Palm Island resident put it, it was “Blackfellas talking to Blackfellas.”

The program won an award for the best coverage of indigenous affairs at the 2006 Queensland Media Awards.

Indigenous audience representatives identify local radio and television as the only real alternative available to them in such times of community crisis.

The importance of community-based Indigenous Community Television (ICTV) became apparent during the first audience study of indigenous media, conducted from 2004 to 2007 by me and colleagues from Griffith University. Indigenous audiences across Australia expressed their dissatisfaction with mainstream media representation of indigenous issues. Audiences were unanimous in their conclusion that mainstream media in Australia have failed them, and they’ve turned to their own media for reliable news and information.

Around 180 community radio and television stations broadcast to Indigenous communities from cities to the vast, sparsely populated areas of regional and remote Australia. Until recently, the vast majority of these stations essentially re-broadcast mainstream television into remote and regional aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander com-

munities.

But change was in the air, initiated not by government policymakers, but by remote indigenous broadcasters determined to counter the often culturally damaging mainstream media images dominating TV screens in their communities. And so ICTV was born.

ICTV first began in 2001 as a narrowcast/split channel service initiated by PY Media on Imparja, the aboriginal-owned commercial television station. By 2005, program production had increased to almost 300 hours. The service, coordinated by the aboriginal-controlled PY Media, ran on an



annual budget of only AUD\$70,000. It included contributions from regional hubs, including Warlpiri Media, Pilbara and Kimberley Aboriginal Media, Ngaanyatjarra Media and the Top End Aboriginal Bush Broadcasters’ Association. Until October 2006, when ICTV was incorporated as a separate organisation, PY Media coordinated 20 hours a day of indigenous community TV programming. The 20 hour block was refreshed each month.

In 2006, the federal government committed AUD\$48 million over four years to develop a National Indigenous Television Service. At the time of writing it was unclear what relationship the community-initiated ICTV service would have

with this new initiative.

For many of the indigenous people we interviewed, the government scheme was perceived to be designed to wrest control of the ICTV initiative away from the bush communities that started it, although it was unclear how the signal would be delivered to anyone other than those with a satellite dish. As the majority of Australians watch terrestrial-delivered free-to-air or cable TV, it seems that the vast majority of Australia's viewers will be denied the chance to watch what is arguably the most innovative programming initiative in Australian television since it began here in 1956.

Where local media production is being undertaken regularly, indigenous community radio and television stations play a critical role in maintaining cultures and languages. Where local and culturally appropriate frameworks are used to structure community media, then these media have

become part of the local community and local culture.

For example, Umeewarra Media in Port Augusta, South Australia, estimates there are around twenty different tribal groups with ten indigenous languages still spoken in the area. Two of these languages have been chosen for broadcast because of their relevance to local audiences.

The absence of an audience-producer barrier is a defining characteristic of indigenous media in Australia. This has led to innovative uses of a range of technologies: radio (particularly talkback, language and music), video through ICTV, and UHF radio. These came about because communities identified a functional need for this technology to maintain and expand traditional communication systems.

Audiences regard indigenous radio and television as powerful media for education, particularly for children and thus, their future. This offers a

holistic concept of the ultimate goals of indigenous media in whatever form.

For many of the people we spoke with, ICTV is much more than a mere television service.

An old Anangu woman at Umuwa (in the central desert) stopped us on the side of the road when she heard we were interviewing people about their attitudes to indigenous television. She was upset at the thought of the television service she identified as "hers" being tampered with, and apologised for "talking strongly."

"Travelling in any way in the country they can listen to music;

they can put a TV there and make everybody happy, make everybody awake and think about the land. This is my grandmother's land. This

is my tjamu's land. This is my kami's land, my grandmother's and grandfather's and uncle's and mother's. We started this media for our Anangu children. We can't give it to anybody."

The integration of media technology — in this case, television and UHF radio — with local culture is clear. Here, traditional frameworks for communication remain strongly in place. The technology is merely a tool for enabling it.

***"Audiences were unanimous in their conclusion that mainstream media in Australia have failed them, and they've turned to their own media for reliable news and information."***



Indigenous Community Television, launched in the 1990s on the Imparja Info Channel as a community station. Imparja is an Aboriginal-owned, commercial television company.

*Michael Meadows was a print and broadcast journalist for ten years before moving to journalism education and research.*

*With colleague Helen Molnar he carried out the first national study of the indigenous media sector in Australia in 1998, and with colleagues from Griffith University undertook the first national studies of the Australian community broadcasting sector, including the first-ever qualitative audience study from which this article has been drawn. He teaches journalism at Griffith University in Brisbane. Information: [www.waru](http://www.waru).*



# Media poetics and cattle ranching

Making community radio relevant to language and power

---

BY CLEMENCIA RODRIGUEZ

---

**E**ven as more academics, students, NGOs, and media advocacy initiatives focus on citizens' media, these same groups seem to be experiencing a frustration with the sameness of the citizens' media discourse, seeing a lack of originality and diversity of ideas and concepts.

"It's more of the same, again and again. We repeatedly hear about media that give a voice to the voiceless and empower marginalized identities, but no one is saying anything new."

Some argue that citizens' media does not truly reflect life in local communities. They argue that to accurately reflect diverse communities, these media need to come in diverse forms and formats and produce a variety of genres and narratives, but instead are too homogenous.

They are frequently visited by the feeling of having reached "the end of the line."

Where does this feeling come from? Citizens' media have not reached the end of the line. Rather, it is our understanding of citizens' media that is too thin. Our interpretations, analyses and articulations of citizens' media are not capturing what they need to.

Indeed, the crux of studying and theorizing citizens' media is found in the complex relationship between social movements and media technologies.

As people and communities get involved with social movements, they realize the urgency of having their own media to mobilize, get their voices heard in public spheres, and maintain connections.

At the same time, when people without previous experience in social movements get involved with citizens' media, they start asking questions, making new



Radio Andaqui provides a voice for local people. Photo: courtesy of the author.

connections and developing new understandings of themselves and the context of their worlds.

Typically, people involved in citizens' media become thirsty for new directions and they begin to look beyond the worlds they know. In this process of questioning that which they take for granted, people stumble upon progressive social movements, drawn by visions of ways to "do things differently."

The directions in which social movements and citizens' media are moving are not mutually exclusive, and need to be explored, investigated and theorized to help us answer some questions.

How are different social movements using media technologies?

How are social movements cross-fertilizing and learning from one another in their designs and uses of media technologies?

When and why do information and communication technology issues become part of a social movement's agenda?

Central to these is the relationship between language and power. We need to spell out, illuminate and disaggregate this relationship to understand how citizens' media drive social change.

Radio Andaquí in Colombia provides an example of this.

### THE MEDIA POETICS OF RADIO ANDAQUÍ

As articulated by Juan Francisco Salazar (2004), media poetics means understanding the complex processes in which media technologies interact with social, cultural, and political dynamics in a given context. This understanding is necessary for us to detect how the technology interacts with the context, weaving itself into different aspects of the local social and cultural fabric.

Consider the media poetics of Radio Andaquí, a community radio station in Belén de los Andaquíes, a municipality of twelve thousand people in the Caquetá region of the Colombian Amazon. Radio Andaquí is known in Colombia as a pioneer community radio stations and an example to emulate.

Since its founding in 1995, Radio Andaquí has opened numerous communication spaces in which the people of Belén de los Andaquíes can re-invent themselves, exploring new ways of being and imagining their own futures and the future of their region.

