

From the fight against fascism to the struggle for sustainable development: how the Sword of the Spirit, CIIR and Progressio worked for international relations advancing social justice



A RECORD OF CHANGE IN A CHANGING WORLD



Jon Barnes

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Celebrating a life

Martin McEnery

Former chair of Progressio's board of trustees

THIS PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS the work of the non-governmental organisation first born as the Sword of the Spirit in 1940 at the start of the Second World War before becoming the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) in 1965 and then bearing the name Progressio from 2006.

After concluding programme operations in March 2017, Progressio closed in June 2017 and deregistration with Companies House and the UK Charity Commission was completed in March 2018. One of the board's final acts was to commission this publication. Its purpose, rather than mourning a loss, is to record and celebrate the endeavours and achievements of the Sword of the Spirit, CIIR and Progressio during its long productive life.

After mobilising Catholic opinion and action in the UK against fascism and totalitarianism in Europe in the 1940s and 1950s, its life spanned several vibrant phases of work from the 1960s supporting national and international struggles for peace, democracy, human rights and sustainable development in the developing world.

It was my great privilege, and a very severe challenge, to be chair of Progressio's board during the last nine and a half years of the organisation's life, including the final period of closure. In presenting this account of the work of the Sword of the Spirit, CIIR and Progressio, I am reminded of a writer who once stated: *"The only thing you take with you when you're gone is what you leave behind."*

A life-long commitment to solidarity and justice

In leading, nurturing and supporting action for social, political and economic change in the world based on justice for the poor and oppressed and fulfilment of their rights, the organisation achieved an influence that belied its small size. Rooted in Catholic Social Teaching yet independent of the official Catholic Church, it worked with people of all faiths or none for solidarity between people within and across borders. A key aim in its work was to make social justice a core feature of statecraft. This included influencing the UK as an important actor in international affairs.

Progressio, along with CIIR and the Sword of the Spirit before it, accumulated an extraordinary body of wisdom in pursuing the still ongoing challenge of achieving greater fairness in the world. Over the course of more than 76 years of committed labour from its UK base and in several regions of the developing world, it pioneered a development approach that valued partner organisations' and communities' own strengths and responded to their needs and interests. In both the organisation's international policy work and its on-the-ground country programmes, it sought to enhance partners' own capacity and strategies for change. The empowerment of partners and people struggling against poverty, marginalisation, discrimination and injustice was not a process driven from outside but one that they shaped themselves. It was their strengths, wisdom, voices, influence and profile that the organisation promoted and amplified in performing its support role.

Progressio's continued commitment to the principles of solidarity and accompaniment in its work upheld the legacy of CIIR and Sword of the Spirit, reflecting the organisation's enduring values rooted in fundamental respect for the dignity of every human being.



Reflecting on values for today

The need for these principles and values today is just as important as ever, and maybe even more so, in an increasingly divided and uncertain world. It is in this spirit that Progressio's board of trustees commissioned this publication to preserve and promote the organisation's legacy.

In sharing this chronicle of the organisation's efforts over the decades, we believe the experiences and lessons involved in the various phases of that journey provide implicit food for thought on how far work for sustainable development and social justice involving the NGO sector in the UK has advanced and what its future trajectory might be.

We hope that this task of wider reflection will be taken up by readers, particularly those involved in studying or strengthening the effectiveness of NGOs and civil society organisations and their institutional development and practice. At the same time, the board offers this record as a possible source of insight, guidance, hope, encouragement and inspiration for all committed to helping to tackle the many challenges that our planet and its people face. The words of one of the organisation's original founders, uttered in the mid-1970s, ring true today:

"We live in a 'time of trouble', a time when men have lost their way, when ideas do not seem to add up, and the new directions are hard to find. But these are also times when those who really love and work and pray have an impact that they could never have in more confident and comfortable days."

Barbara Ward, speaking at CIIR's 1974 AGM. Source: CIIR's 1975 annual report

Celebrating the contribution of people

Whatever its impact in keeping the spirit of Progressio alive in response to changing and profoundly challenging times, this publication is primarily intended to reflect and celebrate the contribution made by those who carried out and supported the organisation's efforts. The value of their hard work and commitment, the approaches taken, the results achieved and the lessons learnt hopefully speaks for itself in these pages. This affirmation is a meaningful legacy in its own right.

To support this aim, the publication's boxes include a selection of short vignettes. These are written in a personal capacity by former staff and board members, as well as development workers (DWs) who shared knowledge and expertise with partner organisations in capacity-strengthening placements on the ground. They illustrate the organisation's approach, recall particular initiatives and strands of work, and bring to life the challenges, successes and dilemmas involved. The contributors also reflect on what their involvement in the organisation, and the significance of its closure, has meant for them personally, professionally and politically.

It has not been possible, due to time, space and information constraints, to involve or acknowledge every individual in the text, but hopefully all those who have been closely associated with the organisation, whether or not they are mentioned, will feel they are present in the story this publication tells. While for some outsiders this record may seem quite extensive, those who were intimately involved in the life of Progressio, CIIR and the Sword of the Spirit may consider it a brief synthesis, given the scope, diversity and depth of the organisation's work as well as the complex challenges it faced at each stage.

This legacy document has been placed on Progressio's [website](#) which contains information and resources on the organisation's work since the early 2000s in particular. Though dormant since Progressio's closure, the site remains accessible in archived form to users. Those wishing to delve even more deeply into the life of the Sword of the Spirit, CIIR and Progressio for the purposes of research, particularly its role in the post-war years and the pre-digital age, are encouraged to consult the organisation's archive located at [Westminster Diocesan Archives](#) (see description and contact details on the final page of the publication). Additional CIIR records are kept at the [Institute of Commonwealth Studies](#).



A difficult decision and bringing closure

The decision to close the organisation was a painfully difficult one for its board of trustees to take, not least when Progressio, following the example set by CIIR and the Sword of the Spirit, was registering continued achievements and displaying further innovation in its work for social justice and sustainable development. Though we were able by this time to demonstrate a solid legacy of achievement as the chapters of this publication attest, the continued challenges of development, unresolved and new, as well as recent positive progress providing opportunities for further traction, meant Progressio was in many ways still on a mission.

Progressio had been driving forward a new wave of initiatives on women's rights and gender justice as well as tackling the challenges of citizen voice and participation in conflict-affected states. It was also further strengthening its longstanding record of supporting the livelihoods and resilience of communities battling to protect the environment and natural resources they need to survive and thrive.

Progressio, building on the organisation's existing combination of international policy work with the placement of professionally qualified DWs to support partner organisations in the global South, had also successfully joined the UK's International Citizen Service (ICS) youth volunteering scheme. With its focus on harnessing the energy of youth to action in the global North and South for sustainable development, ICS held out major promise, both as a new complementary strand of Progressio's strategy for change and as a source of institutional renewal.

These positive developments, however, occurred against a backdrop of growing concern over Progressio's longer-term finances. The concern was due in particular to the mounting uncertainties surrounding continuation of the overall Programme Partnership Agreement scheme (PPA) under which the UK's Department for International Development (DfID) provided strategic core funding for particular NGOs. Progressio had repeatedly benefited from the PPA scheme as a successful applicant since the start of the 2000s, just as it had earlier continually received block grants for its work from the government's Overseas Development Administration (ODA) before DfID's 1997 creation as a separate UK ministry.

As the end of the overall PPA scheme became increasingly probable in the light of political changes in the UK – its abolition was eventually confirmed at the end of 2016 – Progressio urgently sought other sources of funding to reduce reliance on the PPA. In order to remain financially viable, it also had to downsize its operations. This included cutting staff and reducing the number of countries it worked in. We had to leave our work in Timor-Leste after 36 years' support for its people's struggle for independence and subsequent nation-building, and we also had to withdraw from most of our longstanding work in South and Central America. All of this resulted in a loss of local programme experience and expertise.

With the failure to identify and secure new sources of sufficient alternative funding to make up for the impending loss of a grant the size of that provided by the PPA, the Board concluded unanimously in September 2016 that the prudent route ahead was for us to close. It vowed to do so in a carefully staged way so as to support our staff during the final period, ensure the financial viability of activities coming to an end and also enable ongoing partner projects to continue beyond Progressio. After concluding programme operations in 2017, Progressio's closure in June that year was followed by deregistration with Companies House and the UK Charity Commission in March 2018.

End of a partnership and final words of thanks

No celebration of CIIR and Progressio's work is complete without recognising the vital support that DfID – and the ODA before it – had hitherto provided to the organisation. Indeed, many of its achievements would not have been possible without such official UK commitment, matching the vital contributions made by other donors to whom we are also grateful.



At each stage, this funding relationship with the UK government enabled CIIR and Progressio to achieve results, strengthen programme innovation and boost its delivery of impact, undertake work in difficult environments, and pursue change on challenging issues requiring long-term investment. It also enabled the organisation to develop new systems and areas of work and contribute to the UK's diverse NGO community promoting sustainable development. But with the unravelling of this partnership, a longstanding key foundation of the organisation's stability and success was removed.

As well as the emotions involved in letting go the organisation's work for people-powered development, the last two years were challenging in institutional management terms. Yet we ensured a closure process that was both fair and controlled, first under the leadership of Mark Lister and then James Collins who took over as chief executive officer in late 2016, combining this role with his existing one as finance director. I thank them respectively for their commitment and dedication and loyalty. In the final 12 months of the closure process, James' wisdom and his steady hand on the helm provided powerful support to staff and indeed to me personally.

A great tribute is likewise due to the staff in both the UK and Progressio's focus countries. While gradually dwindling in numbers as programme operations were being concluded, they coped with emotions and uncertainty and stuck to the task at hand.

I also wish to pay tribute to my predecessors in chairing the organisation and to the talented leaders who nurtured and guided its daily work and evolution over the decades (see **Annex** containing a timeline of institutional landmarks and summary of the organisation's evolution and work). They gave staff the freedom to make the most of their knowledge and expertise as a crucial ingredient of the organisation's success. Their respective job titles changed according to the management fashions and institutional arrangements of the day, but each leader faced the constant challenge of ensuring the organisation's survival while succeeding in different ways in bringing new dynamism to its work.

The organisation was led for much of its life by women. This attribute no doubt underpinned its rapid engagement on the needs and rights of women in development and its increasingly solid commitment to addressing gender as a central feature of its approach.

The work of CIIR and Progressio, moreover, reflecting its commitment to locally led empowerment, was increasingly driven by the inspirational leadership on the ground of country representatives from the global South itself. They brought creativity and passion to their work with partner organisations, and the vitality of their contribution greatly influenced the organisation's outlook and approach. The organisation's impact also rested on the daily accompaniment of partners by development workers, most of who came from countries of the global South by the start of the new millennium. The organisation is equally indebted to them all.

It was the collective effort of people that made the organisation's work special and I thank the thousands of individuals – including the organisation's members and supporters over the years – who gave it influential life.

December 2019

Martin McEnery was chair of Progressio from 2008 to 2017



CIIR

PROGRESSIO



Marking a milestone

Introduction

75 years of Milestones

Progressio (formerly Sword of the Spirit and CIIR) has been campaigning on many fronts for 75 years. Here is a glimpse of some of the major milestones in the life of this vital organisation...



1940

📌 **Sword of the Spirit takes up the fight**
Sword of the Spirit is founded by Cardinal Hinsley, Archbishop of Westminster. Publishes pamphlets decrying Facism, serving as a voice of British Catholics against Totalitarianism.



1960

📌 **Advocacy work begins in Zimbabwe**
CIIR lobbies to draw attention to the plight of people suffering torture and eviction due to resettlement in Zimbabwe.



1973

📌 **Work begins to support women in Yemen**
CIIR establishes training for midwives and rural health workers, as well as literacy programmes for women, in a country where a third of women are illiterate.



1974

📌 **First development worker sent to Nicaragua**
CIIR becomes first international development charity to appoint regional development workers, through tumultuous times – the revolution, natural disasters and the Contra War.



1980

📌 **Pushing for justice in South Africa**
CIIR becomes one of the most persistent voices calling for an end to apartheid, drawing attention to the unique injustices. Supporters write postcards to lobby MPs and MEPs.



1985

📌 **CIIR calls for change in Timor-Leste**
CIIR fights to end the Indonesian occupation, lobbying and mobilising religious institutions and the UK government, raising awareness through quarterly newsletter *Timor Link*.



1998

📌 **CIIR enters Haiti**
CIIR begins work in Haiti, where inhabitants face issues such as environmental degradation. For Haitians living in the neighbouring Dominican Republic, problems are particularly acute. Many workers are



2005

📌 **Starts monitoring elections in Somaliland**
Progressio commences work with local partners to support and strengthen a burgeoning civil society within a very fragile state. At the invitation of the country's electoral commission, we go on to monitor three elections and publish reports on our findings.



2008

📌 **Hitting home with big campaigns**
"Say No to Terminator Seeds" campaign highlights practice of genetically modifying plants to produce sterile seeds. Supporters send 2000 postcards to MPs to raise awareness. In May 2008, UN agree to keep the ban on the seeds.



2012

📌 **ICS launches**
Progressio is selected to join the UK government's International Citizen Service (ICS) programme, involving young adult African, Central American and UK volunteers working side by side with communities e.g. to help build eco-latrines and help fight gender-based violence.



2016

📌 **ZimFare/ZimFast**
Progressio launches new fundraising challenges in solidarity with Zimbabweans and other marginalised people – see pages 6-7. Please join ZimFare/ZimFast or see the back page to donate now.



CIIR

PROGRESSIO

Marking a milestone

Introduction

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Setting the scene, sketching the overall picture

THE UK'S NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR working on and in the developing world has expanded and diversified significantly since the 1960s, in response to the wide-ranging political, economic and social problems affecting the lives of people and the national and international policy shifts involved. One NGO that made a significant contribution to the sector's work and evolution was Progressio, which was originally born as the Sword of the Spirit in 1940 at the start of the Second World War and operated between 1965 and 2006 as the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR).

In July 2017, Progressio, after the closure of its programme operations in March, held a celebration of the organisation's 76 years' work. The event took place at the London office of the Catholic international development agency CAFOD – one of the many institutions and initiatives it had helped to foster over the decades. Progressio's exit from the UK's international development community, in keeping with the organisation's values, was typically unassuming. It also came at a time of continued political upheaval in the UK, in the aftermath of the 2008-09 international banking crisis, in which the role and future of the NGO sector, despite – or perhaps because of – its status as a recognised force in UK public life, was being increasingly challenged and questioned.

Whether Progressio's disappearance had wider significance in this climate or was simply another story of a smaller NGO finally losing the perennial battle for financial survival in a competitive and unpredictable funding environment is for others to reflect on. Either way, the organisation's pioneering work and quietly influential role in the UK's development sector over the decades meant its closure was somewhat of a milestone. In telling the story of its life, this publication implicitly raises the question of what its lasting relevance will be for future work promoting sustainable development. Its prime aim, however, is to provide a chronicle of the organisation's valuable endeavours over the years in the hope that the record constitutes a valuable legacy in itself.

Continuity and change

How the organisation worked

Over the 76-year course of its incarnation as the Sword of the Spirit, CIIR and Progressio, the organisation addressed an extensive range of issues, both in its UK-based awareness-raising and policy influencing and through its overseas work supporting local partner organisations (see Jumble Display below). The diversity of its endeavours was the product of the organisation's evolving remit as its attention shifted from the justice and peace challenges of Europe during and after the Second World War to the role of the Catholic Church in wider global affairs in the 1950s and then to the situation of the developing world from the 1960s onwards. CIIR's rapid engagement with the manifold problems affecting people in countries and regions of the developing world created an expansive dynamic of its own.

CIIR and Progressio adjusted the organisation's [ways of working](#) in order to strengthen their approach and impact and add new dimensions over the years. Yet the essential nature of its suite of interventions remained in many ways constant, as outlined below.

International advocacy: pressing for policy change

One mainstay of the organisation's work was its UK-based education ([policy and advocacy](#)) work on poverty and injustice in the global South and international policies affecting sustainable development. It combined research and analysis drawing on deep country knowledge with influencing policy-makers, with targeted information work and public-awareness-raising used to boost the impact of parliamentary lobbying. In support of these aims, the work involved a dynamic publishing programme, events, conferences and speaker tours by leading thinkers and practitioners from partner organisations in the global South, as well as supporting journalists and engaging the media.