One of these communication spaces is the

Planeta Salsa program, in which the town's salsa experts gather every Friday night around a microphone and a bottle of rum. Understanding the significance of Planeta Salsa requires looking at Belén's collective self-image.

The region is known as "cattle country" where people only listen to rancheras, the Colombian version of country-western music. The belief that Caquetá is a land of cowboys, cattle, and large haciendas can be traced back to the early 1930s when the Colombian state, transnational corporations, and local elites essentially created the idea of "the natural cattle disposition of the Caquetá." The Lara family consolidated Larandia, which by the 1950s became one the largest land estates in Latin America with 50,000 heads of cattle, airports, river ports and 40 kilometers of roads locals could only use if they paid a toll.

Larandia's influence on the region was significant not only because of the type of infrastructure that was put in place, but also because it introduced "the Larandia effect" – the notion that privileged what was "good for cattle." State institutions adopted policies that ensured that immense portions of the Amazon rain forest were opened up for pasture and cattle.

The popular conception of "success" became closely tied to the image of the cattle rancher with cattle pastures, cowboy boots, and a taste for ranchera music.

However, according to a recent study by the Ministry of Agriculture, only 14.6% of Caquetá's soil is appropriate for agriculture, and 0% is appropriate for cattle ranching. It is highly acidic with a very low nutrient concentration. The cattle economy established in the region in the 1930s has had a tremendous negative social and environmental impact.

The notion that "making it" is so tied to cattle that homesteaders and newcomers see the forest as something to get rid of in order to open pastures for cattle, dramatically degrading forests and



water ways. The cattle economy has produced a stratified society with a class system based on access to land. As ranchers expand their haciendas, they simultaneously secured a pool of cheap labor by forcing small landowners from their land and created a class of dependent laborers.

It is this collective image of Caqueta as “cattle country” that Radio Andaquí intends to disrupt.

The station allows other, subjugated views to emerge and serve as alternative markers for a different vision of the region’s future. In this sense, Planeta Salsa creates a communication space in which those with no taste for cattle or rancheras can express themselves.

Instead of trying to persuade audiences didactically that the cattle economy is not good for Caquetá, Radio Andaquí opens a communication space where listeners can question for themselves the notion that Belén de los Andaquíes is cultur-

ally and materially dependent on cattle. Planeta Salsa introduces audiences to the idea that Belén contains a multitude of voices, styles, musical genres, and visions for the future.

*“The station allows other, subjugated views to emerge and serve as alternative markers for a different vision of the region’s future.”*

“Saying that Belén is only about rancheras is like saying that we are all coca growers,” one of Planeta Salsa’s producers, Alirio Cuéllar, says. “There is an audience for everything. The salsa audience is not as large as the ranchera audience, but as people began listening to Planeta Salsa and calling in to the show, the producers realized their program had its followers. Planeta Salsa was right for the exquisite ears of Belén.”

By facilitating new ways to codify self and environment, Radio Andaquí does not use communication technologies to send a specific persuasive message, attempting to convince citizens that their region should be used for this or that. Instead, this citizens’ radio station opens a communication space where different, subjugated perspectives can engage in open dialogues about the economic and cultural terms that will define their territory and their future.

*Clemencia Rodriguez teaches in the Department of Communication, University of Oklahoma.*

## United Nations adopts Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

The adoption of the Optional Protocol on December 10 is regarded as an historic advance for human rights. Forty-two years after a similar mechanism was adopted for civil and political rights, those who suffer from violations of their economic, social and cultural rights are finally given equal status in the UN human rights system. Their right to an effective remedy is recognized.

The Optional Protocol is important because it provides victims of economic, social and cultural rights violations who are not able to get an effective remedy in their domestic legal system with an avenue to get redress. As such, it corrects the longstanding imbalance in the protection of different human rights which marginalised economic, social and cultural rights.

If the Committee receives reliable information indicating grave or systematic violations of the Covenant, the Committee shall invite that State Party to cooperate in the examination of the information. The inquiry may include a visit to the territory of the State Party concerned.

Victims of violations of ESC rights can only utilize the procedure after their state has ratified the Optional Protocol. The Optional Protocol will be opened for signature at a signing ceremony in Geneva in March 2009.

Source: International NGO Coalition for an Optional Protocol to the ICESCR

### Internships available

*The Upstream Journal* accepts applications for internships in writing, design or publicity.

Contact the editor for information.



# Container tech

## Jamaican community retrofits shipping container into creative computing centre



*“For me it really wasn’t about the technology. Technology was just a tool that I had that I could use. It could have been anything. It is first and foremost about the people. That is the subject of the Container, its people. What the Container can do to alleviate the pain and suffering of its people.” — mervin Jarman (he requests this spelling of his name)*

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BY FRANCESCA DA RIMINI

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**P**almers Cross, a township of six thousand in south central Jamaica, has been burdened with an unenviable reputation as “a cursed place of crosses and tribulation from which nothing good can come.” Lack of urban infrastructure and employment exacerbate other poverty-related problems.

In 2003 Jamaican artist/activist mervin Jarman returned to the Cross with a radical digital media intervention. Having undergone a personal transformation sparked by encounters with art and computing in the UK, mervin wanted to share the joy, hope and recoded social agency with his birthplace community.

From “hardcore” street life, through art school and innovative computing studies to co-founding the Mongrel art group, mervin’s experiences and philosophies imbue the Container project with

something out of the ordinary.

The shipping container was repurposed as a creative computing centre, with an open multi-function infrastructure. It is concurrently a community access point for digital arts, a social hub and, most importantly, a fluid framework in which people can “realise their own aspirations” at their own pace.

This unique laboratory for learning and artistic experimentation embodies mervin’s initial idea of “repatriating technology,” using it to link marginalized groups to their heritage and “cultural backbone.”

Technology was the thing that he needed to take back home, for people “to begin to notice those whom they have not paid any attention to over the years. So it was a repatriation of a tool back into the streets, so that people can stand up and take notice.”

Situated on family land “where we could build our dreams on the grave yards of time,” and funded from Jarman’s own savings, a donated shipping container was retro-fitted by “the guys

on the corner,” some of Palmers Cross’s most disenfranchised.

Painted bright yellow, with large kiosk-style windows, the familiar transport form countered understandable technophobia. A long central desk supports back-to-back monitors in a space of

creative flows and cool breezes,

Many Container users were once shy observers outside, mervin says. “They used to stick their hands through the window and touch the mouse. And something happened, that excitement, and gradually you get them to come and sit and start to participate in whatever programs we are running at the time, and that really opened up the social architecture of the space, allowing people to feel included and to want to be part of it.”

The Container houses a network of new and recycled workstations running proprietary and free software, plus a dedicated multimedia suite, connected to a Linux server. Digital recording equipment is freely borrowed, and well-cared for. A sponsored broadband connection from the Cable and Wireless Jamaica Foundation enables



*The Container is open 10 hrs per day and can accommodate 50 persons per day. It averages 75% of capacity each day. It tries to be faithful to its original mission to be a user-friendly community access, including use as an alternative recreational space for the youth who would usually be sitting on the street corner.*



*“People came to cut and weld the windows, insulate the space, put in the flooring, lay down the gravel, fix up the building in front of the site, plan and execute the opening and other events. This helped to create a sense of a shared ownership, a buy-in from the community.*

*It is their space. They monitor it themselves. It’s a point of pride that in a very poor community riddled with crime, this space was declared and maintained by the community as a safe space.”*

*- Jamaican/Canadian artist and Boot Up workshop team member, Camille Turner*

projects like Skint Stream, an intercontinental “Poor-to-Poor” live streaming event.

Open ten hours daily, the Container is a self-organising system. Annual membership of its Community Computer Club costs \$1000 Jamaican (USD 15), plus a nominal hourly access charge for those who can afford it, which helps running costs and creates “stakeholders.”

Learning occurs on multiple levels, from email and scanning photos, to certificate programs, multimedia courses and music production. The Container has trained over 100 young people in IT to nationally accredited standards.

The open design makes learning easy and inclusive. “There is no secrecy” mervin says. “We openly advocate for people to “copy take” — to look at what other people are doing on their screens, and then make copies of it on your screen, to find out “how can I do that?”

Community leadership training is vital. Participants in Digital Storytelling workshops learn not only narrative and technical skills, but also to mentor others.

“Sometimes the most unlikely people really step into their own and surprise everyone,” says Camille Turner. “And it is really important for people to see people like themselves in leadership roles.”

Gangs, guns and premature deaths have devastated Palmers Cross, particularly its young men. The Container has been extraordinarily successful in creating a social context whereby long-standing patterns of behaviours and rivalries are changing.

“The welcome of the community opens to us the vibrant Jamaican culture few from the outside are privileged to experience,” Turner said. “There’s a rhythm to life at the Container that is the flavour of what Jamaica is all about. Music is always blaring. On Friday nights there is a cook-up with grilled fish, roast breadfruit, dancing, singing and stories. In a town where unemployment and violence is rampant, the community itself has created a safe haven, an oasis where there is a possibility of healing”

Understanding gang dynamics from his own youth, mervin apportioned the technical training within the lab, developing independent “experts” in different areas — software programs, hardware, and recording equipment. The Container was set up as a neutral space, with the only rule being to respect others. Lab users had to communicate

with each other to learn the digital tools, notwithstanding old rivalries. The deliberate inversion of conventional hierarchies of knowledge within the Container has also affected social relations outside, turning enmity into camaraderie.

Underpinning the project are some core principles and practices of Rastafarianism, an emancipatory Jamaican (now transglobal) social movement and belief system dating from the 1930s, Explains mervin:

“I feel I like I was a Rasta from birth because I was born in poverty, I grew up in poverty ... I’ve been persecuted. The philosophy of Rastafarianism to me, and the whole concept of I and I, is, whatever is good for me is good for you. So I and I share in all things. So there’s this I, and that I, and we work together. The food, the drink, the liberty, it’s all-engaging, an all-encompassing thing. The complementation of the earth is so diverse, how can it just be for me? That creates a critical imbalance. That imbalance that people cry about day and night, but most of them fail to do anything about it.

Wake up, open your eyes and see this. Understand that it’s our reality, it’s a shared reality, positive and productive.”

*Francesca da Rimini is an artist and writer. She has also worked on various research projects focussing on creativity and new technologies, and was the founding Executive Officer of the Australian Network for Art and Technology. She has contributed to many film, video, media art projects, and was a member of art groups VNS Matrix and Identity\_Runners. In the 1990s she created her avatar GashGirl, and put her to imaginative work in the online world of LambaMOO. She has worked with sound artist Michael Grimm on net art projects, including dollspace, and Los Días y las Noches de los Muertos. She is currently a PhD Candidate at the University of Technology, Sydney, researching how network culture enables new collective forms of political and social agency.*

To find out more about the Container Project, visit [www.container-project.net](http://www.container-project.net).

*“In a town where unemployment and violence is rampant, the community itself has created a safe haven, an oasis where there is a possibility of healing.”*

# La "Nouvelle économie" Au secours des pays en développement?

PAR MATHIEU FORT

**E**ffectuer un paiement sur Internet ou vérifier les cours de la Bourse sur son téléphone mobile ne sont désormais plus des actions réservées aux habitants des pays les plus avancés. Ainsi, aux Philippines, le remboursement d'un micro-crédit peut s'effectuer par message texte. En Inde, les pêcheurs de Kerala ont accru leur profit en négociant le prix avec différents marchés grâce à leur téléphone mobile.

L'explosion de la Nouvelle économie ne semble plus de nos jours se restreindre aux pays riches. Selon un rapport des Nations Unis publié en 2008, les nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication (NTIC), incluant le téléphone mobile et Internet, ouvrent la perspec-

tive d'un "grand saut technologique" qui pourrait contribuer à la modernisation rapide des pays appauvris.

## UNE FRACTURE NUMÉRIQUE ?

Si les progrès technologiques opérés au cours des trente dernières années dans les pays développés sont sans précédents, les pays appauvris ne sont pas en reste. En effet, depuis le début des années 90, ils ont réalisé d'importants progrès, et cela même parfois plus rapidement que leurs voisins du Nord.

La possession de téléphones mobiles a pratiquement triplé dans les pays en voie de développement entre 2002 et 2006. En ce qui concerne le développement d'Internet et l'utilisation des ordinateurs, on constate le même genre de progrès : l'utilisation d'Internet ayant plus que doublé entre 1999 et 2004, notamment grâce au développement des cybercafés.

La diffusion croissante des NTIC dans les pays appauvris fait état d'un rattrapage certain. Toutefois, malgré ces progrès considérables, des écarts importants subsistent. En 2006, 53% de la population latino-américaine possédait un portable, 20% en Afrique, tandis qu'en Europe on comptait plus d'un portable par habitant. Même si le taux de pénétration d'Internet a augmenté de 41% en Afrique sub-saharienne entre 1999 et 2005, la région demeure la plus faiblement connectée au monde. Le niveau d'utilisation des technologies reste quatre fois moins élevé dans les pays à faible revenu que dans les pays riches.

La diffusion des NTIC participe à la réduction de l'extrême pauvreté en favorisant le développement des économies les plus pauvres. Le secteur



Le marché africain du téléphone mobile est celui qui affiche la croissance la plus rapide au monde. Photo: kiwanja.net

des NTIC peut en effet contribuer de manière directe à l'expansion économique par la création de nouveaux marchés.

Cependant, la contribution la plus importante des nouvelles technologies dans l'économie d'un pays réside dans les gains de productivité permettant la modernisation du mode de production. En outre, si l'introduction des NTIC dans les entreprises nécessite souvent de lourds investissements, les petites entreprises peuvent également en profiter.

Ainsi, au Congo et en Zambie, les entrepreneurs peuvent régler leurs fournisseurs grâce à leur téléphone mobile; au Brésil les petits producteurs agricoles obtiennent les cours du café et du cacao et les prévisions météorologiques sans quitter leurs plantations.

De manière plus générale, la diffusion des NTIC au sein d'une économie participe à la création de structures plus efficaces nécessaires au développement économique. Les nouvelles technologies créent ainsi une partie des conditions nécessaires à la croissance des entreprises en participant à l'amélioration des services financiers, bancaires et administratifs.

D'autre part, les NTIC peuvent être mises au service de l'éducation en participant notamment à une diffusion plus rapide et moins onéreuse du savoir. Le Réseau Africain de Formation à Distance, par exemple, mis en place par le Ministère des Affaires Étrangères français et des pays comme le Burkina Faso, le Togo, le Mali et le Bénin a permis l'instauration d'un système multimédia destiné à la formation des directeurs et des enseignants d'écoles primaires.

Les progrès en matières de techniques de communication et d'information participe à la démocratisation des services de soins et à l'amélioration des conditions sanitaires de vie. La mise en place de systèmes de télémédecine rend possible la réalisation de soins parfois complexes dans un environnement souvent marqué par un manque de personnel compétent et de matériel adapté.

Au Cambodge, l'utilisation d'une simple connexion à Internet pour communiquer avec des médecins des pays développés a ainsi permis de mettre en place un système de dépistage du cancer du col de l'utérus.