Challenging stance, collaborative approach

This work often sharply challenged decision-makers and set out the crucial need for different policy action. Yet it also displayed an independent and impartial commitment to

The right to water Corporate accountability
The Church and conflict in Northern Ireland Guyana *The war on drugs* Climate change Pinochet and solidarity with Chile Bilingual education Mexico's Zapatista uprising Martial law in the Philippines *Conflict in Angola* Business and human rights Liberation theology Namibia's struggle for independence Fragile states Agro-ecology Lomé Convention Preferential option for the poor HIV prevention Income generation Women's rights *Traditional birth attendants* **Alternative media** Africa Centre Third World debt Agro-forestry Crisis in Yemen Rhodesia's internal settlement Peace and disarmament Dominican Haitian rights Make Poverty History Earth summit Mining Capacity-building Baby milk Intermediate technology Zimbabwe's farm workers Aid spending and conditions Partnership Local government Civil society Indonesian repression in Papua Ecuador's indigenous movement Ethical investment Ecumenical action New International Economic Order US intervention in El Salvador Human rights and communism Hong Kong handover New world order Southern Africa's future Oil and the developing countries G8 Rural livelihoods in Honduras Conflict and human rights in Colombia Participation SDGs Human rights impunity Institutional strengthening Women's leadership Asia's financial crisis Annexation of East Timor Argentina's dirty war FGM The EU's Common Agricultural Policy Catholic Social Teaching Youth volunteering Gulf War Farmers' rights to save seeds Participatory budgeting War on terror Peru's urban environment Good governance Environmental sustainability ICS Election monitoring Disability rights Zimbabwe's crisis of governance and rights Human rights truth commissions Corporate codes of conduct Land grabs Sexual and reproductive health and rights UNCTAD Mozambique Advocacy capacity Ending apartheid World population Migrant workers Korean reunification Food security and nutrition Primary health care Literacy Community radio Faith leaders and tackling HIV stigma Latin America Bureau Capacity building Trade justice Empowerment Biodiversity Future of the UN Nicaragua's right to survive UK race relations El Salvador's peace accords Indigenous rights The fight against fascism Haiti's struggle for democracy Archbishop Romero Gender and masculinity Death squads in Guatemala Children's rights



pluralistic dialogue across party political and ideological lines. The organisation used the extensive scope and depth of its relationships with partner organisations in the global South to marshal grassroots evidence for its policy proposals and to share local insights of people-centred struggles for change.

In the 2000s Progressio went on to run higher-profile advocacy campaigns, investing in greater engagement of its members and supporters to lend greater public weight to its targeting of decision-makers. Throughout its life, moreover, the organisation, as an outward expression of its own rich entrepreneurship, saw itself as part of a wider movement. It seized opportunities to work in coalition with others, support networks and even spawn new initiatives and organisations.

Catholic Social Teaching: an ethical compass

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) provided the ethical compass for the Sword of the Spirit, CIIR and Progressio, guiding the organisation on how to live out its beliefs in the world.

CST, rooted in Scripture, emerged originally from church concerns with the impact of the industrial revolution on the lives of people, as expressed by the Pope Leo XIII's 1891 *Rerum Novarum* encyclical 'On the Condition of Labour'. It has been shaped since by church leaders and social movements, with a series of papal letters since the 1960s covering the Catholic Church's relations with the world and the challenges of sustainable development. The 2006 renaming of CIIR as Progressio invoked Pope Paul VI's famous 1967 encyclical on development, *Populorum Progressio*.

At the heart of CST is a call to treat everyone as our brothers and sisters and planetary life as something that we all share. It urges us to consider how each and all of us can live in this world for the common good. CST has addressed major issues in the world such as respect for life, the management of labour, the sharing of resources and the care of creation. It touches on many aspects of life: from the family to international development, from how we think of the homeless to how we care for the environment, and from how we shop and consume to the rights of workers and the dignity of work.

Core principles open to all

CST is not an ideology but has developed over time as a result of practical reflection on the realities of modern life. It is based on fundamental core principles which are not dependent on a particular religious belief and can be shared by people of all faiths and none. The principles are:

Dignity: The dignity of, and respect due to, every human being, and the entitlement of each person to freedom, to the use of their skills and creativity, and to the control of their own lives within the social context they live in.

Solidarity: The need for us to live and work with a sense of solidarity with fellow human beings, recognising we belong to each other and need to consider always our global neighbours.

The common good: Ensuring that we act, make decisions and use the power that we have on the basis of what serves the common good, recognising that the fruits of the earth belong to everyone. No one should be excluded from the gifts of creation.

Subsidiarity: Ensuring that decisions are taken at the lowest possible level, or closest to where they will have effect.

A preferential option for the poor: To create conditions for marginalised voices to be heard, to defend the defenceless, and to assess lifestyles, policies and social institutions in terms of their impact on the poor.

Peace: Involving an order that is founded in truth, nurtured and animated by charity, and brought into effect under the auspices of freedom (*Pacem in Terris*, 1963).

Caring for the planet and the environment: Promoting consideration of how our actions affect the earth and poor people. Everything and everyone is interconnected.

The dignity of work and participation: Work is an essential part of human dignity and everyone has the right to participate. The human person should always come before the pursuit of profit. Workers have the right to join trade unions, to a just wage, to spend time with their families and to rest.

These principles informed the vision, mission and values of the organisation, which reaffirmed their continued significance in its final incarnation as Progressio. Progressio stated these to be:

Vision Poor people empowered to transform their lives

Mission To help people gain power over their lives and overcome the barriers that keep them poor

Values Respect, solidarity, passion, boldness

See also: the [Catholic Social Teaching: Faith in a Better World](#) website and 'Foundation stones', a reflection on Progressio's vision of development drawing on CST by its then executive director, Christine Allen, in [Interact autumn 2008](#).



This commitment included promoting collaborative faith action alongside its efforts to encourage the Catholic Church to uphold and strengthen its commitment to social justice. CIIR and Progressio made the ecumenical approach of the Sword of the Spirit – which called itself ‘the movement’ – an essential feature of the organisation’s advocacy and networking. It also went on increasingly to nurture dialogue between different religious faiths, urging leaders and communities to rise to the challenge of pro-poor, rights-based development. The identity of the organisation, as a lay body rooted in Catholic Social Teaching (see Box above) while independent of the Catholic Church and maintaining close relations with it, helped it to perform its ecumenical and wider inter-faith advocacy role and this made for productive mutual influence.

Overseas skill-share programme: boosting partner strengths on the ground

The other mainstay of the organisation’s work was its secular overseas technical cooperation programme which came to settle on a core set of focus countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and the Middle East and, later, Timor-Leste (East Timor) in Asia. It involved the recruitment of skilled professionals – they were called development workers (DWs) rather than volunteers from the late 1980s because of their high levels of specialist knowledge and technical expertise – to share skills and knowledge with partner organisations in multi-year placements. The aim of DW assignments was to help partners enhance the impact of their work supporting poor, oppressed and marginalised people.

The overseas programme, in line with its principles of boosting local leadership and partner self-reliance and providing technical support often not available or accessible locally in the global South, involved a rigorous recruitment, selection and orientation (induction) process. It matched the knowledge and expertise of DW candidates with partners’ stated support needs, following joint assessment of how placements would be developmentally effective. This took into account the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation’s overall structures, operation and performance in supporting the needs and rights of social groups organising to improve their lives.

Partner dialogue and accompaniment

Assessment of progress and impact in the project initiatives supported by DWs was likewise founded on participatory dialogue and reporting with partner organisations. The overseas programme also involved country and regional strategies, with partners and DWs brought together to develop joint approaches and share lessons on their work on key themes and issues, with insights fed back into the life of the organisation as a whole.

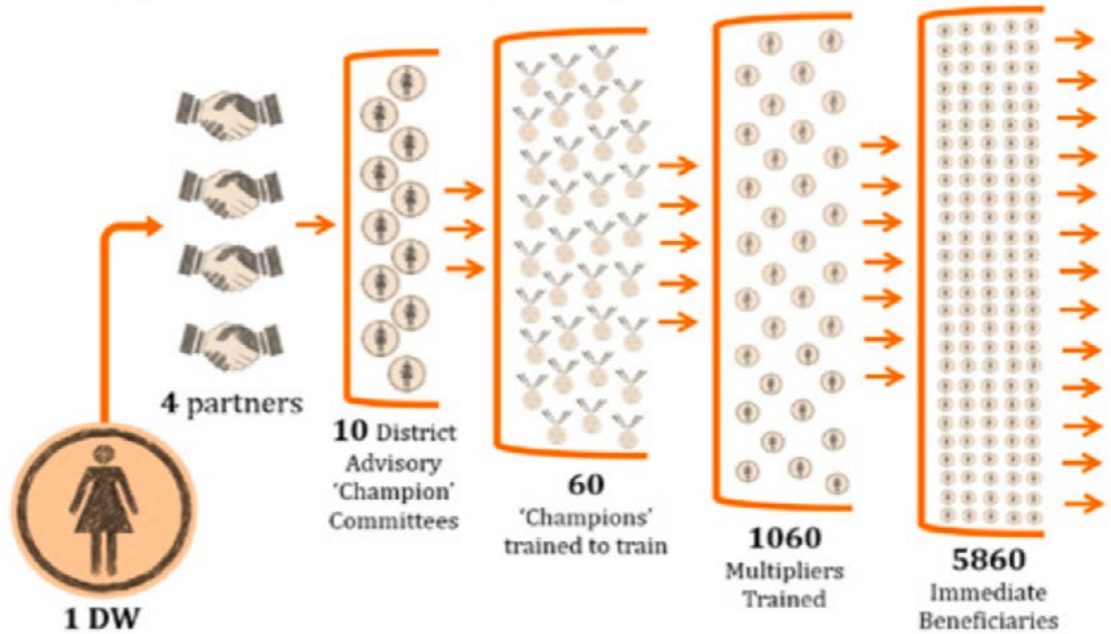
Key to DWs’ work, as contributors to this publication describe, was their accompaniment both of individual counterparts within organisations and of partners’ daily work to support communities and other beneficiary groups, as well as to reach and influence wider public audiences and policy-makers. The human value of this professional solidarity and encouragement was just as important as DWs’ sharing of new ideas on practices, methods and approaches, and it was for such qualities of respect and supportive facilitation that DW candidates were tested in their recruitment.

As well as promoting North-South exchange, the programme became increasingly centred on South-South cooperation, with most DWs hailing from the developing world by the new millennium. The drive reflected the organisation’s commitment to facilitating bottom-up Southern leadership in taking forward the sustainable development agenda.

From CIIR to Progressio: programme-policy integration

The two programme mainstays, both promoting North-South and South-South links and exchange, shared the values of solidarity and were equally committed to empowering the voice, influence and capacity of Southern partners and their strategies for change. Nonetheless, for much of the CIIR period, the two programmes, despite frequent synergies, worked relatively independently of each other in mostly different countries. This was due to their largely separate funding bases and their different operational dynamics and requirements between the 1970s and the 1990s. In the politically charged and repressive climate of many countries in the global South, for instance, high profile policy work would have posed security risks to DWs working on the ground with partners to improve the lives of communities. Still, this was a challenge that the organisation often took on in some settings.

➤ Progressio 1 to 6,000 'power' multiplier



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Chart showing the potential impact of a single development worker replicating and cascading the benefits of their exchange of knowledge and expertise with partners.

Suad Abdi (right), Progressio's country representative, leading a meeting to review the progress of DWs' work with partners to strengthen citizen participation and governance in Somaliland.



Changing circumstances, building stronger synergies

In the new millennium, however, changing internal and external circumstances meant that the organisation, as CIIR transitioned to Progressio between 2002 and 2006, brought the two key sides of its work together. It harnessed its international policy and advocacy initiatives to the interests of partners solely in countries where it had DWs. Conversely, it also made DW support for the strengthening of partners' local and national advocacy expertise a stronger feature of country programmes on the ground, bringing in the international policy dimensions of problems affecting people's lives. As well as affording greater policy-programme synergies, this integration further enabled the projection of partner voice and grassroots DW experience in organisational awareness-raising as well as stronger dialogue and interaction between civil society and faith-based actors.

In the 1990s, CIIR's education programme had been renamed the International Policy Department (IPD) to reflect more accurately its advocacy role targeting decision-makers, while CIIR's overseas programme adopted the name of International Cooperation for Development (ICD) to boost its secular appeal. The two formally merged as CIIR changed its working name to Progressio in 2006.

Joining ICS: the power of youth in later life

In 2011, Progressio joined the new UK government-funded International Citizen Service scheme, coordinated by Voluntary Service Overseas, pairing 18 to 25-year-old [volunteers](#) from the UK with local counterparts on 10-week placements. Progressio ran its own [ICS programme](#) in focus countries in Southern Africa and Central America over the next five years, achieving positive results with partners and communities (see Chapter 5). The ICS scheme, in mobilising the energy and commitment of youth, added a new complementary dimension to Progressio's traditional strategy for change combining international advocacy work and DW programming and held out promise for the organisation's regeneration.

An enduring world outlook and development approach

Though having a relatively settled geographical pattern from the 1980s, the country focus of CIIR's and Progressio's work, and the types of programme intervention it involved, changed over the years (see Box Table below). So too did its specific thematic content, which adjusted to the politics, ideological shifts and international development policy trends and priorities of the age. For all the organisation's chameleon-like changing operational shades, however, its world outlook and development approach had firm colours that remained largely unchanged over time.

The Sword of the Spirit's concern was with the national and international political, economic and social circumstances that had led to the Second World War and the need to tackle the underlying causes of conflict. This meant that, in later becoming an organisation focused on the problems of the developing world, CIIR did not see the task as one involving a discrete sphere of charitable external action labelled international development. The task, rather, required coordinated policy action, nationally and internationally, across multiple policy spheres to address the structural factors that kept people poor and infringed their rights.

The work of CIIR and Progressio on international development, in terms of themes and principles, revolved around the promotion of just societies and just economies, with politics based on the influential participation of poor, oppressed and marginalised people. Its growing rights-based work on gender, ethnicity and other forms of discrimination as well as HIV and AIDS and environmental sustainability was equally concerned with justice. Similarly, as far as engaging policy-makers and citizens in the global North was concerned, the 'national interest' of rich countries such as the UK could not be narrowly framed but needed to encompass commitment to solidarity with struggles for social justice in the world. Development was about promoting new international relations at all levels – hence the preposition 'for' in CIIR's name.