Finalement, les NTIC sont des outils qui participent à la préservation de l'environnement en améliorant la collecte et l'analyse de données sur

les évolutions environnementales. Si elles ne permettent pas à elles seules de résoudre les problèmes environnementaux, les NTIC apparaissent toutefois comme un moyen nécessaire à la prise de décisions vis-à-vis des dégradations naturelles (déforestation, désertification, tsunamis, ouragans, érosions des sols...) dont les pays en voie de développement sont souvent les premières victimes.

Il semble qu'un certain dynamisme en ce qui concerne la diffusion des NTIC se soit instauré dans la plupart des pays appauvris, par contre la fracture numérique reste toujours aussi importante et certains obstacles pourraient empêcher qu'elle se résorbe complètement.

Le premier d'entre eux est le manque flagrant d'infrastructure. Il y a donc une grande nécessité d'investir dans les infrastructures notamment dans les régions les plus éloignées souvent délaissées par le secteur privé du fait de la faible rentabilité des investissements et d'une utilisation de connexions satellites très coûteuses.

Un projet, actuellement en cours, prévoit l'installation d'un réseau de câbles à fibres optiques de l'Afrique du Sud au Soudan qui permettra d'accroître l'accès à Internet dans l'ensemble de la région tout en réduisant son coût.

Des investissements sont également nécessaires dans la mise en valeur de ressources humaines capables d'assimiler rapidement et d'utiliser efficacement ces nouvelles technologies. Le capital humain apparaît donc comme une conséquence mais aussi comme une condition de la diffusion des NTIC.

Finalement, les pays appauvris doivent se doter d'un cadre juridique efficace afin de contrô-



Un kiosque de téléphone cellulaire typique d'une localité de l'Ouganda Photo: kiwanja.net

ler et régler le commerce électronique pour favoriser un développement durable et harmonieux des NTIC et assurer la protection et la sécurité des utilisateurs.

Pour chacun de ces obstacles, on se rend bien compte des limites et des dysfonctionnements du marché et de la logique de rentabilité privée. On voit clairement apparaître la nécessité d'une intervention de l'État en collaboration avec la communauté internationale afin d'éviter que ne se creuse un autre fossé, cette fois-ci numérique, entre le Nord et le Sud.

*Mathieu Fort, titulaire d'un Baccalauréat en Économie Appliquée d'HEC Montréal, est responsable du blog du Comité pour la justice sociale. Il est également membre du groupe de travail sur la justice économique et s'occupe des questions relatives à la dette du Tiers-monde.*



Un autre kiosque, mieux nanti celui-ci, de téléphone cellulaire de l'Ouganda. Photo: kiwanja.net

## La expansion technologique - est-elle adaptée à la situation fragile dans ces pays?

*Pour répondre à cette question, Upstream a rencontré la directrice du Centre d'études sur l'intégration et la mondialisation, situé à l'Université du Québec à Montréal, Michèle Rioux.*

Les recherches de Michèle Rioux portent sur la société de l'information et le secteur des télécommunications, ses propos nous aideront à mieux cerner les problèmes présents avec ce phénomène technologique.

Les gouvernements des pays appauvris croient que les NTIC auront un impact réel sur leur économie ou peuvent leur faire sauter des étapes pour démocratiser leur société. Selon Rioux, il doit y avoir une certaine méfiance face à ce genre d'argument. Elle précise que cela dépend de l'appropriation et de l'utilisation de ces technologies. Les NTIC sont des opportunités incroyables, mais la mobilisation de ces technologies par les acteurs et ce qu'ils vont vouloir en faire est ce qui compte. Elle affirme que « ce n'est pas une recette magique, c'est un outil. »

Rioux stipule que le principal défi actuellement, partout dans le monde, par rapport au NTIC est la remise en cause des règles, des politiques et des lois. Nous ne savons pas encore comment gérer ces enjeux. Par exemple, les pays du Tiers-monde n'ont pas toujours les outils nécessaires pour introduire correctement la concurrence, qui devrait être admis dans le pays en termes de fournisseurs de services, comment faire la standardisation, quels types de lois devront être mises en place sur la propriété intellectuelle. Donc, une multitude de politiques devront être mise en place et dans ces pays, nous savons encore moins comment le faire.

D'un côté plus positif, tout un pan de l'aide internationale vise à réduire la fraction numérique. L'aide se fait surtout par une coopération volontaire où chaque pays fonctionne selon son propre programme. Ce qui est décevant, selon cette spécialiste, c'est le manque d'une véritable solidarité numérique dans la société de l'information réduisant ainsi les actions des organisations internationales.

Le problème réside dans l'accessibilité. Quand certains villages dans les pays en voie de développement n'ont pas d'électricité, l'accès à un ordinateur devient plus difficile. Par contre, l'enjeu véritable dans les pays en voie de développement, précise Rioux, c'est l'éducation. « Si une grande partie de cette population ne sait pas lire ou écrire, cela ne sert à rien de doter chaque maison d'une connexion large bande. Bien sûr que l'éducation électronique est un bon outil, mais à ce niveau on en fait peu. Les compagnies agissent surtout en fonction de la vente des téléphones » déclare-t-elle.

Pour l'avenir, il faudrait enligner la coopération internationale dans les NTIC sur les problèmes fondamentaux étant la formation et l'éducation qui permettra d'améliorer la condition de vie des gens dans les pays en voie de développement.

*- Mary Ivanchiu, étudiante à l'UQAM en Science Politique*

# Five worst countries for media freedom

## **ERITREA**

Although little is known about this sub-Saharan country, it has recently become notorious on the world stage. In the Reporters without Borders (RSF) 2007 Press Freedom Index, a report on media democracy throughout the world, Eritrea came last out of the 169 countries surveyed. It is the only country in Africa without any privately owned print, television or radio. The government, a one party system run by President Isaias Afewerki, shut down private media in 2001 and jailed several journalists after they criticized the government. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, Eritrea has long been one of the leading countries that imprison journalists in the world, with more than 15 journalists in detentions and prison camps since 2001.

## **NORTH KOREA**

The dictatorship of Kim Jong Il has allowed few journalists into the country. All media are government run and cover pro-government news only. The media is owned almost solely by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) which broadcasts adoring messages to Kim Jong Il, who is usually referred to as “Dear Leader” on-air. Reports on the country’s famines and the poverty crises are censored, and journalists who dare to speak out against the government are sent to prison camps.

## **TURKMENISTAN**

Up until December 2006, the leader’s golden face had to be displayed at all times on television news station screens. According to reports by the Committee to Protect Journalists, reporters at these stations had to say “ their tongues will shrivel if their reports ever slander the country, the flag, or the president,” at the end of each broadcast. The country’s new president, has vowed to improve the freedom of expression, but so far, most journalists there claim that not much has changed. The opening of internet cafés in Turkmenistan is as a positive move, but torture and violence inflicted upon reporters continues. For example, Reporters sans frontiers agency reported that a visiting journalist was brutally tortured as a human rights conference between the EU and Turkmenistan was taking place.

## **IRAN**

Although Iran has a history of dissidence in the voices of writers and intellectuals, it also has a long history of censorship, in recent years policing anti-Islamic sentiments. According to Reporters without Borders, nearly 10,000 websites are blocked due to supposed “anti-Islamic” content. Cyber cafes are monitored, and those caught looking at “non Islamic” sites are told to disconnect. Online journalists are harassed and imprisoned for writing about reformist ideology or uploading online versions of reformist newspapers. As this Upstream Journal was going to press, four weblog publishers were sentenced to eight and a half years imprisonment and 124 lashes.