CIIR and Progressio: focus countries and main work approach on/in each location, 1970-2017

DATE	COUNTRIES	APPROACH: international advocacy; overseas DW programming; joint international advocacy and DW programming; ICS volunteers
1970s	LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, Guyana, El Salvador Ecuador, Peru, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, Panama, Dominican Republic, Haiti, British Honduras (Belize), Cayman Islands	Education Department international advocacy Overseas DW programme
	AFRICA Rhodesia, South Africa, Mozambique, Angola, Namibia Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda	Education Department international advocacy Overseas DW programme
	MIDDLE EAST North Yemen, Somalia	Overseas DW programme
	ASIA East Timor, Philippines India, Bangladesh, Vietnam	Education Department international advocacy Overseas DW programme
1980s	LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN El Salvador, Guatemala, Brazil, Chile, Haiti, Guyana Nicaragua, Honduras Ecuador, Peru, Dominican Republic	Education Department international advocacy Education Department international advocacy+overseas DW programme Overseas DW programme
	AFRICA South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Angola Zimbabwe	Education Department international advocacy Overseas DW programme
	MIDDLE EAST North Yemen, Somalia	Overseas DW programme
	ASIA East Timor, Philippines, Hong Kong, South Korea	Education Department international advocacy

1990s

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

Colombia, Guatemala, Brazil

Nicaragua, Honduras, Ecuador, Peru
El Salvador

Dominican Republic and Haiti

Education Department (IPD) international
advocacy

Overseas DW programme (ICD)

Education Department (IPD) international
advocacy+overseas DW programme (ICD)

AFRICA

South Africa, Angola, Mozambique,
Malawi

Namibia, Zimbabwe

MIDDLE EAST

Yemen, Somaliland

Education Department (IPD) international
advocacy

Education Department international (IPD)
advocacy+overseas DW programme (ICD)

Overseas DW programme (ICD)

ASIA

East Timor, Philippines, Papua

East Timor, Philippines, Thailand,
Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam,
Cambodia, Burma (Myanmar)

Education Department (IPD) international
advocacy

Education Department (IPD) international
advocacy (countries involved in SEACA national
and international advocacy capacity-building
initiative, ending 2002)

2000-2006	LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN Colombia Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador Ecuador, Peru Dominican Republic and Haiti	Education Department (IPD) international advocacy Overseas DW programme (ICD) Education Department international (IPD) advocacy+overseas DW programme (ICD)
	AFRICA Angola, Malawi Namibia, Zimbabwe	Education Department (IPD) international advocacy Education Department international (IPD) advocacy+overseas DW programme (ICD)
	MIDDLE EAST Yemen Somaliland	Overseas DW programme (ICD) Education Department international (IPD) advocacy+overseas DW programme (ICD)
	ASIA Timor-Leste (East Timor), Philippines, Papua	Education Department (IPD) international advocacy
2006-2010	LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador Ecuador, Peru, Dominican Republic and Haiti	Joint policy-advocacy and DW programme
	AFRICA Malawi (from 2008) Namibia (until 2008) Zimbabwe	Joint policy-advocacy and DW programme
	MIDDLE EAST Yemen, Somaliland	Joint policy-advocacy and DW programme
	ASIA Timor-Leste	Joint policy-advocacy and DW programme

2011-2017

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN
Peru (until 2013)

Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador

Dominican Republic and Haiti (until early 2016)

Joint policy-advocacy and DW programme (and ICS volunteering until 2012)

Joint policy-advocacy and DW programme (until 2014) and ICS volunteering

Joint policy-advocacy and DW programme

AFRICA
Malawi, Zimbabwe

Joint policy-advocacy and DW programme and ICS volunteering

MIDDLE EAST
Yemen, Somaliland

Joint policy-advocacy and DW programme

ASIA
Timor-Leste (until 2014)

Joint policy-advocacy and DW programme



Overview of the publication's contents

Readers keen for a quick account of the work of the Sword of the Spirit, CIIR and Progressio may wish to turn to the [Annex](#) at the end of this publication. It contains a year-by-year timeline of landmarks in the organisation's life along with a commentary summarising its institutional evolution and work. The synthesis in the Annex signposts the detailed coverage available in the publication's chapters and is thus also a useful guide for those interested in reading and finding out more.

As the Annex shows, the organisation's trajectory was marked from the outset by the prophetic role of its founders and early leaders, with those later directing and supporting its mission adapting pursuit of continued momentum to the needs and demands of the day. The summary provides a snapshot of the organisation's journey associated with leadership at each institutional stage.

The organisation's evolution and work in wider context

The publication's main chapters, however, record the life of the Sword of the Spirit, CIIR and Progressio in slightly different phases to reflect how changes in the organisation's structure, operation and work were shaped by major developments and ideological shifts in the outside world.

The driving force in the global South was the support needs of partner organisations helping social groups and communities to change their lives for the better. Their needs and interests, depending on the national and international policy and ideological trends of time, were sometimes supported but often resisted by local states whose conduct tended to be more shaped by domestic elites.

Another local influence was the geopolitical and commercial interests of governments and businesses from the economically rich world. With the expansion of the NGO sector in the UK and elsewhere – including its growing involvement in advocacy, a field of work CIIR played an early vanguard role in helping to pioneer – policy-makers in global North came under growing pressure to address sustainable development and human rights concerns in their global statecraft. The steady institutionalisation of state and NGO action and interaction in the UK on international development, affecting NGO programming, financing and policy work, became a factor that also shaped CIIR's and Progressio's internal and external dynamics.

In documenting the life of the Sword of the Spirit, CIIR and Progressio, therefore, the publication describes the changing nature of the organisation's internal operation and work for development justice in the context of the wider political, NGO and donor environment. External shifts, of which there were many, are signalled in terms of their relevance to the organisation rather than analysed in depth themselves.

A breakdown of the chapters

The breakdown of the publication's chapters below, with a description of the contextual setting of work in each phase, will also be useful to guide the reader on the content available in each one.

Chapter 1: The shape of things to come

From the wartime vision of Sword in the Spirit to global action as CIIR (1940-1969)

- This chapter traces the 1965 birth of CIIR and the consolidation of its focus on the developing world. It describes how CIIR's outlook and approach were shaped by the previous evolution of the Sword of the Spirit, hence the overlap between the two institutional stages in this chapter.
- While the Sword's focus was on UK and Europe in opposing fascism and totalitarianism, its advocacy of a post-war peace undergirded by social progress, human rights and ending racial discrimination marked CIIR's multi-dimensional stance on global development. CIIR did not view the process as one of modernisation catch-up automatically emulating the developed countries or piecemeal charitable improvement of local living standards, but one that needed to enhance locally driven strategies to tackle the structural causes of poverty and injustice.
- The Sword's work on the problems of state action during and after the war similarly meant its growing role on global issues considered international relations to be based on people and not just states. CIIR's emphasis on local partners' and communities' self-reliance and empowerment in its overseas 'volunteer' programme also had its roots in this period.



Chapter 2: Solidarity with the Third World

Fighting oppression and injustice and tackling the causes of poverty on the ground (1970-89)

- This chapter covers CIIR's intensification of work on struggles for national liberation and political, social and economic change amid the legacy or persistence of colonial rule and the distortions of the Cold War. As political and social movements in what was then called the 'Third World' attracted the active support of citizens in the 'First', this was the age of international solidarity, with CIIR backing church and civil society partners working for peace, justice, rights and democracy in Southern Africa, Central and South America and East and South East Asia.
- This period saw Catholic Church commitment to social justice, as exemplified by adoption of a 'preferential option for the poor' in Latin America, take worldly shape and face opposition – often violent. CIIR's roots in Catholic Social Teaching and ecumenical cooperation inherited from the Sword made it an effective convenor of international church action for development justice.
- This was a time of global economic ferment. Calls for a new international economic order, the 1970s oil crisis and soaring Third World debt gave way to the 1980s spread of free-market economics which had made a violent entry on the world stage with the US-backed 11 September 1973 military coup against Chile's 'democratic road to socialism'. The rising importance of the European Community and its trade policies became a key focus of CIIR's development desk.
- This was the heyday of CIIR Education Department's advocacy. But as this chapter's strapline also conveys, its secular overseas programme, placing skilled professionals in development projects in response to partner requests for outside expertise, was gaining strength in areas such as health, agriculture, popular education and women's rights. Solidarity, in this setting, involved CIIR recruits accompanying partners' daily work and sharing skills and learning with them.

Chapter 3: Rising to the challenges of the new world (dis)order

Promoting democratisation, human rights and people's empowerment in the era of 'globalisation' and poverty reduction (1990-2005)

- This chapter documents CIIR's work for development justice in the new global policy climate following the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall. Its much-vaunted promises of a post-Cold War peace dividend and an age of global progress supposedly combining liberal democracy and market economics were hard to tally with the situation facing partners in the global South.
- For advocacy partners in Central America, Southern Africa and Asia, the causes of conflict and social exclusion remained unresolved in difficult political transitions, and this chapter looks at CIIR's adjustment of its work in the 1990s to highlight the need for human rights truth and justice and stronger civil society participation to deepen democratisation and consolidate peace. It also covers CIIR's policy work on globalisation and economic justice amid official Northern-led policy drives to remove barriers to international trade, investment and finance, with Asia's 1997 financial crash leading to a series of advocacy initiatives with partners in the region. It was one of several crises occurring in the global South and a rehearsal for the damage of the North's 'credit crunch' of 2008-09.
- In this policy context, the chapter describes how CIIR's much expanded overseas programme, now operating as ICD, responded to partners' changing types of support requests. As they grappled with the social costs of free-market adjustment, they sought ICD development workers (DWs) with expertise on income generation, livelihoods and economic policy.
- State downsizing and reform – or, in the case of Somalia, collapse – saw aid donor policy-makers look increasingly to civil society to deliver social solutions. This was a time of debate on competing ideological conceptions of civil society's nature and role. The chapter looks at how ICD recruited DWs with relevant expertise to help civil society groups and networks strengthen their institutional structures and operation to tackle the challenges and opportunities, including their capacity to advocate supportive public policy and state action. A wide range of projects took shape promoting citizen participation, the voice and influence of women and other under-represented groups facing discrimination, alternative media and access to information.
- With development actors making HIV and AIDS a cross-cutting concern, this chapter examines ICD's moves to replicate its rights-based prevention work in Southern Africa in other country programmes and CIIR's policy development to promote Catholic debate and action on the issue. The work informed and was informed by CIIR's ever increasing focus on women's rights and gender, with DW work with Nicaraguan partners also leading to innovative work on masculinity.



- The UN's landmark 'earth summit' in 1992 confirmed the relevance of ICD's growing poverty-focused and rights-based work on environmental sustainability, which became a significant institutional priority following 1998's Hurricane Mitch afflicting partners in Central America.
- As this period unfolded, Northern models of free-market globalisation faced rising criticism, leading to developments that yielded advocacy opportunities for their better social performance, reform or rejection. They included the World Bank's 1999 introduction of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, the UN's approval of the 2000-15 Millennium Development Goals and civil society advocacy on the MDGs. The 2005 Make Poverty History campaign on the UK-chaired G8 summit, supported by CIIR, was a high water mark for such action in the UK where a Labour government had set up DfID as a separate ministry on its election in 1997.
- The period was also bracketed by two US- and UK-led wars with Iraq and the post-2001 'war on terror', which further complicated the political, faith and human rights dimensions of conflict, peace and justice in CIIR focus countries in Asia and the Horn of Africa.

Chapter 4: Charting a new course as Progressio

'Changing minds, changing lives' for sustainable development (2006-2010)

- This chapter examines the factors that saw CIIR change its name to Progressio in 2006 and merge its international policy (education) work into ICD's country programmes. Donor shifts and other NGOs' ongoing expansion of policy, advocacy and campaigning over the 1990s had made it harder for CIIR to fund a policy unit with its own country priorities and work streams.
- Progressio's new strategy made participation and governance one of its three main themes and this chapter sets out the contextual relevance of the diverse initiatives undertaken in different regions. They built on the impetus of CIIR's existing work – ICD's pioneering of participatory and gender-focused local budgeting with Dominican Republic partners since 1997 was a leading example and became a template for work elsewhere. They now assumed topicality as official aid donors and civil society organisations, albeit with often different policy approaches, built promotion of 'good governance' into their work. DfID, for instance, released a White Paper on the issue and a diverse transparency and accountability movement was emerging.
- Progressio's second thematic priority, environmental sustainability and protection of natural resources crucial to poor people's lives, built on the organisation's involvement in environmental education and its long track record of supporting rural development and food security based on small-scale agriculture and agro-ecology. The chapter highlights the significance of its efforts amid the 2007-08 global food price crisis and rising policy debate and action on 'land grabs' and climate change, with Progressio using insights of DWs' work with partners to run successful advocacy campaigns over the decade on farmers' access to seeds, forest resources and water. Progressio similarly made partner voice part of its submissions to global policy consultations on food and agriculture and its contribution to the food, fuel and finance concerns raised by UK NGOs around the 2009 London G20 summit on the damage of the international banking crisis.
- Work on HIV prevention, Progressio's third thematic priority, took further influential shape in programmes in Somaliland and Yemen and Latin America and the Caribbean at this time, matching work in Southern Africa. This chapter looks at how Progressio worked with partners to involve faith leaders and communities in promoting its rights-based and gender-focused approach. The move was part of a concerted effort to renew the faith dimensions of Progressio's work as a cross-cutting feature of its strategy, which assumed topicality among Catholics at this time. The 40th anniversary of Pope Paul VI's encyclical on development, *Populorum Progressio* took place in 2007 and in 2010 Pope Benedict XVI made an official visit to the UK.
- The chapter notes shifts in the international aid climate affecting Progressio. Donor intentions to move away from middle-income countries and focus on the poorest ones led to Progressio closing work in Ecuador and Namibia and opening a new programme in Malawi.

Chapter 5: Pursuing regeneration in an age of uncertainty

'People-powered development' and mobilising young people for global change (2011-2017)

- The 2013 election of Pope Francis, whose outlook resonated with Progressio's, and the 2015 advent of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), promising a more ambitious, rights-based approach, provided an ostensibly propitious climate for the organisation. By 2011, the extent and depth of Progressio's work on participation and governance, environmental sustainability and HIV and AIDS had achieved a relatively even balance



across its country programmes, and this chapter covers its drive to scale up the impact of previous gains.

- Before describing continued achievements, however, the chapter sets out the rising uncertainty of Progressio's future. Ongoing donor shifts forced it to phase out DW programmes in all of Latin America and the Caribbean and Timor-Leste – still sites of important programme impact and learning on civil society strengthening and nation-building, as the chapter shows.
- More significantly still, the 2010 election of a Conservative-Liberal Democrat government had been followed by a right-wing political and media campaign to undermine UK commitment to international aid, which Progressio helped NGOs oppose. In this febrile environment, intensified again after the Conservatives' 2015 election victory, the chapter describes how Progressio's funding relationship with DfID was indirectly placed more and more in doubt during this period. This was despite positive evaluations of its work, held earlier in the decade amid donors' growing demands for evidence of 'results', which increasingly emphasised 'what works' best practice within the constraints of existing policies rather than necessarily the need to change them.
- Cuts meant DW programming became centred on Zimbabwe, Malawi, Somaliland and Yemen during this period. Progressio's on-the-ground experience with partners in these countries, however, equipped it well to urge policy-makers to adopt a people-centred approach in their now prominent concern with the situation of so-called 'fragile and conflict-affected states'. The chapter notes Progressio's SDG-targeted campaign on the role and rights of women in such contexts. This drew on its work to tackle violence against women and girls, now also an issue commanding policy-maker attention.
- The campaign also drew on Progressio's continued work on gender and masculinity and the promotion of faith commitment to rights-based HIV prevention, with sexual and reproductive health and rights further reinforced at this time as a prime focus in Progressio's work on gender justice. Progressio followed up its progress in helping partners strengthen Somaliland's electoral process and women's political representation with action research on the wider gender injustices in society questioning the putative nation's political settlement.
- The challenges facing Progressio's work in fragile settings were acutely demonstrated by the spiralling conflict and large-scale humanitarian crisis in Yemen exacerbated by the Saudi-led military intervention backed by the West. Progressio was forced to suspend its DW presence.
- One encouraging UK development at the start of the decade was the coalition government's launch of the International Citizenship Service youth volunteering initiative which Progressio joined. The final part of the chapter outlines how Progressio's approach to ICS work in its Southern African and Central American focus countries brought benefits for partners and communities. Youth interest in global affairs and politics was rising and, as signalled by the chapter's strapline, Progressio sought to make ICS a complementary strand of its wider strategy for 'people powered development'. It worked to tap ICS's potential to intensify the pursuit of organisational renewal begun in the 2006 transition from CIIR with its ageing membership.
- The chapter records how returning ICS volunteers were active in Progressio's contribution to the 2013 civil society IF campaign on world hunger around the UK-hosted G8 summit and also supported Progressio's advocacy campaign for the 2012 Rio+20 'earth summit' and finalisation of the SDGs to address water security and rights. Progressio's work on agro-ecology and natural resource management remained the main source of its international advocacy. This also highlighted the environmental, livelihoods, human rights and climate change dangers of a policy drive by the G8, World Bank and business lobbies to increase private investment in large-scale agriculture in the global South.

Chapter 6: Final chapter, end of story?

Closing an organisation and reflecting on its legacy (2017-)

- The concluding chapter examines the circumstances that led to Progressio's decision to close and end the organisation's decades-long life. The trigger, following 2015 elections and prolonged political uncertainty in the UK caused by the 2016 referendum on EU membership, was the anticipated decision by the new Conservative government to end the Programme Partnership Agreement (PPA) mechanism providing strategic core funding for successful NGO applicants. Progressio had enjoyed its own PPA since the scheme's creation at the start of the 2000s.
- Loss of PPA funding vital to Progressio's financial stability and programme operation was a blow it could not immediately withstand. In the context of its damage to the organisation's ability to sustain its core combination of DW programming and international advocacy, the chapter outlines why Progressio's board concluded that a survival strategy based on the value of its ICS scheme alone would not be enough to uphold its overall strategy for change.
- The chapter discusses the wider significance of Progressio's disappearance as a



result of its impending loss of PPA funding in the wider NGO context – abolition of the overall PPA scheme coincided with the outcome of a DfID review of its relations with civil society organisations involved in development – and in historical perspective: the success of CIIR's and Progressio's work over the decades owed much to official UK funding, and its indirect termination marked the unravelling of a decades-long partnership not just a recent funding relationship.