## **CUBA**

There are strict laws that prohibit any journalist from speaking out against the government of Cuba, with penalties of up to three years in jail. Cuban legislation prohibits private media outlets, and repression of information via the internet is censored. Fewer than 2% of Cubans have online access.

For more information, visit

Reporters Without Borders, [www.rsf.org](http://www.rsf.org), and

The Committee to Protect Journalists, [www.cpj.org](http://www.cpj.org)

*Compiled by Andrea Paré*



# eye on the World Bank and IMF

## World Bank doesn't have - and doesn't want - human rights standards in its projects

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BY VERONIKA WERNER

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**“There is no institutional energy with regard to human rights,” and thus no effort whatsoever within the World Bank to get an operational policy on human rights, according to a source in the Bank’s legal department.** As a result, human rights affect the decisions of the World Bank either indirectly or not at all.

*“The overarching goal of human rights frameworks is the empowerment of the weakest and most marginalized, including the poor.”*

*- Anna Palacio, former Counsel General, World Bank*

outline its principles of organization and operations, state that “only economic considerations shall be relevant to their decisions,” there is a growing consensus that this should not affect its human rights obligations.

“The Articles of Agreement are supposed to prevent the Bank from taking so-called political decisions. The fact that it has to take human rights into considerations is not contrary to this

principle, because human rights guarantees are not political considerations, they are legal considerations,” says Sigrun Skogly, a Norwegian professor of international law at the University of Lancaster, U.K.

There is no rationale for the World Bank to accept human rights violations without a protest or, moreover, to support these violations if the state, in which people affected are living, does not have the ability or is not willing to protect the fundamental rights of its citizens. Most member countries of the World Bank have ratified the basic human rights treaties, which mean that these states not only have an obligation towards their citizens but also towards people in other states.

“It is not legitimate for states to create an international organization through which they can then avoid their obligations,” professor Skogly says. “They carry their obligations with them when they operate through the Bank.”

There have been efforts within the World Bank to respond to these concerns.

In January 2006, a legal opinion from the former Senior Vice President and General Counsel Roberto Dañino argued for a less strict interpretation of the World Bank’s mandate, saying that international opinion now favors the protection of human rights over the sovereignty of the state. This shift in favor of human rights legitimates an



intervention in internal political concerns.

Dañino's legal opinion has five main points:

The Bank's role is to support its members to progressively realize their human rights commitments.

Breaches of human rights should be relevant to the Bank, since violations have a negative economic impact.

In some areas human rights have a direct relevance on the Bank's work, e.g. the public participation and consultation requirements contained in several Bank policies, like the Indigenous People policy.

The Bank role is not that of an enforcer, this belongs primarily to the mandate of its member countries, and other, non-financial entities.

And the World Bank has a responsibility to work together with its member states even when they are in breach of human rights, in a collaborative way to assist in the implementation of the member states' human rights obligations.

Dañino left the World Bank shortly after drafting this opinion, which was not approved by the World Bank's Board of Directors.

His replacement, Ana Palacio, also recognized the Bank's human rights obligations. "The overarching goal of human rights frameworks is the empowerment of the weakest and most marginalized, including the poor," she wrote. "Human rights can help secure and strengthen their ability to claim rights and entitlements and take advantage of opportunities. From the perspective of the Bank's mandate, the international human rights frameworks can help inform a broad and comprehensive interpretation of legal empowerment of the poor that encapsulates both poverty reduction

and governance initiatives."

Palacio left the World Bank in April 2008 without having pushed for organizational or policy changes. Instead, she considered it sufficient that the World Bank provide a "facilitative role" in helping members realize their human rights obligations.

As a result, the Bank limits its activities on human rights to dialogue with other international organizations like the UN and OECD. For example, the World Bank is a member of the OECD Development Co-Operation Directorate's Network of Governance (GOVNET), an international forum that brings together practitioners of development co-operation agencies, as well as experts from partner countries. The GOVNET aims at improving the effectiveness of donor assistance in support of democratic governance. Its work covers a range of governance issues, including human rights, transparency, accountability, participation and equality, anti-corruption, governance assessments and capacity development in support of these elements of democratic governance.

Although one could argue that the World Bank is now more open to talk about human rights than it was ten years ago, it continues to refuse to take responsibility for being involved in human rights violations. When it comes to the question of redress, the World Bank refers to the legal system of its member countries, regardless whether or not people affected may have a chance of being fairly treated in their home countries.

Nonetheless, there is a way to get heard: people affected by a World Bank project can file a complaint with the World Bank Inspection Panel. Even though the Bank has had no human rights

### **Accountability within the World Bank Group**

The World Bank Inspection Panel was created in 1993 to enhance accountability to local communities who feel they have been or could be affected by Bank financed projects, such as road projects in tropical rainforests and dams in highly populated areas. The Inspection Panel allows affected people to request an investigation into the World Bank's role in projects, and the extent to which the Bank has complied with its social and environmental policies.

The Inspection Panel cannot investigate projects undertaken by the divisions of the World Bank that finance the private sector - the International Finance Corporation and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency. These agencies now have an Office of Compliance Advisor/Ombudsman (CAO). The CAO has a somewhat broader mandate than the Inspection Panel, which can only investigate whether the Bank has violated its own policies, and has problem solving and advisory roles.

policy, the Panel has, since its inception in 1993, interpreted certain Bank policies and procedures to incorporate human rights issues. The Panel has identified four circumstances in which Bank policies and procedures require it to take human rights issues into account:

The Bank must ensure that its projects do not contravene the borrower's international human

rights commitments;

The Bank must determine whether human rights issues may impede compliance with Bank policies as part of its project due-diligence;

The Bank must interpret the requirements of the Indigenous Peoples policy in accordance with the policy's human rights objective;

The Bank must consider human rights protections enshrined in national constitutions or other sources of domestic law.

However, the Panel can only identify policy violations, and is limited to making recommendations to the Board of Directors. Thus far, some recommendations to improve human rights elements in projects have been accepted.

The Inspection Panel does not investigate projects of the World Bank divisions that support private sector initiatives, the Investment Finance Corporation and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency; they have a similar office, called the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman, established in 1999.

Beyond these internal mechanisms, there is no avenue for external accountability of the World Bank. As an international institution the Bank claims immunity from both international and national law and cases cannot be filed in courts.

Although the legal situation is clear, there has been only a small shift in the Bank's attitude - the establishing of the Inspection Panel and dialogue partnerships. Given the lack of World Bank operational policies on human rights, people affected are limited to other courses of action which may or may not be effective, such as media attention, public hearings and the lobbying of government representatives.

*Veronika Wenner interned with the Upstream Journal from September to December. A German national, she has returned there to continue a career in law.*



### **On the Bujagali River, Uganda**

The government of Uganda is constructing a 250 megawatts dam near Bujagali Falls with the help of the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB). A spectacular series of cascading rapids, Ugandans consider the falls a national treasure. Downstream from two other large dams, the Bujagali Project is one of a series of hydroelectric dams planned on the Nile.

The government of Uganda considers the dam to be part of the solution to the country's persistent energy problem, but the livelihoods of about 6,800 people are directly affected by this project. It will have an impact on the fisheries and submerge highly productive agricultural land.

Despite an ongoing investigation into claims filed by civil society groups regarding violations of social and environmental policies of the World Bank and the AfDB, the construction of the dam proceeds. In 2008 the Inspection Panel concluded that project managers did not comply fully with environmental requirements, did not consider the 95% of people not connected to the power grid, and did not consider important cultural and spiritual matters associated with the Bujagali.

Photo: International Rivers

If you wish to comment on the lack of a human rights policy at the World Bank, Canada's representative is Executive Director Samy Watson.  
[swatson1@worldbank.org](mailto:swatson1@worldbank.org)

## Labour rights get some protection at one World Bank division

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) is the only division of the World Bank Group with protection of labour rights in its lending policies. Its Performance Standards define clients' roles and responsibilities for managing their projects and the requirements for receiving and retaining IFC support.

The Performance Standard objectives include

- establishing, maintaining and improving the worker-management relationship,
- promoting the fair treatment, non-discrimination and equal opportunity of workers and compliance with national labour and employment laws,
- protecting the workforce by addressing child labour and forced labour,
- promoting safe and healthy working conditions and the health of workers.

No other division of the World Bank, including the International Development Association which provides funds to the poorest countries, has a policy on labour standards.

## Disability and the World Bank

The World Bank estimates a worldwide rate of disability about 10-12% in poor countries. Poverty and disability represent a vicious circle: disability causes poverty due to the overall poor living conditions. These are associated with malnutrition, poor access to health care, and education opportunities, which leads to a higher rate of disability.

The former World Bank President James Wolfensohn created the World Bank Disability and Development Team. Its main goals are mainstreaming disability issues and the rights of people with disabilities into World Bank operations, building partnerships, and leveraging financial resources and skilled staff through financing projects including disability issues, collecting data and statistics, research and analyses, technical assistance and knowledge sharing.

Its success has been mixed. Its disability training events were attended by few World Bank task team leaders, but the number of projects with a reference to disability has increased. The World Bank also participates in the Global Partnership on Disability and Development, a forum that includes developing countries, bilateral and multilateral donors, UN agencies, NGOs, foundations, and other stakeholders.



### Group of miners entering shaft at Glubokya mine

Photo: Jim Pickerell, World Bank

Mining and steel production accounts for 40 per cent of the Ukraine's export revenue, but has suffered from the lack of modernization since the collapse of the Soviet Union. For example, in November 2007 more than 100 people died in the Zasyadko coal mine caused by a methane explosion. Days later more workers were injured and killed by similar explosions in the same mine.

Coal mining deaths range from 0.009 per million tonnes of coal mined in Australia through 0.034 in USA to 4 in China and 7 in Ukraine. China's total death toll from coal mining averages well over 4000 per year. However, the picture is improving: in the 1950s the annual death toll in coal mines was 70,000, in the 1980s it was 40,000 and 1990s it was 10,000. Ukraine's coal mine death toll is over two hundred per year. The World Bank is providing over \$300 million in support of mining and energy in the Ukraine.

# The financial crisis

## An uncertain future for Canada's foreign aid

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BY SARAH BABBAGE

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**I**n November's speech from the throne, the Canadian government promised to continue to increase its spending on foreign aid.

However, with a worldwide recession beginning, developing countries will be watching closely to see if the government keeps its promise.

Canada spends more than \$2.2 billion annually on foreign aid. A decrease in aid funding is possible, according to Bill Morton, Senior Researcher in Development Cooperation at the North-South Institute.

"Financial crises put pressure on government budgets overall and aid tends to be a particularly vulnerable part of their budgets," he said, adding that if aid is cut it will be unfortunate because

Canada is currently on track with its aid commitments. Canada promised to double aid between 2001 and 2011, and to double aid to Africa between

2004 and 2009. According to Morton, Canada would likely meet these goals if spending was not impacted by the recession.

"No one really knows what the full extent of the crisis could be or whether aid will be affected," Morton said. So far, the Conservative government has tried to reduce government spending by capping civil servant wages, reducing equalization transfers to the provinces, and ending the \$1.95 sum per vote that goes to parties after elections. The government is also considering selling its corporate assets.

No other governments have resorted to cutting aid yet. The OECD Development Assistance Committee has issued a call for developed countries to maintain their aid budgets and many governments have responded by pledging to do so. Whether they are actually able to maintain them

remains to be seen.

Foreign aid is now more important than ever to keep the world economy stabilized. The IMF recently announced it would require an additional \$100 billion US to fight recession in developing countries.

Poor countries will be strongly affected by an aid decrease, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa where foreign assistance represents more than 10% of many governments' budgets.

Morton warned that the crisis will have a variety of impacts on developing countries. Trade will be hurt as developed countries take protectionist measures. Remittances from workers abroad will decrease as unemployment rises. Foreign and direct investment in the countries will also decline.

"There is a distinct possibility that countries that have made significant advances in development will go backward," Morton said. Such backpedalling occurred in the 1990s, when foreign aid fell following the cold war. Many countries lost the gains they made in the 1970s and 1980s.

The recession will also make it more difficult to negotiate climate change treaties with heavy polluters like China and India, who won't want to risk slowing their growth rate. The financial crisis may reduce energy costs, and lower oil prices may encourage foreign trade.

Public opinion will play an important role in Canada's decision to cut or maintain aid spending. Canadians have shown strong support for international aid in the past and if they maintain this support through the crisis, the government will have difficulty justifying any aid cuts. So far, the aid budget has been protected, with the government honouring its promise of an 8% increase in the 2009 budget.

*The global food and fuel crisis has driven 100 million more people into poverty.*

If you wish to comment on Canadian foreign aid, contact:

Minister of Foreign Affairs Lawrence Cannon.  
House of Commons, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6  
Email: Cannon.L@parl.gc.ca

## Venez voir le nouveau blog du Comité pour la justice sociale!

C'est un nouveau moyen facile pour faire une différence. Joignez-nous pour lire nos articles intéressants, en savoir plus sur les droits humains et les questions sur la justice sociale, partagez vos commentaires, provoquez des débats et sensibilisez le public sur différents sujets, tels que :

- L'Industrie minière canadienne
- Le Consensus du Costa Rica
- RDC : La situation au Nord-Kivu
- La Souveraineté alimentaire
- Norvège donne un coup de main au Libéria
- L'abolition de l'Esclavage

Développer par les volontaires du CJC qui croit qu'à travers le dialogue nous pouvons promouvoir l'éducation et faire comprendre la nécessité d'une société plus juste. Nous voulons avoir de vos nouvelles! Visitez notre blog à [blogcjs.wordpress.com](http://blogcjs.wordpress.com) (français)



## Check out the Social Justice Committee's new blog!

It is a new and easy way to get involved and make a difference. Join us to read our interesting articles, learn more about human rights and social justice issues, share your comments, spark debate and raise public awareness on different topics such as :

- The Canadian Mining Industry
- Le Consensus du Costa Rica
- RDC: The Situation in North-Kivu
- La Souveraineté Alimentaire
- Norway Gives a Helping Hand to Liberia
- L'abolition de l'Esclavage ?

Developed by SJC volunteers who believe that through dialogue we can promote education and understanding to make our world more just. We want to hear from you! Visit [blogsjc.wordpress.com](http://blogsjc.wordpress.com) (English version).

## US and Europe commit 40 times more money to rescue financial firms than to fight crises of climate change and poverty

A Nov. 2008 report by the Institute for Policy Studies stated that the World Bank failed to offer an aggressive plan at the G20 emergency summit for addressing the poverty crisis in the developing world. The World Bank's "program of action" for developing countries to counter the impact of the financial crisis adds up to a maximum of less than \$50 billion annually of new monies over the next three years. That's the equivalent of only 1.2 percent of the \$4.1 trillion in financial sector rescue packages deployed by the rich countries. All of the World Bank's increased financing would come in the form of interest-bearing loans.