- The publication ends with brief reflections on the losses that the organisation's exit from the NGO stage may entail for the UK's overall sustainable development community. As well as the value of its own individual achievements, its contributions to the sector over the years – new initiatives and organisations, new ways of working, and people schooled in its thinking and practice going on to work elsewhere in the development sector – merit consideration.

Focus on the new, importance of the old: a companion text on the early years

It should also be noted that the text, as will become apparent in the chapters, provides greater coverage of the organisation's work undertaken by CIIR and Progressio from the 1970s onwards rather than that of the Sword of the Spirit and CIIR's very early years. It was during the 1970s that CIIR took on the long-term shape of the organisation as it evolved over future decades.

This bias also reflects the likelihood that contemporary readers will be more interested in the organisation's work concentrating on international development rather than the challenges of post-war Europe. It is furthermore due to the availability of the 1980 publication **From Sword to Ploughshare** in which Michael J Walsh, at that time working with London University's Heythrop College, provides a fascinating chronicle of the 1940-80 period straddling the Sword and CIIR. It can be seen as a useful companion text to this publication. The opening two chapters, especially the first, draw extensively on Walsh's work while adding hindsight observations on the significance of developments at that time for CIIR's and Progressio's future.

For the record: writing approach and further resources

A few remarks are also in order on the approach taken in writing this publication, which has drawn on a range of key literature (in particular annual reviews, newsletters, publications and the website) as well as publicly available [evaluations](#).

The aim has been to record and reflect on the endeavours and achievements of the organisation – as well as the difficulties and challenges it faced – at each institutional stage and external phase. It has not been to provide a definitive assessment of the impact of the organisation's work, either during each period or as a result of its life as a whole. Similarly, in commenting on the shifts in the organisation's evolution and operation in seeking success, the intention has been to note the challenges and opportunities involved, not to pass judgment on the choices and decisions made. To provide different perspectives, the text includes short vignettes from people who led or worked for the organisation, which provide reflective insights on the organisation's efforts.

Wider analysis of the impact and longer-term significance of the organisation's work, as well as of the effectiveness of how it went about it, may be a follow-up task for others to take up, using this publication as a source for leads to the wider information and documentation available in the organisation's [archive](#) (see details on final page).

The sheer diversity and scale of the organisation's work over the decades, as reflected by the list of [acronyms](#) at the back of the publication outlining the scores of partners it supported, makes a neat list of achievements hard to craft, given their number and nature described in the text. Nonetheless, the concluding Chapter 6, 'Final chapter, end of story?', draws out some of the leading examples and features of the organisation's positive contribution to sustainable development and social justice as well as the legacy it has left. They suggest the organisation played an important catalytic role in the UK's development NGO sector over the years, one that deserves to be remembered.

Hyperlinks are used throughout the publication for ease of navigation.



The arrow takes you to the previous page view



returns you to the publication's main contents page



returns you to the contents page of a specific chapter



CARDINAL HINSLEY'S

CALL TO YOUTH

Broadcast on Sunday, April 29th, 1942.

The shape of things to come

From the wartime vision of Sword of the Spirit to
global action as CIIR (1940-1969)

Keep young. Keep the spirit of youth ; keep the ardour, the enthusiasm, the freshness, the idealism, which make youth the springtime of life. The trials to come will be a hard test for your ideals, but don't let them be crushed.

Each of you has a personality, each of you has unique gifts ; each of you has a part to play, a special place to fill, for the betterment of your generation, for the advancement of truth, and for the increase of goodness in the world.

Nothing must be allowed to damp that vital spark in you, young men and women of Britain, in whom lies the hope of a fuller and better life for a generation to come.

Give your youth to God. There is no greater gift of God in the natural order than youth. And since it is God's greatest gift to you, your youth is the greatest gift you can give to him.

In these days Youth Movements are being planned all over the world. But youth must be moved in the right direction. Youth must move towards God, by whom and for whom it was made. There are some who want to capture youth and drive it goose-stepping along their own way of life. That is the design which has degraded the Hitler Youth into slavish machines for destruction. May God save us from such a movement!

Young men and women of Britain, be true to yourselves, and to the traditions which we inherit from our Christian past. You have souls made in God's image. You are marked with his seal, and to him you belong.

No social theory, no blue-print organisation of youth must be allowed to rob you of your personality and of your God-given rights and duties. We want no cast iron regimentation for British boys and girls. You belong to God, "who giveth joy to youth."

Be true to God. Give him back the choice gifts he has given



CIIR

PROGRESSIO

The shape of things to come

From the wartime vision of Sword of the Spirit to global action as CIIR (1940-1969)

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Birth of a movement, lasting spirit

CHURCH IN THE WORLD was the name the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) later gave to a new publication series. But the principle that Catholics must act – and help galvanise inter-faith commitment and wider public action – in favour of a ‘world neighbourhood’ based on peace and social justice was a fundamental feature of the organisation’s calling from its very birth as the Sword of the Spirit.

Fighting fascism, promoting a just peace

Launched in 1940 when Britain and Germany were at war, the Sword of the Spirit’s aim was to mobilise Catholic opposition in Britain to fascism, countering perceptions that Catholics were sympathisers or prone to appeasement. The Catholic Church had signed a 1933 pact with Hitler, and hierarchies in Italy and Spain were seen as firm supporters of the Mussolini and Franco dictatorships.

The ‘movement’, as the Sword also came to call itself at the time, was led by a group of Catholic intellectuals, including historian Christopher Dawson and economist Barbara Ward, the first general secretary (sharing the post with university lecturer ‘Rudolph’ Beales), who travelled the country to speak on public platforms and became a dynamic presence in the media. They were inspired by the December 1939 national broadcast by Cardinal Arthur Hinsley, the Archbishop of Westminster. In voicing his conviction that Britain was right to resort to arms to confront Nazi oppression, he also stressed that “in the end the sword of the Spirit will alone convert unjust assailants and recreate peace and good will”.

Inaugurating the Sword of the Spirit on 1 August 1940, Cardinal Hinsley declared: “We are convinced that a better world can be built only on the foundations of faith, hope and charity.... We are not inspired by narrow patriotism, which limits our Christian charity to the red patches on the world map where waves the British flag. We have no hatred for any nation or race. On the contrary we will never lose sight of the kinship and love which ought to bind human beings to one another.”

Internationalist intent: linking people, working beyond states

Cardinal Hinsley’s words, concerned with the perils of fascism and achieving peace and justice in the post-war reconstruction of Europe, spurred influential church action and critical debate within and beyond the Catholic Church that was to mark the Sword of the Spirit’s future direction (see Box below). Indeed, their internationalist intent, that any country’s role in the world – that of its citizens as well as its state – should be centred on solidarity and upholding the rights and wellbeing of all people regardless of nationality, race or colour would underpin the thought and practice of the organisation as it evolved over the next 76 years.

Hinsley’s words carry resonance in 2018 amid the uncertainties of the UK’s relationship with the rest of Europe as well as wider strains in the international cooperation required to tackle the global challenges of peace, social justice and planetary survival. Problems such as continued arms sales to repressive regimes, climate change denial, the overall inadequacy of governmental humanitarian responses to the refugee crisis, hostility to migrants, resurgent racism and xenophobia and the rise of right-wing populism provide a stark reminder of how much remains outstanding in official UK, European and Western commitment to a fairer order at home and abroad.

From communism and the future of Europe to a wider world outlook

After the war and into the early 1950s, the Sword switched its attention to Communist oppression in Eastern Europe, holding campaigns for religious freedom and human rights as well as for food aid. The immediate priority was Poland as the organisation called, in vain, on Britain and other Allied Powers not to acquiesce to occupied territories being ceded to Moscow as a result of the 1945 Yalta conference on Europe’s reorganisation.

While this work was highly valued in Europe and marked the start of the Sword’s wider international involvement, it had a weaker domestic focus. With declining support in the UK and even reports that the Vatican wanted the Sword to close as it faced a financial crisis, a new direction was needed. This came in 1950 when Cardinal Bernard Griffin, Archbishop of Westminster and *ex officio* president of the Sword, persuaded the



Back to the future: the Sword of the Spirit's concern with the justice and peace implications of Britain's role in Europe and the wider world after the Second World War has had enduring relevance.

Peace and disarmament was an early focus of the Sword's work, and opposition to British arms sales to repressive regimes became a pressing concern as the organisation transitioned to CIIR. The challenge would persist over the years, as witnessed during Progressio's final period by Saudi air strikes in Yemen (see image from *Guardian* article right and Chapter 5).

A popular series of 1961 events discussing the UK's prospective membership of the European common market anticipated the emergence of future CIIR and Progressio advocacy on the British government's role in the EU and the bloc's stance on international development and human rights. The pros and cons of EU policies became a key concern within the UK's international development community, with debates further fuelled from 2016 by the possible consequences of so-called 'Brexit'.

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Wartime achievements, creative tensions

The Sword of the Spirit, launched to pursue a “till-victory” campaign of “prayer, study and action” for “the rights of God, of man, of the family, of minorities, of dependent peoples”, promoted its vision through widely circulated briefings and pamphlets, mass public meetings, sermons, retreats and high-level media coverage. Highly acclaimed was *The Catholic Church and the International Order*, published by Penguin in 1941. The efforts built a vibrant movement for change with branches across Britain, except where there were unsympathetic local bishops, and Czech, Polish, French and Belgian sections were set up in London.

Of ground-breaking importance then, and of crucial significance later (as CIIR and Progressio matched ecumenism with a commitment to work with people of all faiths and none), was the Sword of the Spirit’s collaborative influencing with other churches. An unprecedented development in December 1940 was a Quaker-facilitated joint letter to *The Times* signed by Cardinal Hinsley, the archbishops of Canterbury and York and others. It set out the basis for a just settlement of the war, combining the respective ‘five peace points’ of both Pope Pius XII and the 1937 Oxford Conference, precursor of the World Council of Churches.

Cooperation across church barriers

Cooperation across church barriers was not easy, despite the best efforts of movement leaders. In 1941, opposition within the Catholic Church hierarchy sought to weaken the Sword’s inclusion from the outset of non-Catholic members. This was an alienating move that led for a time to separate Catholic and non-Catholic movements. The diplomatic skills of a joint committee of open-minded church leaders and lay members from different faiths would be needed to bind them together in a positive direction. A major achievement was joint committee agreement of a 1942 statement of common Christian ideals, albeit then prone to competing pressures over how they should be interpreted and translated into practical work.

Sensitivities over the nature and projection of Catholic identity, as noted in later chapters, would also be a structural challenge for the organisation as it became CIIR and then Progressio. They reflected the complex spectrum of faith and ideological considerations motivating those involved at various institutional levels as well as operational differences of opinion over strategies to enhance its public profile, attract wider support and boost impact. Paradoxically, however, they would also be a source of institutional distinctiveness and creativity, due to the organisation’s intrinsically pluralistic outlook.

organisation to widen its scope “to create a body of well-informed Catholics to follow the fortunes of the Church throughout the world... and explain to others what is happening and why”.

New issues, taking a new track

The two sides of work envisaged – watching, studying and publishing, and spreading relevant knowledge among Catholics and the nation at large – foreshadowed the emergence of CIIR’s education work from the second half of the 1960s, later called ‘advocacy’ from the late 1980s and early 1990s. *Catholic International Outlook* replaced *The Sword* as the title of the organisation’s flagship journal in 1953 and was published until 1963.

Cardinal Griffin’s proposal built on the Sword’s earlier collaboration and affiliation with the United Nations Association ([UNA](#)) in relation to the 1948 adoption and subsequent promotion of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as collaboration with the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on problems of world food supply. The right to food had already become a topic of awareness-raising. In the later 1950s, the Sword also became Pax Christi’s representative in London and would continue to collaborate with this international Catholic movement on peace and nuclear disarmament.

These signs of a wider outlook put the Sword on a new track, as confirmed by the 1961 addition of ‘for the promotion of international relations’ as the organisation’s strapline, invoking the need for bonds of solidarity between people as well as states in the quest for post-war peace based on social justice. The Sword worked that year with European embassies in London to lead a highly successful campaign of lectures and conferences on the contested issue of the UK’s possible membership of the European common market, then known as the European Economic Community (EEC).

Helping to spawn the beginnings of an international development ‘movement’

The Sword’s renewed impetus saw it become quickly involved in international initiatives that set the organisation on its longer-term course. Its efforts helped to create early landmarks in the emergence of the UK’s international development sector, as outlined briefly below and recorded more fully in Michael J Walsh’s 1980 publication *From Sword to Ploughshare*.



From sword to ploughshare

Sword of the Spirit
to
Catholic Institute for International Relations
1940-1980

Birth of CAFOD and the Africa Centre

In 1961, the Sword joined the FAO's Freedom from Hunger campaign and convened a meeting of interested Catholic organisations to discuss a common approach within the Church in England and Wales. The momentum generated led to a decision by the Catholic Church to create the Catholic Fund for Overseas Development in 1962, and in 1962/63 the Sword made fundraising for [CAFOD](#) an organisational priority, building on the success of grassroots Catholic 'family fast days' for food aid as an immediate source of money. A 'books-for-the-missions' initiative set up by the Sword in 1960 had similarly helped to support the emergence of [Book Aid International](#).

Such achievements were some of the first examples of what would become a major strength over the decades: the organisation's vanguard ability (often due to the forward-looking openness of church leaders and the foresight and expertise of leading individuals within the organisation) to catalyse wider action. The Sword, and then CIIR, used its intellectual insight and organisational energy to facilitate the emergence of new organisations and initiatives from the 1960s (see Box).

An extended family

The Sword and the Spirit and then CIIR helped to foster several important organisations that still operate today, including:

Pax Christi England and Wales
CAFOD
Book Aid International
The Africa Centre
Christians Abroad
Catholic Association for Racial Justice
The National Justice and Peace Network
The Latin America Bureau

At this time the Sword also nurtured the [Africa Centre](#). Its establishment in 1962 built on the impetus of an Africa sub-committee that the Sword had created in the late 1950s to provide information on the region, including in the wake of Pope Pius XII's 1957 encyclical letter (teaching document) on Africa, *Fidei Donum*. Chaired by a Conservative MP, Major Patrick Wall, the committee was part of the 'movement' but operated quasi-independently.

[Margaret Feeny](#), who had been appointed the Sword's organising secretary and became CIIR's general secretary following the 1965 renaming of the organisation (see below), played a leading role in setting up the Africa Centre. The demands of the centre's burgeoning operation as a venue for conferences and media briefings meant she decided to take charge of it in 1967.

The work of the Africa committee and Margaret Feeny's deep knowledge and first-hand experience of Africa helped to expand the Sword's overseas role and contributed in turn to major developments in the UK's engagement abroad on development issues.

From the Sword to CIIR: launching an overseas 'volunteer' programme

The Africa committee, alongside its UK-based information work, ran seminars in Africa at the invitation of missionary bishops. This led, as the field of 'volunteering' typified by Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) emerged from the late 1950s, to overseas requests for a specific Sword sending programme to be established to meet local – at the time specifically Catholic – needs.

Such a programme took shape in 1962 as the Catholic Overseas Appointments Bureau (which later joined forces with a non-Catholic bureau run by the Christian Institute for Education to create the [Christians Abroad](#) volunteer support body in 1975). A good number of these CIIR volunteers worked in East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Uganda) as part of a privately-funded Church-linked programme. The latter, until its phase-out from

the mid-1970s, also saw CIIR, for a while, place a few individual volunteers in India and Bangladesh. This initial geographical focus was not surprising in view of the UK's historical colonial links. Enda Byrne, CIIR's first programme officer, had driven forward work with local churches in East Africa.

Working with a difference

It soon became clear that the Sword's emerging volunteer programme would take a distinctive approach, one that transcended narrow religious conceptions of the Church's social role and questioned paternalistic charitable action. Setting out the expectations of volunteers and Church partnerships, Margaret Feeny said: "Those who go must be willing to understand and to adapt, to learn and respect local culture. The object is to help others help themselves. We are concerned more to help the Church in the developing countries with their task of social progress."

These words, remarkably forward-looking at the time, reflected an early commitment to boosting local self-reliance and responding to partners' needs in terms of their own strategies for development. The nascent idea, furthermore, that the aim of volunteers was to work themselves out of a job once a successful exchange of skills and knowledge had occurred was both novel and challenging within the emerging overseas volunteering sector.

As explored more fully in Chapter 2, such an approach took firm shape under CIIR as it established a strong presence on the ground – including staffed offices better able to assess the development value of projects and support project volunteers – in the countries where it worked (see reflection by Dinny Hawes further below).

In the meantime, Stan Windass, appointed the first organising secretary for volunteers on the Sword's 1965 conversion into CIIR (see below), played an important role in developing the organisation's volunteer recruitment systems. These included the running of volunteer selection weekends and volunteer orientation (induction) programmes. Their aim was to ensure that candidates offered relevant skills otherwise unavailable to developing country partner organisations and that, as volunteers providing professional technical support, they would display the human qualities and development motivation required in partner placements. They were expected to respect and build on the existing strengths of partners and the social groups they worked with.

"Those who go must be willing to understand and to adapt, to learn and respect local culture. The object is to help others help themselves. We are concerned more to help the Church in the developing countries with their task of social progress."

Margaret Feeny, Sword of the Spirit organising secretary, on the organisation's approach to recruiting and placing overseas volunteers

CIIR joins the British Volunteer Programme

The mid-1960s were a turning point. In 1965, the organisation (now renaming itself CIIR), helped by its increasingly strong reputation for its education work on development and international affairs as well as its emerging overseas work, was invited to become a member of the UK government-supported British Volunteer Programme (BVP) consortium of sending agencies.

CIIR's membership of the BVP – it joined VSO, International Voluntary Service (IVS) and the United Nations Association International Service (UNAIS) in belonging to the consortium – opened the door to greater official public funding for the organisation's overseas work as the UK took the overall scheme forward as part of its post-colonial relationship with the developing world. Membership was also significant in that it was premised on BVP-funded CIIR recruits being selected solely on the grounds of their development expertise. Following the later 1970s phase-out of its privately funded Church-linked programme, CIIR's volunteer programme gradually became 'entirely secular'.

This development would not be devoid of future internal sensitivity in view of the strong faith impetus behind much of CIIR's education work and the rising institutional importance of its overseas programme. The latter grew in size and diversified well beyond church partners. At the same time, the openness of the overseas programme to all potentially interested parties boosted CIIR's rich pluralistic identity – already shown by its ecumenical disposition – as an institution rooted in the Catholic Church yet independent of its official structures and positions.

From Central America to the South: a growing presence in Latin America

Another key development in CIIR's volunteer programme that marked the organisation's evolution, and its contribution to development and human rights work in the UK, was allocation of Central America to CIIR in the BVP's regional division of global labour among its constituent agencies. CIIR's expansion of volunteering in Central America followed reconnaissance visits by Stan Windass. By 1966, 29 volunteers had been placed in the region and, in 1969, a regional coordinator, Julian Filochowski – who would go on to become director of CAFOD in the early 1980s – was appointed to support volunteers' project work with partners there.

Volunteers in Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador – and later Panama – soon accounted for a considerable part of CIIR's overseas presence (with the BVP also funding a sizeable cohort in North Yemen and a small contingent in Somalia). Volunteers in Central America, alongside their long-term development project work, also mobilised to facilitate international aid agency responses to disaster emergencies. They included the devastating earthquakes to hit Nicaragua and Guatemala respectively in 1972 and 1976. In the Caribbean, CIIR also had a project foothold, if not a country coordinator at this stage, in the Dominican Republic.

By the mid-1970s, moreover, CIIR had also set up country programmes in the Andean region of South America, following the transfer of BVP responsibility for Ecuador and Peru from UNAIS to CIIR in 1973 and 1976. As subsequent chapters show, the internal and external impact of the organisation's Latin America experience, in terms of its overseas programming, UK-based advocacy and institutional outlook on change, was profound. CIIR was influenced by the vibrancy of the region's social movements and the pro-poor commitment within the Catholic Church.

CIIR's growing region-wide involvement followed the Sword's 1963 establishment of a Latin America committee to match the one working on Africa. Its contribution to the 1960s upsurge of UK interest in pressure for political and social change in Latin America and the Caribbean was possibly a factor in the BVP's willingness to support volunteering in a region that had traditionally been seen as falling within the US 'sphere of influence'. In 1961, the US government had established its Peace Corps volunteer programme.

DINNY HAWES

A radical departure for volunteer 'sending agencies'



Dinny Hawes was a CIIR volunteer in the Raymah primary health care project in Yemen from 1977 to 1980 and then desk officer for CIIR's Yemen and Somalia programmes. From 1990 to 2003 he worked as CIIR's international programmes director.

In the 1950s and 1960s, British volunteer programmes generally took the form of young and relatively inexperienced people filling gaps in under-resourced and under-staffed schools and hospitals in poorer, mainly ex-colonial, countries. Programmes such as VSO made placements based on recommendations from friendly in-country contacts. CIIR did likewise, but with its internationalist commitment and wide range of contacts, also questioned the long-term impact that these placements were having. The organisation was in close contact with many who were working for deeper change as countries in Africa and Latin America struggled to overcome the impact of colonialism and exploitation.

From the end of the 1960s, well in advance of other sending agencies, CIIR began to place full-time representatives in the field to analyse the causes of poverty and injustice in focus countries and identify the local organisations that could be best supported to challenge the structural factors involved and promote positive change.

New approach

This was a radical move that involved a total shift of direction in 'volunteering'. It led to a whole new system of intervention, ranging from country analysis and partner and project identification to a more thorough volunteer recruitment and preparation process at the home end in the UK, with a new emphasis on candidates' understanding of development and commitment to skill-sharing empowering local counterparts.

This approach meant CIIR developed projects that were focused on strengthening the capacity of local organisations and strongly emphasised gender equality, ensuring that women were involved at all levels both as actors and beneficiaries in order to promote their rights. Through CIIR's involvement with the BVP, the value of having on-the-ground representatives, as demonstrated by the new approach practised by CIIR, was soon recognised by other sending agencies, which began to follow suit.

The 1960s were a period of exploration and experimentation for CIIR's volunteer programme. By the start of the 1970s, CIIR had as many as 157 volunteers in place, 86 of them supported by the BVP and the rest privately funded, spread across 20 countries in Latin America, the Horn of Africa and the Middle East and Asia (see [chart](#) of country portfolio in the Introduction).

Though a high point in terms of numbers, expansion gave rise to growing concerns that surging UK interest in volunteering abroad was not being sufficiently matched – until the role of the in-country volunteer coordinator and establishment of country offices started to have an impact – by robust local assessment of project opportunities for their long-term development impact. This was at odds with the organisation's intention to ensure volunteer support was locally relevant and effective and quickly led to pressure for the quantity-quality tension to be addressed. As covered in Chapter 2, CIIR succeeded in doing so as it consolidated its on-the-ground presence in a smaller number of countries, albeit with difficulties along the way.

Becoming CIIR: change of name, long-term direction

As a result of the organisation's expanding international interests and development engagement and the need for their coherent projection in the public and political arenas, it had become increasingly clear that the Sword of the Spirit was no longer an appropriate name. Indeed, Margaret Feeny had found it to be a disadvantage in taking part in sending agency consultations with the ODA on creating the BVP and in negotiations to join the consortium. At the start of June 1965, it was changed to the Catholic Institute for International Relations and a revised organisational mandate was also introduced. CIIR's three primary aims, as agreed by its new president, Cardinal John Heenan, with the Catholic bishops of England and Wales, would be:

- To promote international understanding of social justice;
- To provide an information service, to prepare educational programmes for study, to stimulate service overseas; and
- To be the Catholic contact for government departments and international voluntary societies concerned with the developing countries.

These aims provided the rough contours of the organisation's work for the rest of its life. At the same time, the various strands involved would require reconfiguration and shifts of emphasis over the years, in response to the demands of world events and overseas partners, the opportunities and constraints of policy, practice and funding trends, and the institution's changing role within the UK's steadily expanding international development and human rights NGO sector.

CIIR's education committee: from schools to a wider information brief

On transformation to CIIR with its rearticulated set of aims, the organisation undertook rapid adjustment, following appointment of Mildred Nevile, a staff member since 1958, as the new general secretary in 1967. One of her first major initiatives was to create an Education Committee with a strong information brief to raise public awareness and target political and media opinion. The move expanded CIIR's education work beyond its flourishing schools programme that Nevile herself had successfully developed. The schools programme, as well as running seminars on topics as diverse as race relations, population growth and communism and society, had kindled strong interest in Africa and overseas volunteering.

The work of the committee prefigured that of CIIR's soon-to-emerge Education Department. It included organising public conferences and parliamentary events, publishing pamphlets and briefings, providing information and advice to the media as a mass reach channel to raise public awareness, and encouraging UK politicians of all stripes to take a wider perspective and different approach on the development issues at stake in international affairs.

In a measure of the major influence that [Mildred Nevile](#) would have over CIIR in the coming decades, and of the committee's significant organisational standing and external reputation, the new body came to attract high-profile journalists such as Hugo Young, Edward Mortimer and Hugh O'Shaughnessy. This growing media commitment was in step with the interest that early leaders of the Sword, such as Barbara Ward and 'Rudolph' Beales, had shown in contributing to media coverage and involving journalists in the life of the organisation. In the case of the Catholic press, two *Tablet* editors, Douglas Woodruff and Tom Burns, had been on its early 1960s board.

The education committee also brought in academics such as Cambridge University economics lecturer Dr Valpy Fitzgerald as well as active church figures such as Fr Adrian Hastings of London University's Heythrop College. Emerging figures from the global

Economist Barbara Ward, one of the founders of the Sword of the Spirit, was a charismatic public speaker and media commentator. Having mobilised Catholic and wider church action against fascism and in favour of post-war social justice, she influenced the later work of CIIR as a leading thinker on 'sustainable development'.
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Under the leadership of Margaret Feeny, the organisation embarked definitively on its longer-term international course, marked by the 1965 transition from the Sword to CIIR. As well as nurturing committees on Africa and Latin America, she oversaw the setting up of a volunteer programme and CIIR's inclusion in the British Volunteer Programme consortium.

© Progressio



On becoming the new general secretary in 1967, Mildred Nevile expanded CIIR's education work beyond schools. An education committee targeting political and media opinion paved the way for an education department carrying out lobbying and public awareness-raising. CIIR's advocacy enjoyed a golden age in the 1970s and 1980s, leaving a lasting legacy. It set the scene for policy work to become a core activity of international development NGOs.

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South also later came on board. Salvadorean social democratic opposition leader Rubén Zamora, for instance, joined CIIR's committee in the 1980s. Then in exile in the UK due to mass repression in El Salvador, Zamora later became a presidential candidate in the first elections after the 1992 end of the country's civil war and, in the second decade of the new millennium, its future ambassador to the United States and the UN.

Moving with the times: from *Populorum Progressio* to a 'world poverty campaign'

It was in the later 1960s that CIIR confirmed that its long-term strategy would concentrate on development and world poverty. Coming in the immediate wake of Vatican Council II on the Catholic Church's relations with the modern world and Pope Paul VI's ground-breaking 1967 encyclical on development, *Populorum Progressio*, the organisation's reorientation was in keeping with the spirit of the times. Ample thirst for knowledge on the role of the Church in a changing world among Catholics, as well as the wider interested public, saw CIIR publish a shorter version of the papal letter, *This is Progress*. It became a best-seller.

CIIR, following its 1967 announcement of a 'world poverty campaign' with CAFOD in response to the encyclical, organised a series of conferences on development. In what was to become a hallmark of the organisation's commitment to partner 'voice', they included speakers from what was then called the Third World. In 1969, moreover, CIIR went on to join War on Want, UNA, Oxfam, Christian Aid, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and others to launch a manifesto on aid and development and set up an Action for World Development Group. The purpose of the latter was to coordinate joint efforts and deal coherently with public enquiries and support requests.

A changing UK and the role of Europe

Such developments set the scene for CIIR subsequently to mobilise UK support for continued joint agency action on development in response to the UK's changing global position. Alongside a Comment pamphlet on Europe and the Third World, Cardinal Heenan joined the Archbishop of Canterbury in supporting a 500,000-strong petition organised by the World Development Movement as part of a 1973 campaign. It called on European governments to adopt pro-development policies on trade and meet the UN target of rich countries spending 0.7 per cent of national income on international development aid.

The focus on international development meant CIIR reducing its engagement on disarmament, with work on the issue gradually taken over by *Pax Christi* as a Catholic actor on peace, as well as on race relations. The latter had been a subject of intense focus for CIIR in the 1960s, amid public sensitivities over emerging post-colonial cultural change in the UK and inflammatory political discourse stoking hostility to immigrants, as well as ill- or under-informed media coverage and debate of migration – issues that resonate strongly in the divided 21st century Britain of today.

CIIR's advisory group on race relations, which advised the Church hierarchy and engaged with the British Council of Churches' committee on migration, was the forerunner of the official Catholic Commission for Racial Justice to spin off in the 1970s and become the independent *Catholic Association for Racial Justice* in 1984.

Fighting oppression and injustice and tackling the causes of poverty on the ground (1970-89)



CIIR ANNUAL REVIEW 1986



CIIR

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Catholic Institute for International Relations

Solidarity with the Third World

Fighting oppression and injustice and tackling the causes of poverty on the ground (1970-89)

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FOR CIIR, DEVELOPMENT would not just be a question of traditional charitable action in favour of the 'unfortunate' elsewhere, with discrete improvements in wellbeing painlessly secured without touching the powerful political, economic, social and cultural forces affecting people's lives. Rather CIIR viewed development as requiring structural change. It was a process promoting social justice whereby people facing disadvantage, oppression and discrimination in developing countries would be in a stronger position to organise and empower themselves and have their rights recognised and upheld.

Theories of change, challenges of power

Such change at a national level, in order to tackle the root causes of poverty and achieve socially inclusive forms of development, would involve challenging often unresponsive leaders and elites and re-balancing power relations in favour of the poor. In tandem, it would need to be supported by new approaches to, and forms of, international relations, hence the promotional intent of the preposition 'for' in CIIR's name.

This international dimension was underpinned by CIIR's view, on the one hand, that resources, wealth and power should be shared more equitably globally to strengthen the conditions for developing country states to better advance the lot of their own peoples. In terms of struggles for justice and development at the grassroots, on the other hand, a broader conception of international relations was required, one in which concerned citizens in the First World (particularly church members in CIIR's case) had a morally and politically legitimate right to expect their governments to harness their statecraft to supporting struggles for justice-based development in the Third World.

Policy-wise, this approach meant not just strengthening the purpose of emerging aid programmes in isolation, including cooperation programmes whereby UK professionals and globally-minded citizens might play a progressive part in enabling people to promote change and improve their lives themselves. It also entailed realigning official policies to make them consistent with people-centred development objectives. The spectrum spanned policy spheres such as foreign relations, diplomacy, defence and security as well as trade and investment promotion supporting overseas business opportunities for British companies. Narrowly defined conceptions of what was in the 'national interest' needed to be transcended to emphasise solidarity with and between people seeking positive social change and a fairer, more peaceful world.

A golden age in turbulent times

As it evolved, this ambitious agenda faced and reflected the turbulence of the 1970s and 1980s. The era was marked in the global South by the upsurge of struggles for political and social change or national liberation from colonialism or its legacy. Such movements were repressed by local elites – often with the backing of Western powers failing to recognise the local roots of conflicts and acting through the distorting prism of the Cold War.

This was also a time of major global shifts, ranging from calls for a New International Economic Order in the early years of the period covered by this chapter to the rise, and often violent introduction, of free-market economics and the so-called neo-liberal model as the emerging order of the day. Meanwhile, the European Community (EC), following its emergence as an increasingly important international player, was due to become the European Union (EU) in 1992 with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty.