- Financial Bailouts: \$4,100 billion (some estimates place the eventual cost at closer to \$10 trillion)
- Development Aid: \$91 billion
- Climate change: \$13 billion

## Difficult times lie ahead for workers, after years of increasing inequality - ILO

The ILO's first Global Wage Report predicts that slow or negative economic growth, combined with highly volatile prices, will erode the real wages of many workers, particularly the low-wage and poorer households. In many countries, the middle classes will also be seriously affected. Tensions are likely to intensify over wages, and the workplace may become more vulnerable to wage-related disputes. Since 1995, inequality between top wages and bottom wages has increased in more than two thirds of the countries for which data are available. Among developed countries, Germany, Poland and the United States are amongst the countries where the gap between top and bottom wages has increased most rapidly. In other regions, inequality has also increased sharply, particularly in Argentina, China and Thailand.

***“Terror, whether perpetrated by terrorists or the state, has become the order of the day.”***

## **Final words from murdered Sri Lankan journalist Lasantha Wickrematunge**



*As Chief Editor of the “Sunday Leader” Wickrematunge was a vocal critic of corruption and abuse of authority and a critic of the war who advocated a negotiated political solution to the conflict. On January 8 he was shot by four unidentified gunmen riding motorcycles as he drove to work. This is an excerpt from an editorial he wrote in anticipation of his own death.*

**“No other profession calls on its practitioners to lay down their lives for their art save the armed forces and, in Sri Lanka, journalism.** In the course of the past few years, independent media have increasingly come under attack. Electronic and print-media institutions have been burnt, bombed, sealed and coerced. Countless journalists have been harassed, threatened and killed. It has been my honour to belong to all those categories and now especially the last.

I have been in the business of journalism a good long time. Many things have changed in Sri Lanka during that time, and the greater part of that change has been for the worse. We find ourselves in the midst of a civil war ruthlessly prosecuted by protagonists whose bloodlust knows no bounds. Terror, whether perpetrated by terrorists or the state, has become the order of the day. Indeed, murder has become the primary tool whereby the state seeks to control the organs of liberty. Today it is the journalists, tomorrow it will be the judges. For neither group have the risks ever been higher or the stakes lower.

### **Press Freedom 2008**

### **Better figures despite a hostile climate, more internet repression**

In 2008:

- 60 journalists were killed
- 673 journalists were arrested
- 929 were physically attacked or threatened
- 353 media outlets were censored
- 29 journalists were kidnapped

Internet:

- 1 blogger was killed
- 59 bloggers were arrested
- 45 were physically attacked
- 1,740 websites were blocked, shut down or suspended

For comparison, in 2007:

- 86 journalists were killed
- 887 journalists were arrested
- 1,511 were physically attacked or threatened
- 528 media outlets were censored
- 67 journalists were kidnapped

Source: Reporters Without Borders [www.rsf.org](http://www.rsf.org)

Neither should our distaste for the war be interpreted to mean that we support the Tigers. The LTTE are among the most ruthless and bloodthirsty organisations ever to have infested the planet. There is no gainsaying that it must be eradicated. But to do so by violating the rights of Tamil citizens, bombing and shooting them mercilessly, is not only wrong but shames the Sinhalese, whose claim to be custodians of the dhamma is forever called into question by this savagery, much of which is unknown to the public because of censorship.

It is well known that I was on two occasions brutally assaulted, while on another my house was sprayed with machine-gun fire. There was never a serious police inquiry into the perpetrators of these attacks, and the attackers were never apprehended. I have reason to believe the attacks were inspired by the government. When finally I am killed it will be the government that kills me.

[To President Mahinda Rajapaksa] Sadly, for all the dreams you had for our country in your younger days, in just three years you have reduced it to rubble. In the name of patriotism you have trampled on human rights, nurtured unbridled corruption and squandered public money like no other President before you. Indeed, your conduct has been like a small child suddenly let loose in a toyshop. That analogy is perhaps inapt because no child could have caused so much blood to be spilled on this land as you have, or trampled on the rights of its citizens as you do. It can only bring tragedy. As for me, it is with a clear conscience that I go to meet my Maker. I wish, when your time finally comes, you could do the same. I wish.”

# Book review

*Information Communication Technologies and Human Development: Opportunities and Challenges.*  
by Mila Gascó-Hernández, Fran Equiza-López, Manuel Acevedo-Ruiz [editors]. Hershey: Idea Group Pub. 2007.

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BY KEITH DOUGLAS

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**T**his collection of papers is about the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) as a way of improving various aspects of development. ICTs include computing and networking technology, traditional media (radio, television) and telephone (landline, portable). This range of ICTs is matched by the geographic scope: Latin America, the former Eastern Bloc, Asia and Africa.

The book opens by discussing two common principles. The first concerns a general consensus that many ICT projects fail because the proposals are too “top down”. The second is an adoption of Amartya Sen’s “capacities building” approach (unfamiliarity with these ideas will not hamper comprehension).

This chapter on “Enabling the Expansion of Microfinance using Information and Communication Technologies” suggests that ICTs and microfinance can work together. For example, while some Grameen banks still use paper records, 1315 of 1609 now use management information systems. This technology works in synergy with handheld computer devices, which allow field transactions and use of the bank’s resources - a sort of “mobile ATM”. This use was pioneered in Mexico, reflecting the global scope of the microfinance movement.

ICTs not only facilitate savings and loans, they can allow development of income sources. The Grameen Village Phone project, for example, brings communication to the masses, saving time and money, providing local jobs, etc. One such phone project from Bangladesh has been successfully replicated in Uganda.

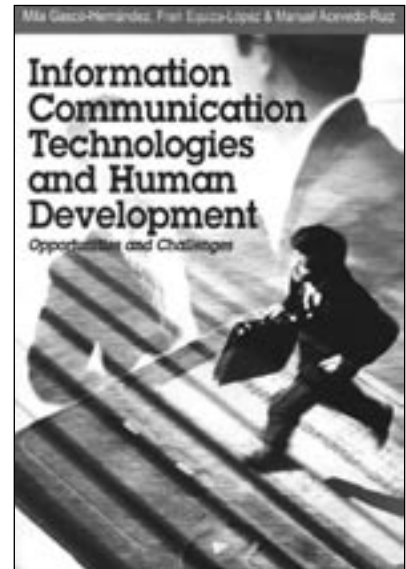
The chapter called “Human Rights Movements and the Internet – From Local Contexts to Global Engagement” discusses how ICTs improve the visibility of grassroots NGOs. One can find Amnesty International and the Social Justice Committee in

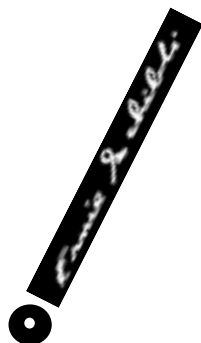
a search engine, for example. ICTs allow easier creation of networks. (It is interesting to note how this implements what systems administrators jokingly call the “eighth layer” of computer networking – humans.) And ICTs permit new forms of action to be taken, the “online sit in” and online civil disobedience (unfortunately including what seems to amount to a directions on how to launch denial of service attacks, which are disruptive or illegal).

The quality of papers in the book is high. Unfortunately, the contributions being of necessity brief, many of the ideas are underdeveloped, although the scope of problems addressed is large. (Details about how to build many of the ICT systems discussed would interest me, but as a policy oriented collection this lack is not a fault.) The papers cover main areas of the developing world and a former Eastern block country. This geographical distribution is a merit of the book, another is the authors. Academics are the plurality of authors, but also represented are international financial institutions, the UN and independent consultants. The book includes a bare bones index (often the case for collections).