Making sense and tackling the complexities of this environment, as well as mobilising opposition to repression and working closely with partners to promote alternatives to the policies and systems they were linked to, was acutely challenging. Yet this was a time CIIR exhibited intense dynamism and established its long-lasting presence and reputation as an actor on development and human rights, both in the UK, North America, increasingly Europe and in the global South.

Establishing a dynamic reputation

The period was somewhat of a golden age, in particular, for its policy analysis, lobbying and advocacy (which was then labelled education work). It is for this work that CIIR was probably best known then and will be remembered by many now, given its high profile and the achievements described in this and subsequent chapters. CIIR also helped to spawn wider spheres of public and political engagement on development issues. As a result of such pioneering, one of the organisation's lasting contributions has been NGOs'

recognition and mainstream adoption since the late 1980s of policy research, advocacy and campaigning as a fundamental requirement of pursuing development change.

At the same time, the period to 1990 saw major advances in the size, innovation, coherence and strategic approach of CIIR's overseas programming. Indeed, 'volunteers' – renamed 'development workers' (DWs) in the late 1980s to reflect the contribution made by their significant professional expertise and overcome connotations of 'volunteers' being inexperienced amateurs – achieved gains with partner organisations in often challenging circumstances.

Overseas programme experience and shared learning with partners also yielded insights that were drawn on to produce policy and practice publications and support public education work. Development practitioners familiar with this equally important yet often more understated strand of CIIR's work at the time appreciated its distinctive value and contribution.

A measure of CIIR's reputation – and of the political space it had been opening for Catholic, ecumenical and secular action – came during its 40th anniversary in 1980. The organisation received messages of support and encouragement from human rights organisations, development agencies and church leaders – including Pope John Paul II – from around the world.

Different programmes, shared principles

Acute political polarisation, armed conflict and violent repression during this period meant that CIIR's education work, on the one hand, and its overseas country programmes placing DWs with partners on the ground, on the other, tended to work on and in different countries (see **chart** of main focus countries and forms of programme intervention in the Introduction). While CIIR conducted its education work on conflict-affected countries at a distance from its UK base in close collaboration with partners in the global South, the need for its overseas programme to consider the in-country security of DWs working on the ground meant that it tended to operate in countries where greater political space existed for grassroots work.

With their different operational requirements and partner needs, the two programmes thus tended to run in a relatively parallel fashion, leading to periodic internal tensions. The sensitivity reflected less debates over the respective merits of each strand of work but more the varying institutional interpretations of CIIR's Catholic-rooted yet wider secular identity and what each and both meant for the organisation's direction and projection. The funding base of the two programmes, given the ODA's significant funding of CIIR's overseas work on a secular basis, was also somewhat different.

Negotiating the fluidities of institutional identity, however, was also a source of strength. Whatever the perceived borders, the two programmes were unmistakably guided by the same analysis of unequal political, economic and social power relations as a core problem for development. They were equally committed to boosting partner voice, capacity and empowerment, and to responding to partners' needs as the basis for the organisation's principles, values and approach (see quotes).

“Education for CIIR is inseparable from solidarity. Solidarity is the basis of CIIR's work, in that CIIR does not speak by virtue of its own wisdom, but out of its relationship with partners around the world working, often against ruthless opposition, for freedom and justice... CIIR tries to be, along with others, a 'voice for the voiceless'... Another form of solidarity is embodied in CIIR's overseas programme, with its emphasis on support for the initiatives and struggles of Third World communities.”

“If a volunteer programme is to be effective in enabling Third World communities to become more self-reliant, volunteer skills must be placed at the service of indigenous development organisations.”

Source: annual reviews, 1984, 1978



As a result, in practice, CIIR's education and overseas programmes, where political circumstances permitted opportunities, frequently demonstrated symbiotic links and benefits. Respect for CIIR's education work promoting solidarity with church and other partners involved in struggles in the global South, for example, endowed the organisation with the local legitimacy and trust it needed to launch new skill-share programmes and initiatives in several countries. The cases were Zimbabwe (1980), Namibia (1991), El Salvador (1990), Haiti (1993) and, in the new millennium (see Chapter 4), East Timor and Malawi.

Conversely, CIIR's volunteering in Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala from the 1960s facilitated partner contacts and insights for the intensification of advocacy on Central America in the 1980s. Overseas volunteers had been close to the fierce challenges facing partners in such settings and had pressed the organisation to tackle the causes of poverty and injustice and uphold its radical credentials. A media-praised information pack, *Yemen and its People*, produced by the overseas volunteer programme in the mid-1970s, was similarly inspired by earlier education work on Yemeni immigrants arising from CIIR's 1960s involvement on UK race relations.

Taking sides and holding an independent line

Taking Sides, the title of a mid-1980s joint pamphlet with the Catholic Truth Society authored by Fr Albert Nolan OP, a South African Dominican priest, encapsulated CIIR's overall approach. This was predicated on a deliberate, justified bias in favour of the poor and those defending their rights. The validity of this stance was sharply illustrated by a 1984 CIIR church delegation to Guatemala. Its report, *A Nation of Widows and Orphans*, covering the impact of repression on poor communities and persecution of the Catholic Church by the country's military rulers, related that an officer had said: "We will never forgive the priests because they have awakened the people."

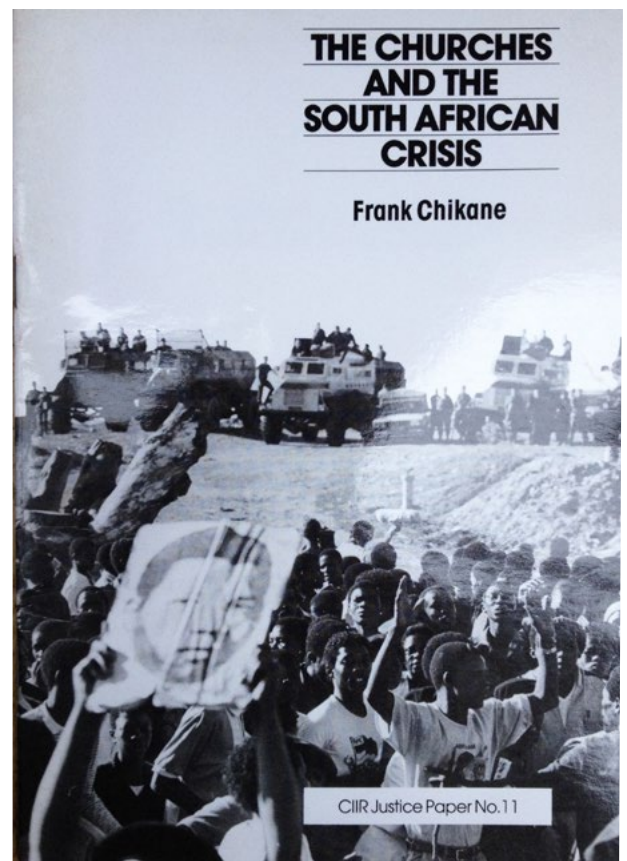
Courage under attack

Siding with the poor and helping to bear witness were the hallmark of CIIR's education work during this period, exposing the organisation to frequent political attack by critics in the UK. The work did not make CIIR vulnerable to the violent intimidation facing partners daily in the global South, of course. But it did require CIIR to show courage in bringing alternative views to political and diplomatic tables, boldly challenging official orthodoxies as it sought to engineer shifts in opinion and policy.

One of the most politically significant examples of such impact during CIIR's early years was the organisation's revelation of the 1973 Wiriya massacre in Mozambique, then still a Portuguese colony. CIIR's intervention (see Box below) caused a diplomatic stir in the UK yet helped to turn the tide against Lisbon's then authoritarian regime and its repressive colonial rule in Africa.

CIIR questioned narratives viewing Third World struggles for national liberation and social justice through the lens of Cold War ideology and provided a platform for overseas partners wanting to have their voices heard internationally on the local roots of conflicts. Pro-poor forces within churches were often the prime target for repressive violence.

Pictured right is a 1988 CIIR pamphlet in which the then general secretary of the Southern African Council of Churches tells the inside story of the struggle against apartheid South Africa. He was arrested and severely tortured during his ministry as a pastor in Krugersdorp and charged with treason in 1985 for his role in the United Democratic Front.



TIM SHEEHY

Diplomacy rewired: turning the tide against Portuguese colonial rule



Tim Sheehy worked for CIIR from 1969 to 1981 and later managed European Commission country offices in Southern Africa. Currently an advisory board member of the Las Casas Institute, Blackfriars Hall, Oxford, which promotes critical reflection on human dignity and Catholic Social Teaching, he is also a principal of the Policy Practice.

Prime Minister Edward Heath had invited the Portuguese President, Marcelo Caetano, on a UK state visit for the July anniversary of a 1373 treaty on Anglo-Portuguese cooperation. CIIR's education committee decided to 'mark' (as opposed to celebrate) the occasion with a one-day seminar at Chatham House, which was attended by 200 people. The idea was to provide a dignified focus for criticism of the way Portugal was prosecuting its colonial wars in Africa. We invited the Bishop of Oporto, António Ferreira Gomes, a critic of the government's policies, to speak but he was refused permission to leave the country. Mário Soares, then an opposition leader living in exile in Paris and Portugal's future prime minister and president, agreed to address the meeting, which was chaired by the Conservative MP, and friend of CIIR, Barney Hayhoe.

The third speaker, Fr Adrian Hastings, who worked for many years as a priest in Africa, was invited to speak in place of Bishop Gomes. Adrian, a CIIR stalwart, though not an expert on Mozambique, briefed himself on the current situation. He consulted with among others the Burgos Fathers, a Spanish missionary society with priests in Mozambique, and learned from them of the terrible atrocities being perpetrated by the Portuguese army. They gave Adrian a detailed account and documentation about a particular massacre in a place called Wirihamu.

From red carpet to red faces

Adrian realised that this information deserved wider circulation and passed on the documents to *The Times*. A front page splash and coverage in other newspapers, together with an editorial highly critical of Portuguese policy and demanding an investigation, transformed Caetano's visit into a political catastrophe for both the British Government and the Portuguese authorities. The episode put significant wind into the sails of the demonstrations being organised by the Anti-Apartheid Movement and its allies and led to an eruption of criticism of Portuguese policy from (almost) all sections of British society.

In the end, Caetano was forced to cut short his visit. This humiliation provided army officers, already dangerously disillusioned with the regime, with a further justification to move against the government and topple Caetano the following year. Thus began Portugal's transition to democracy and the end of its wars in Africa.

The Wirihamu episode, sandwiched by two CIIR Comments circulated to MPs urging British action on Portugal's record at home and abroad, showed not only how effective CIIR's education work – and the role of its recently formed education committee – could be, but also the controversies it could provoke. An indignant letter from the Portuguese ambassador saw Cardinal Heenan raise with CIIR's leadership the diplomat's claim of Catholicism being used as a cover for left-wing bias. In response, Mildred Nevile debunked the charge by stressing the Sword's earlier work on communist oppression in Eastern Europe. She also defended CIIR's independent status, which had been formally reaffirmed shortly after her appointment in 1967. "We do not speak for the Catholic Church and have never claimed to do so. CIIR is an independent lay organisation," she said.

"We do not speak for the Catholic Church and have never claimed to do so. CIIR is an independent lay organisation."

Mildred Nevile, CIIR general secretary, defending CIIR's independence in 1973

Pluralistic and impartial approach

CIIR's ability to remain independent and hold the line against pressure for a more compromised approach was helped by the fact that 'taking sides' meant supporting people and not uncritically adopting ideological blueprints, particularly of a party-political nature, for how 'justice and development' could or should be achieved by or for the poor. Indeed, a defining feature of the organisation, mirroring the complex coexistence of its Catholic yet simultaneous secular identity, was its uncanny ability to entertain and keep in play different positions and narratives (see Box below).

Such a pluralistic approach was demonstrated, for instance, by the inclusion of liberal-minded Conservative MPs such as Peter Bottomley and Colin Moynihan on delegations respectively to military-led El Salvador and the Philippines, and by engagement through trusted partners with a range of centre-left reformist and left-wing revolutionary liberation movements. CIIR also engaged constructively and productively with a wide range of Third World solidarity movements during this period, while taking care to preserve an impartial – but far from neutral – line in siding with the poor and oppressed.

IAN LINDEN

Lives at stake, work on the edge



Ian Linden was CIIR's general secretary from 1986 to 2001, having previously worked on its Southern Africa desk from the late 1970s. He is a visiting professor at St Mary's University College, Twickenham, and author of *Global Catholicism: Towards a Networked Church* (London: Hurst, 2014).

CIIR was colonised intellectually by the developing world. So keeping theology, politics and development in separate silos made little sense; this was reflected in much CIIR attempted. It kept the organisation 'on the edge'. Internally it had to negotiate the differences between a volunteer programme that saw itself as 'secular' and an advocacy programme that saw itself, more accurately, as Catholic. But the secular programme could be seen as an expression of 'the option for the poor' and the religious programme worked with liberation movements and the African National Congress (ANC), the latter containing the South African Communist Party, as secular as it gets, even if it sometimes wanted Archbishop Denis Hurley to preside over funerals of leading members of the ANC. He complained to me that, as photographs were being taken on these occasions, the Red Flag mysteriously appeared behind him.

On the border, crossing boundaries

Whether working with the Rhodesian Justice and Peace Commission, or getting the general secretary of the Southern African Council of Churches, Frank Chikane, back across the South African border – he had been forced to 'skip' to the UK – or smuggling in a de-bugging device for the United Democratic Front, CIIR activity was at times border-line. Our partners' lives were at stake. Frank Chikane survived poisoning by the South African security police.

But CIIR was border-line only in relation to the less life-threatening world of UK politics. The organisation also had friends there: the late Liberal Peer, Pratap Chitnis, Labour MP John Battle, and Lord Chris Patten, then a Conservative MP, who was a constructively critical supporter. In the new millennium, we even sent future Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn MP to East Timor to monitor the independence elections.

Influencing through the media, publications and events

Work with the media – CIIR was an NGO front-runner in recognising its crucial importance as a shaper of public opinion and political debate – similarly benefited from an open, inclusive approach. Journalists were seen, in true CIIR style, as potential partners entitled to their own independent role rather than as a mere instrumentalist outlet for institutional messaging. CIIR engaged the media, not by telling journalists what to think, write or broadcast but by providing information they could make their own professional sense of and productively use.

Supporting and challenging journalists

This approach may explain why CIIR was able to involve leading journalists of different backgrounds and political hues in its committees or attract them as supporters. CIIR's provision of trustworthy information and analysis and a more diverse range of sources and insights for stories – derived from the organisation's close links with partners on the ground and its intimate knowledge of the problems they faced – led to frequent high-profile media coverage.

CIIR, nonetheless, as in the case of Rhodesia outlined below, was not afraid to challenge the often under-informed assumptions and structural biases of established mainstream media and the misleading or damaging effects of its discourse. As a result, the organisation's alternative information role was valued by other target audiences and users (see quotes).

"The British media have not served this country well in its coverage of Rhodesia. The picture of the conflict we receive from church sources on the spot is substantially at variance with that presented through our newspapers, radio and television.... The distortions in public sentiment which can be partly attributed to the media have significantly circumscribed the freedom of action of the British government on the Rhodesian question."

CIIR annual review, 1979

"The most remarkable outpouring of evidence about Rhodesia comes from [CIIR]. It has produced the greatest amount and the greatest variety of material. It is also the quickest off the mark.... Such connections (with the local Church) have given CIIR publications an unrivalled authority."

Manchester University history professor Terence Ranger, writing in the New Statesman in June 1979, quoted in CIIR's 1980 annual review

Launch of the Comment series: finger on the pulse, eye on change

CIIR's work was also bolstered at this time by the unprecedented expansion and impact of its [publishing](#), as marked by its influential flagship *Comment* series launched in 1971 and continued uninterruptedly thereafter. Designed to fit in the suit pocket of then overwhelmingly male MPs as the anecdote went, these booklets provided compelling contextual analysis of the policy processes and political actors affecting the prospects for 'justice and development'.

CIIR, while tending to cover global issues or countries of prime advocacy concern in Latin America and the Caribbean, Southern Africa and south-east Asia, also took advantage of the series to tackle a prodigious range of issues in the public eye or of topical interest to CIIR members – Iran's 1979 revolution, the Northern Ireland conflict, Eritrea, the Stroessner dictatorship in Paraguay, prospects for democratic change and development in Bolivia, the legacy of colonialism and political exploitation of race in Guyana, conflict in the Middle East and Lebanon, oil and the developing countries, world poverty and population growth, the damage of the arms trade, Europe and the Third World, to name a few. The *Comment* series showed CIIR to have its finger on the pulse of international affairs as they affected development. It broke lasting new ground for an NGO at the time (see Box).

PAUL VALLELY

Power of the word and breaking lasting new ground

Paul Vallely, a journalist, writer, broadcaster and academic, is a former chair of CIIR's board of trustees.

CIIR's series of pamphlets known as *Comments* broke new ground on the borderline between well-informed policy and the sphere of public advocacy. They were among the first documents of this kind in the development world to harness detailed policy analysis to the business of advocacy and campaigning. They were one of the first bridges between academia and activism, adding new power to the arguments of those fighting to make the world a better place. Written on an extraordinary range of issues, they understood that structural and political change was the top priority in lots of areas before sound development objectives could be realised.



As well as commissioning expert writers and commentators, a hallmark of publishing then and in the future involved joint ventures prioritising the views of Third World partners. On the one hand, CIIR worked with church and non-church partners to reproduce and translate leading books and banned texts from the global South and bring them to English-speaking audiences. On the other, it collaborated with other Catholic international development agencies in the English-speaking world to reproduce or summarise major church statements, as with the *Church in the World* briefing series. CIIR also published theological reflections on development issues in its *Third World Theology* series along with *Justice Papers* authored by its own faith-based advocacy partners.

CIIR's annual reviews, moreover, were more an analytical chronicle of political and policy trends affecting the organisation's response to development injustice than a promotional 'business report' of work done. Their coverage complemented the role of the quarterly *CIIR News* in providing regular newsletter updates for CIIR members.

CIIR's lunchtime 'circle' meetings and annual general meetings (AGMs) provided unique opportunities for the organisation's members and the UK development community to hear and discuss directly with charismatic church and civil society leaders and advocates from the Third World their first-hand experiences of struggles for development justice.

Pressing for change – policy work in action

CIIR's 'education' programme in the 1970s and 1980s

From country struggles for social justice and national liberation to the challenges of global development

Tackling the interrelationship between development injustice, conflict and human rights violations was a feature of the organisation throughout its 76-year life. In the 1970s and 1980s the challenges were at their sharpest since the work of the Sword of the Spirit in opposing fascism. Yet CIIR ensured vital support for partners in threatening times and contributed significantly to the prospects for change in countries in Southern Africa, Latin America and Asia. The organisation also expanded its engagement on global development issues and their relationship with policy challenges in the UK.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Providing a critical voice on white-ruled Rhodesia and supporting Zimbabwe's independence

CIIR's contribution to creating the UK and international conditions in which Zimbabwe eventually won independence in 1980 cannot be understated. Not without reason was CIIR general secretary Mildred Nevile officially invited to the new Commonwealth nation's April 1980 independence celebrations. Indeed, Rhodesia, as part of CIIR's growing advocacy work focusing on Southern Africa, was an institutional priority for most of the 1970s.

CIIR's UK-based education work helped to change political, diplomatic, media and public opinion on the democratic deficiencies of a 1971-proposed 'internal settlement' agreed between the UK Conservative government and the Ian Smith regime. The deal had declared Rhodesia's unilateral independence as a white-dominated self-governing colony in 1965. That year, CIIR launched a Justice for Rhodesia campaign with Pax Christi, which included the active contribution of a churches group.

Responding to repression

Much of CIIR's work involved spotlighting repression as a systemic feature of white-governed Rhodesia and its efforts to block genuine political change based on majority rule. Over the 1970s, CIIR disseminated in the English-speaking world and Europe a series of Rhodesian Commission for Justice and Peace reports detailing human rights abuses and censorship, working with international partners such as the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) and Trócaire of Ireland.



AFRICA

CIIR does information work on South Africa, Namibia and the frontline states. In supporting the democratic movements within South Africa CIIR works closely with the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference and the South African Council of Churches, who have committed themselves to continuing the work of the organisations banned in February 1988. CIIR's Overseas Programme has health, education and community development projects in Zimbabwe and health and agricultural projects in Somalia.

SOUTH AFRICA

Challenge to the churches

Deepening repression under South Africa's extended state of emergency has checked the democratic movement's developing programme. The shrinking 'legal space' for opposition to apartheid has left the churches as the main support for organised dissent, a role for which they are ill-prepared.

Before the state of emergency —

now in its third year — people's democracy was becoming a growing reality on factory floor, in street committees and civic associations, student, youth and women's organisations. Rejection of apartheid has been inherent both in the wide variety of non-violent resistance — rent, school and consumer boycotts, church protest, court challenges — and in the steady increase of guerrilla

activity, little reported beyond the immediate vicinity of the attacks.

Formal repression includes detention without trial, bannings and restrictions on media, organisations and individuals, and attempts through the courts to criminalise all political activity. Trials also neutralise key activists such as the United Democratic Front leaders facing charges in the Delmas treason trial, which has dragged on for two years. In thousands of unpublicised cases in the rural areas, youngsters are being sent to jail on public violence charges directly related to the political upheaval.

The last year has seen a frightening escalation of 'informal' repression, the vigilante and death squads which function on the fringes of the security forces. CIIR focused on this phenomenon, in southern Africa and other regions, in the conference *Death Squads and Vigilantes: Block to Development* in May 1988. The victims are, in the main, unionists, youth and community activists relating to UDF organisations. Worst hit is the Pietermaritzburg area of Natal where conflict between Chief Buthelezi's Inkatha movement and the democratic unions and township organisations, which challenge his control, has



South African church leaders march to parliament. From left to right: Rev. Khoza Mgojo, Archbishop Stephen Naidoo, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Rev. Allan Boesak, Rev. Frank Chikane

Reports and studies such as the 1975 *Man in the Middle* on torture and the forced eviction of black communities by Rhodesian security forces and *Racial Discrimination and Repression in Southern Rhodesia*, a 1976 analysis of the regime's illegality and repressive constitutional order, prompted considerable UK media coverage.

CIIR also mobilised UK church support in defence of justice and peace commission members facing imprisonment, harassment and threats – supporting a 1978 visit to Rhodesia by Bishop David Konstant of Westminster that led to charges being dropped, for example. In the UK, CIIR mobilised ecumenical opposition to church persecution through membership of the British Council of Churches (BCC) Rhodesia Group.

Towards transition and the Lancaster House talks

Meanwhile, CIIR's analysis applied constant pressure for change at a political level. This included a media-covered Comment which dissected the Salisbury Agreement signed in 1978 on the terms of a settlement and challenged its 'uncritical acceptance' by the UK parliament and conservative sections of the UK press. At this time, CIIR also worked with the Justice and Peace Commission to facilitate Church discussions with nationalist leaders Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe on the situation in the country.

Following a mixture of praise and considerable hostility from UK politicians and media, CIIR went on to organise an all-party delegation to Washington DC to raise its concerns in the United States and then send a mission to Rhodesia, led by Lord Chitnis on behalf of the UK's all-party parliamentary human rights group, to observe the ensuing April 1979 elections. In contrast with official observers, CIIR's *Free and Fair?* report denounced the electoral process as fraudulent, and the findings of a CIIR-published follow-up study by a University of Kent law professor, Dr Claire Palley, made their way into official US Congress records.

CIIR used the reports' findings to target the onset of the breakthrough Lancaster House conference held in September-December 1979. It produced a series of confidential briefing papers to inform and influence the negotiations on the eventual transition to majority rule.

As a result of its longstanding consistent support, CIIR was invited by the Commission for Justice and Peace to be its partner in monitoring the pre-independence elections held in February 1980. For all the hostility to its work within the UK establishment, CIIR's stance in raising human rights concerns and critiquing Rhodesia's internal settlement had been vindicated, as noted by Cardinal Basil Hume, CIIR's new president since 1976, in his address to that year's AGM. CIIR's Ian Linden documented the Catholic Church's role since 1959 in supporting Zimbabwe's independence in a 1980 book.

Vindication and longer-term vision

Despite the demands of combining urgent action on repression with partner engagement on Rhodesia's political process and its various moments, CIIR also showed vision on the country's longer-term development challenges as it became Zimbabwe.

In the run-up to independence, development specialist Roger Riddell, then a CIIR researcher, edited a series of studies, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, which examined the socio-economic and administrative challenges facing a future government. The research, covering issues such as employment, land and international investment, led him to be invited to chair an early post-independence presidential commission and relocate to Zimbabwe to establish an independent research unit providing advice. In 1980, CIIR also published a comprehensive study of foreign companies and international investment in the country from the early 20th century to the present.

In 1978, moreover, CIIR had set up the Zimbabwe Project with the Swiss Bethlehem Fathers, a regional initiative providing vital information to help agencies support the return of Zimbabwean refugees in neighbouring states. A Namibia project would be launched on similar lines in the next decade to aid returnees as South Africa's occupation of the country was brought to an end (see below).

CIIR also demonstrated awareness and responded to signs of problems in the newly independent Zimbabwe. Concern over reports of independence government repression of opponents in Matabeleland saw CIIR disseminate statements by Zimbabwe's justice and peace commission and Catholic bishops on the situation, following a 1983 visit to the country by Mildred Nevile. CIIR's response was a harbinger of the organisation's long-run future work on the crisis of governance and rights in Zimbabwe described in later chapters.



RHODESIA

IMMIGRATION ACT, 1966 [Chapter 27] 7

NOTICE TO PROHIBITED IMMIGRANT

To Timothy John SHEEHY
at Salisbury

TAKE NOTICE that permission to enter Rhodesia or to remain therein is refused on the ground that you are a prohibited immigrant by reason of the operation of—

- * (a) paragraph (h) of subsection (1) of section 5 of the Immigration Act, 1966; (Chapter 27);
 - * (b) ~~subsection (5) of section 5 of the Immigration Act, 1966;~~
 - * (c) ~~section 6 of the Immigration Act, 1966;~~
 - * (d) ~~section 30 of the Immigration Act, 1966, in that you have, entered/ remained in Rhodesia in contra-~~
~~vention of the provisions of~~
 - * (e) ~~subsection (3) of section 23 of the Immigration Act, 1966.~~
- *Immigration officer to delete or complete as appropriate.

You are notified that, in terms of the Act, you may appeal to the nearest magistrate's court—

- (a) on the grounds of identity, as provided in section 10 (1) of the Act, if you have been alleged to be a prohibited immigrant by reason of the operation of paragraph (a) or (h) of subsection (1), or of subsection (5) of section 5 of the Act; or
 - (b) to determine whether or not you are a prohibited immigrant if you have been alleged to be a prohibited immigrant by reason of the operation of any other provision of the Act;
- but that, if you have been refused entry in terms of the proviso to subsection (5) of section 8A of the Act, you are not entitled to enter or remain in Rhodesia for the purpose of noting or prosecuting your appeal, or to be present at the hearing thereof, but may be represented at your appeal by counsel or attorney.

Such appeal must be noted within three days after this notice has been given, and shall be made on form No. I.F.6, which may be obtained from any immigration officer.

Date 11 January 1979

Place Salisbury

Immigration Officer

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the notice, of which this is a copy, declaring me to be a prohibited immigrant to Rhodesia on the grounds stated therein.

Date 11 January 1979

Signature Tim Sheehy

Notice banning CIIR staff member Tim Sheehy from entering Rhodesia

Fighting apartheid South Africa, loosening its regional grip

The multi-faceted approach of CIIR's Rhodesia-Zimbabwe education work provided a blueprint for CIIR's wider engagement on Southern Africa as it expanded during the 1980s. It focused on supporting partner struggles for democratic change in South Africa and tackling apartheid's damaging grip and impacts on neighbouring countries.

Taking a stand against Western complicity

A CIIR paper, alongside the impact of a 1980 UK visit by Durban's Archbishop Denis Hurley, led the Catholic bishops of England and Wales to condemn apartheid and reject Pretoria's claims of defending Christianity against communist subversion. The move was highly significant as leading Western powers, notably Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government newly elected in the UK and the Reagan administration in the United States, deployed such arguments to justify their refusal to take tough international action against the regime. CIIR worked closely with the US Catholic Bishops' Conference to challenge the US side of this official transatlantic stance, as it would do also in relation to Washington and London's failure to oppose right-wing repression in Central America (see next section).

Mobilising British and international support for South Africa's Catholic Church was a constant priority as apartheid repression and resistance intensified during the 1980s. As the decade progressed, the emptiness of President P W Botha's touted political reforms, intended to head off mounting pressure for change, became increasingly clear.

Supporting the resistance of Christian churches

The repression included a 1985 attempt to try Archbishop Hurley for treason – CIIR arranged the presence of bishops from around the world at the proceedings – as well as the detention and torture of leaders from the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) for their 1986 and 1987 statements opposing apartheid. The latter had also declared the goals of the democratic opposition to be in line with the Church's social teaching.

CIIR also supported growing ecumenical cooperation against apartheid by distributing globally the 1985 Kairos document issued by a large group of mainly black South African theologians from townships. It challenged all churches, on theological grounds, to act in unison on the underlying causes of South Africa's political crisis. In 1987, the inter-denominational South African Council of Churches (SACC) adopted the Lusaka Declaration, declaring the repressive apartheid state to be illegitimate, and the next year both the SACC and the SACBC had their headquarters destroyed in arson and bomb attacks following their call for a boycott of that October's local elections.

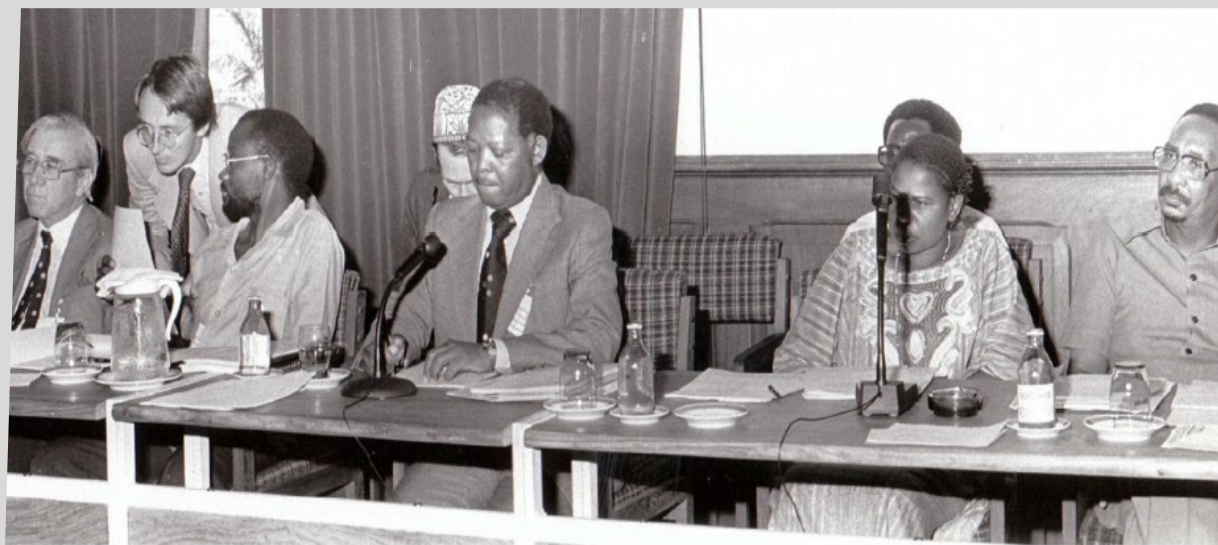
Through publications, CIIR brought to international attention the front-line courage of the churches in filling the democratic gap created by the regime's repression of social organisations and its banning of political opposition. They included, for instance, 1988's *God in South Africa* by Catholic priest Albert Nolan, one of the Kairos authors, as well as *No Life of My Own*, an autobiography of Rev Frank Chikane, a leading opponent of apartheid and then SACC's general secretary.

Raising issues, adding to international pressure

CIIR extensive publishing on South Africa highlighted the various forms of apartheid repression and resistance taking place in South Africa. It covered issues such as violent police conduct, torture, the impact of emergency legislation, conscription and conscientious objection, forced removals, and the situation of children in townships and women in detention.