Used as a “jumping off point” the book succeeds, and promises many avenues of further progress. Hopefully, in a few years a sequel will inform us the current status of many of the projects discussed and what has been learned.

*A philosopher by training, Keith Douglas was a volunteer with the SJC from 2006-2008 and played a large role in improving our ICT capacity. He now works with Statistics Canada in Ottawa.*





## The economic crisis - the more things change, the more they remain the same?

**D**uring the last several months the western world has begun to experience what will undoubtedly become the worst economic crisis since the Depression.

It was triggered by the collapse of a number of large American banks and financial institutions that had been lending huge quantities of money recklessly and foolishly to people who would never be in a position to repay. The more loans there were, the more commissions and bonuses were paid out! So much for the public perception of banks as conservative and cautious lenders!

Then, as numerous borrowers across the United States, finding themselves unable to repay their mortgages, walked away from their homes, the banks found themselves with a serious lack of liquidity. With no money in their coffers, they have no funds to lend to productive businesses and with that the economy crashes. Thanks to globalization, it quickly spreads to the whole of the western world. A fragile edifice built on trust is destroyed by rapacious greed.

This brings to mind a quote made by a bank executive back some thirty years ago in reference to another lending frenzy. "We were greedy little pigs," he said of the banking community that was lending huge sums of money, not to individuals, at least publicly, but to the world's poorer countries. Then, as now, the emphasis was on making the loans. To whom and for what didn't really matter. And so, dictators by the score borrowed money that lined their pockets, purchased the arms used to repress their people, was wasted on ill thought out projects and the like.

Similar to today, the time arrived when the borrowing countries could not repay these debts. In fact, many had to borrow more just to service them. And we had a crisis. Then, as now, the banks were bailed out. Most did not have to pay for their greed as governments and the international financial institutions such as the IMF and World Bank stepped in.

Those who did have to pay were the countless citizens of the debtor countries who never saw a penny of the loans. The infamous structural adjustment programs (SAPs) that exist even today, though under different names, saw to that. Country after country had to follow the dictates of the economic powers that led to more hunger, less health and education, loss of control of hydro, water, communication services, etc. It did not matter that the money went to dictators or that, thanks to high interest rates imposed by the West, it has been repaid many times over.

An important difference between the "debt crisis" of the 80s and 90s and now is that back then the borrowing countries were almost totally judged responsible for the crisis. This time a major share of the responsibility is being laid at the feet of those who made the foolish loans and those who enacted the legislation that made it possible.

However, it is one thing to indicate responsibility; it is quite another to exact retribution from those bearing it. The American government's response to date is to have the taxpayer bail out the banks (and possibly the auto industry) to the tune of almost one trillion dollars and counting. Again, the victims will bear much of the costs, for example, through unemployment and the loss of savings set aside for the education of children or retirement.

When the victims protest, the powers that be respond that this is the only way to keep matters from getting worse. Maybe, but if that is true, it indicates that something is terribly wrong with the system. Any system which continually rewards the foolish and the crooked while punishing the victims is morally wrong and has to go. The people of Africa, much of Asia and Latin America already know that. The Latin Americans especially are actively searching for a new and better economic order. What will we do?

Ernie Schibli is a founding member of the SJC, and one of our most popular workshop animators. Contact: [ernie@s-j-c.net](mailto:ernie@s-j-c.net)



## National survey shows high level of interest in magazines covering international development and human rights, like the *Upstream Journal*

With the financial support of the Canada Magazine Fund, the *Upstream Journal* commissioned six questions in a national telephone poll fielded by Strategic Communications, a political consulting firm. A random sample of 1,012 adult Canadian residents was interviewed.

The two questions that are direct indicators of the magazine market are

- 1) How often do you read magazines of particular types? and
- 2) What is your interest in a Canadian magazine on international development and human rights?

**Over half (55%) of all survey respondents indicated interest in a magazine like the *Upstream Journal*. 15% stated that they would be ‘very interested’ in such a magazine.**

One in five (22%) adult Canadians reported that they ‘very often’ read magazines covering issues such as poverty and human rights, with a further 47% ‘occasionally’ reading this type of magazine. This reported readership is statistically identical to the number who report reading magazines about business and economics (21%) and politics (21%).

Respondents who said they read political magazines ‘very often’ are more likely to be in the 65 and older age category (33%). This is also true for ‘very often’ readers of magazines that focus on ‘social issues such as poverty and human rights’ (33%).

Respondents either ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ interested (559 respondents, 55% of the total sample) in a Canadian magazine that focuses on international development and human rights were asked what sort of content they would like to see in such a magazine.

General comments about politics and world affairs (12%) are mentioned the most as desired magazine content by respondents interested in a magazine such as the *Upstream Journal*. This is closely followed by mentions of environmental issues (10%). More specific content suggestions are ‘economics & government spending’ (7%), ‘Canadian content’ (6%), and ‘Canada on the global stage’ (5%). This latter category is doubled for people who indicated that they already read ‘social justice’ magazines (10%) and those ‘very interested’ in a magazine such as the *Upstream Journal* (11%).

Summary: A substantial percentage of Canadian adults (55%) report being interested in purchasing a magazine covering issues like those in the *Upstream Journal*, with approximately one-in-seven (15%) Canadians being ‘very interested.’ Within this smaller sub-population of ‘very interested,’ reducing poverty and inequality is the major issue of global concern, and they would like to see articles on how Canada is involved in this issue as well as news on environmental issues, economics, and government spending.



Canadian Heritage  
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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Magazine Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage toward our project costs.



The Social Justice Committee  
Le Comité pour la justice sociale

**The Social Justice Committee of Montreal** has been working to raise awareness of the root causes of hunger, poverty and repression in the world through our education programs since 1975. We work in solidarity with organizations in a number of Third World countries in the search for a more just and sustainable global socio-economic system.

The Social Justice Committee depends on financial support from its members and the general public. It is a registered charitable organization; donations are tax deductible.

**We invite you to donate today, and become a member by supporting the mission of the Social Justice Committee to:**

- Analyze the underlying structural and global causes of poverty, human rights violations and other social injustices.
- Contribute to informed popular participation in eliminating these injustices.
- Work in solidarity, and through education, to transform our world into a just society.

The Social Justice Committee believes that social and economic change is essential for the creation of a sustainable world, and

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The *Upstream Journal* is published by the **Social Justice Committee of Montreal**. The *Upstream Journal* focuses on economic, social and cultural rights, reflecting the SJC perspective of Third World poverty as a human rights issue. We try to go "upstream" to examine root causes of poverty and injustice.

Subscription to the *Upstream Journal* is only \$5 a year. It is published five times a year, at irregular intervals.

Views expressed in the *Upstream Journal* are the writers' own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Social Justice Committee. We welcome the submission of illustrations and articles on aspects of international development and human rights.

**Connect**

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Le Comité pour la justice sociale remercie le **ministère des Relations internationales** de son appui à sa mission d'éducation à la solidarité internationale.

The Social Justice Committee thanks the **Québec Ministry of International Relations** for its support of our mission of education on behalf of international solidarity.

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Palestine - "Seated on the wall." Stencil by Arofish

## The 1000 PEACEWOMEN ACROSS THE GLOBE exhibit is coming to Montreal!



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Hosted by the Social Justice Committee and the Queen of Angels Academy, in partnership with the YWCA.

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Keep up to date on these and other activities - sign up to get our email bulletin.  
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# Alone

Street artist of Tehran