Meanwhile, to take account of the changing tactics of the Botha regime and assess future political and socio-economic trends, CIIR published several editions of its *South Africa in the 1980s* study during the decade. First published in 1984 and translated into several languages, its circulation was banned in South Africa.

In 1986, in the context of mounting international pressure for government action against the regime, CIIR produced and disseminated a Comment and commissioned a book on the case and scope for sanctions. It went on to explore this challenge in further detail in a 1989 study for Commonwealth foreign ministers and also became an active member of the Southern Africa Coalition, which was urging fundamental change in British policy towards South Africa. Such work complemented other aspects of CIIR's international advocacy such as its technical support for the Association of West European Parliamentarians against Apartheid. AWEPA had been formed in 1984 to coordinate international political opposition to white-only rule. A 1982 Comment had covered sport sanctions and apartheid.



CIIR's contribution to the struggle against apartheid South Africa and its regional damage included advising the Southern African Development Coordination Conference in the 1980s. Pictured (top far left and bottom second left) is CIIR staff member Tim Sheehy.

CIIR worked with a wide range of other agencies, including the BCC, the ICJ and others to highlight the problems of apartheid repression and control. CIIR, alongside its own publications, distributed books such as *Appetite for Power: Buthelezi's Inkatha and South Africa* first published in 1987. Amid growing alarm at the role of right-wing vigilante groups in repression as the Botha government battled to stave off change before eventual 1989 handover to the pre-transition FW de Klerk administration, the book formed part of CIIR's efforts to debunk prevalent Western narratives. These presented the effects of apartheid political manipulation as a problem of 'black-on-black' violence.

Working for regional resilience and cooperation

Working closely with the SACBC, a key partner in publicising the church's promotion of justice in South Africa and the wider region, CIIR drew international attention to the crushing human and economic costs of apartheid in Southern Africa. As well as conferences, the work involved commissioning books such as journalist Joseph Hanlon's *Beggar Your Neighbours*, co-published with James Currey and released as *Apartheid's Second Front* by Penguin in 1986. Numerous *Comments* analysed the destabilisation of Angola and Mozambique and Pretoria's occupation of Namibia.

Meanwhile, as early as 1981, CIIR, reflecting the high esteem in which it was held in the region, had been invited by Mozambique's post-colonial government to provide international liaison support to the newly founded Southern African Development Coordination Conference. CIIR's Tim Sheehy acted as secretary to the steering committee responsible for organising the initial meetings of SADCC. The grouping, set up to coordinate resistance and reduce member countries' economic dependence on South Africa, including through the support of international aid, later became the SADC development community promoting post-apartheid regional integration in the 1990s.

As in the case of Rhodesia's transition to Zimbabwe, CIIR cast an eye to the future by launching research studies during the 1980s on the long-run development challenges of South Africa and Namibia. Analysis in the latter case encompassed well-reviewed publications on the post-independence future of education, mining, fishing and agriculture. Work of this kind, linking support for immediate struggles for justice with future country needs – including the role of foreign investors – was an extension of CIIR's earlier role in helping to create the inter-denominational Christian Concern for Southern Africa (CCSA) in 1972 (see Box).

Pressing for change on business conduct and investment in Southern Africa

CIIR hosted and helped to support and guide the CCSA as part of CIIR's 'extended family' (see box in Chapter 1) by providing staff time and advice as a member of its governance bodies. CCSA's advocacy from the early 1970s included producing reports on the human rights impacts and ethical responsibilities of businesses and banks investing in South Africa and Namibia and submitting evidence to parliamentary inquiries.

CCSA's work also evolved to include building company profiles and analysing corporate investment portfolios and policy pressure for mandatory disclosure of information on business respect for the rights of workers and local communities. A 1976 report, *Poverty Wages in South Africa*, covered by the *Guardian*, highlighted the UK government's failure to alter its policy of company self-regulation and voluntary disclosure. In 1977, CCSA criticised an EEC code of conduct as being similarly weak and lacking penalties for non-compliance.

Early precursor

Sitting alongside international calls for sanctions against apartheid South Africa at the time, CCSA's work on Southern Africa was an early precursor of the business and human rights and responsible investment fields emerging in the United States and the UK. In the UK, church and charity action led to the 1980s creation of the ethical investment research foundation [EIRIS](#). Business conduct was a work area in which CIIR would retain strong future interest across its international advocacy work, as shown in the case of South Africa at this time with its 1989 publication of *Fruit of the Vine* book on labour exploitation in the country's growing wine industry.

Namibia's independence: supporting a crucial milestone

A milestone in the crumbling of apartheid was neighbouring Namibia's 1990 achievement of independence. It followed UN resolutions and a protracted UN-supported process, which had recognised the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) fighting occupation as the legitimate representative of the Namibian people.

A factor clinching the breakthrough in ending South Africa's occupation had been events in adjacent Angola where Pretoria, with the active Cold War support of Western powers, had armed and backed UNITA rebels fighting the country's post-colonial MPLA government supported by the Soviet Union and Cuba. South Africa had stepped up its own direct military intervention, committing large numbers of troops which operated deep inside Angola. Their presence illustrated the relevance of CIIR's support for the End Conscription Campaign in South Africa.

In the late 1980s, however, the Luanda government's armed forces, with the vital military help of Havana, had succeeded in holding off the Pretoria-supported rebels. The protracted bloody stalemate made it more and more costly for South Africa, increasingly isolated abroad and in crisis at home, to sustain its military destabilisation of Angola. This means of keeping its post-Second World War grip on Namibia and thwarting regional challenges to apartheid had been placed in check.

CIIR's steady contribution

Amid the geo-political wrangling and high-level diplomatic negotiations, CIIR made its own steady contribution to supporting Namibia's freedom. Following the first of several Comments over the years on Namibia's plight issued in 1975, CIIR drew attention to South Africa's human rights violations in the territory. In 1978, for example, in partnership with the BCC, it published and disseminated internationally a locally banned report, *Torture – a Cancer in Our Society*, which had been assembled by Catholic and Anglican leaders of the Christian Centre, precursor of the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN) founded that year and an ongoing CIIR partner.

A follow-up study in 1979 by one of the report's authors – deported from the country – drew attention to the South African administration's history of rigging elections. It stressed the need for the UN, if free and fair polls were to be held, to insist on effective electoral systems and processes safeguarded from coercion and political and media manipulation.

Another major contribution in the late 1970s and early 1980s was CIIR's support for international advocacy targeting a Western government contact group. The group, formed by the UK, the United States, Canada, France and former colonial power (West) Germany, had been set up in the 1970s to mediate between South Africa and SWAPO. CIIR's work matched politically its studies on Namibia's socio-economic future on transition – both the English and German editions of the initial *Namibia in the 1980s* study had sold 7,000 copies by 1983.

Ecumenical action: holding the West to account

With the BCC, CIIR helped to establish and coordinate an international ecumenical contact group to shadow the official Western grouping. In doing so, CIIR worked closely with Bishop Bonifatius Naushiku of Windhoek, Namibia's first indigenous Catholic bishop, and the diocese's Justice and Peace Commission. One of the commission's members – like many Namibians – had been forced to flee the country in 1980, following death threats. He was helped to come to the UK with his family by Middlesbrough's Justice and Peace Commission.

In 1982, CIIR supported a BCC delegation to Namibia to express solidarity with the CCN in response to the threats it faced and to gather information on South Africa's overall repressive occupation. The delegation's findings were published in London's *Observer* newspaper and made considerable impact in South Africa. This included endorsement in a major report on the situation in Namibia produced by the SACBC following a year-long process of research. Two SACBC bishops toured contact group countries that year and CIIR organised their itinerary in Britain. CIIR actively disseminated the SACBC report outside South Africa at the request of the bishops' body.

Supporting transition

Though the importance of the official contact group waned by the mid-1980s, the different Western churches hitherto involved in monitoring sustained their collaboration as a renamed Namibia Ecumenical Group. NEG members used common position papers to press their respective governments in the West to provide unequivocal support for Namibia's independence, drawing on CCN's analysis and statements which were widely distributed by CIIR. CCN rejected South Africa's diversionary argument that the 'granting' of Namibian

independence be made conditional on the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. By the mid-1980s the CCN was further intensifying pressure. In 1985, for instance, it hosted a visit by US Senator Edward Kennedy and an all-party parliamentary delegation from the UK. Meanwhile, CIIR continued to produce Comments to track progress in diplomatic efforts and the UN, analysing their implications for the achievement of an independent Namibia. Such work culminated with the organisation of an international Catholic delegation to monitor Namibia's November 1989 elections, which paved the way to eventual transition to independence the following March. To counter South Africa's control of the media, the London-based Namibia Christian Communications Centre, which CIIR had helped to support, set up an office in the capital Windhoek to provide a reliable source of information.

Angola: conflict and pending peace

Namibia's eventual transition contrasted with the enduring travails of Angola's peace process, which remained a focus of CIIR advocacy into the 1990s. As part of CIIR's engagement on Portuguese colonialism in Southern Africa, highlighted by the Wiriya case and future concern over the impact of apartheid destabilisation on Mozambique's 1975 independence, CIIR had also started working on Angola in 1973.

CIIR, concerned by ill-informed UK media coverage of Angola's protracted anti-colonial struggle and rivalry between nationalist movements in achieving 1975 independence, issued its first Comment on the country in 1976. It drew attention to the role of foreign intervention in escalating the conflict and was followed by a CIIR-hosted UK visit by the Methodist bishop of Luanda, who briefed MPs on the conflict and the response of churches.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Dictatorship in South America and CIIR's growing regional vocation

CIIR's mid-1970s launch of volunteer programmes in Peru and Ecuador noted in Chapter 1, complementing those already underway in Central America, took place in a climate of growing UK concern and solidarity with struggles for social justice and human rights in Latin America at this time.

CIIR's growing Latin American vocation saw its education committee attract new members with strong expertise on the region such as Rosemary Thorpe, an Oxford University economics lecturer and Latin America expert specialising on Peru, John Rettie of the BBC Latin America Service, and later journalist Jon Snow of Independent Television News. The latter's ITN reporting from El Salvador in the early 1980s provided a much fuller picture of the problems underpinning conflict and human rights violations in the country.

From political space to rise of the generals

Though brittle democracies in the two Andean nations starting to host CIIR volunteers had succumbed to a period of rule by the armed forces before a return to civilian government in the second half of the 1970s, the self-declared reformist military regimes then in charge had vowed to undertake a more inclusive process of development modernisation, albeit displaying contradictory attitudes in practice towards the role of social movements. As outlined later in this chapter, sufficient political space existed for CIIR to work on the ground through volunteers in Peru and Ecuador in the 1970s, notwithstanding the former's dangerously deteriorating political situation in the 1980s which CIIR found the courage to withstand (see Box).

Staying the course in Peru amid the political violence of the 1980s

CIIR was one of the few agencies to remain in Peru during the political violence and repression arising from the Maoist Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) rebel insurgency starting in 1980. CIIR remained committed to sustaining its support for partners through volunteers, with the support of country-based staff. They included John Saville, Richard Harthill and later Carolyn Williams – CIIR's country representative and a future member of Progressio's board. Their work put CIIR in good stead later to accompany partners' project initiatives in the 1990s when Dina Guerra became the first Peruvian national to lead the country programme in 1994. A comparatively safer environment for local development work was then emerging as insurgent groups were defeated, albeit contending with the authoritarian political manipulations and repressive restrictions of President Alberto Fujimori elected in 1990. He employed populist public appeal to launch a free-market economic restructuring programme imposing heavy social costs.



Tafos images from the time of the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso).

Above: Military intervention in the university campus, San Marcos University, Lima, 1990

©Victor Bustamante/ Archivo TAFOS-PUCP

Below: Terrorist attack on telecommunications tower, Ayaviri, 1989 ©Jacinto Chila/ Archivo TAFOS-PUCP

In contrast, authoritarian military regimes already in place or seizing power elsewhere in South America in the 1970s – Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Uruguay and Argentina – were determined to crush violently all social and political challenges to elites in whose interests they ruled. Their ruthlessness also acquired a regional dimension as the regimes shared intelligence and worked jointly to eliminate exiled political opponents and human rights critics in so-called Operation Condor. The acute human rights and wider social justice problems at stake became an intense focus of CIIR's increasingly strong education work on the region at this time.

Chile's 1973 military coup: a human rights crisis with wider meaning

It was Chile that became an immediate priority for CIIR's work on South America. The banning of political opposition, mass arrests, systematic torture, extra-judicial killings and disappearances by the Pinochet dictatorship, following the US-backed 11 September 1973 military coup against the democratically elected Salvador Allende government's socialist programme in favour of the poor, made the country a major international cause for almost two decades.

Indeed, the Chile experience was a fiercely debated case. On the one hand, the experience of Allende's 1970-73 Popular Unity administration tested the scope and limits of achieving radical social and political change through the ballot box and popular mobilisation; on the other, with the rise of the 17-year military regime undertaking a radical free-market economic experiment backed by repression, it posed the challenge of how the democracy-human rights relationship could be restored on solid foundations.

Supporting an international solidarity movement

Throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, CIIR mobilised support for the vital human rights work of the Catholic Church and other church agencies. It hosted church partner visits and raised awareness of the situation in the country through events, country research visits, delegations, vigils, promoting media coverage and lobbying MPs and ministers.

In the wake of the coup, for example, CIIR, in partnership with CAFOD and with the subsequent support of Christian Aid and Oxfam, persuaded the UK's then Labour government to channel considerable funds to the Vicariate of Solidarity, the Catholic Church's human rights body, in order to help those suffering under General Augusto Pinochet's rule. Official support was likewise won for a UK refugee programme for those fleeing Chile and elsewhere in Latin America, with cities and towns around the UK welcoming and hosting exiles.

CIIR also supported and sat on the board of the UK's Chile Committee for Human Rights. This group played a significant role in the 1970s and 1980s in mobilising broad political opinion and public action in Britain against the Pinochet regime's repression, working closely with human rights organisations in Chile to support victims and human rights defenders. The committee's activities complemented those of the Chile Solidarity Campaign, which worked with the UK's trade union movement to block arms supplies and urge the UK government to isolate the regime internationally.

It was solidarity of this kind in countries around the world that helped Chile eventually win 1990 handover to an elected civilian president. The transition followed the resurgence of protests across the country over the 1980s, which created enough national and international pressure to force the armed forces to hold a 1988 national plebiscite on continued military rule, the topic of CIIR's Comment, *Pinochet: Yes or No*. In the final stages of its engagement on Chile, CIIR, with the Washington Office on Latin America ([WOLA](#)), sponsored a delegation to monitor the referendum which an increasingly internationally isolated Pinochet lost.

A laboratory in the South

CIIR's series of Comments on Chile, which continued into the 1980s, pointed out at an early stage that mass repression and controls on trade unions and civil society by the Pinochet regime were not a problem of temporary excesses but a systematic requirement of imposing and sustaining the introduction of a radical neoliberal economic model unfettered by democracy. Even on eventual transition to civilian rule, Chile's constitution and political system retained provisions for continued military tutelage and electoral over-representation of political forces previously associated with supporting the military regime.

Indeed, Chile's experiment was a laboratory for economic policies reducing and redefining the state's role in the economy and freeing market forces, which became the dominant mainstream in countries of the West and spread globally in the 1980s. Monetarist

CHILE

Pinochet's new political order rejected

As the protests mount against the Pinochet government, each year seems to bring some new atrocity which demonstrates the true character of General Pinochet's rule. He has failed to build a new political order. There is less support for the government now than at any time since the coup; despite thirteen years

of absolute control over the educational system, young people throughout Chile are overwhelmingly opposed to the regime; the economy is in ruins with the highest per capita debt in Latin America. He is kept in power by the armed forces which, with insignificant exceptions, have remained loyal to him as Commander-in-Chief. The

opposition, weakened by years of repression, has yet to overcome the divisions which have prevented it from forming the sort of alliance which the great majority of Chileans would be prepared to support actively. Only such an alliance will be able to force General Pinochet from power [Comment, 'Chile', August 1986]. ■



'Chile will be free and ours': protest banner during the papal visit

CIIR Annual Review 1987 ©Julio Echart

restructuring in the UK following 1979 election of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government and subsequent adoption of so-called Reaganomics in the United States – both the UK and US governments backed the Pinochet regime – set the tone for the structural adjustment programmes now being introduced in the global South at the insistence of the Washington-based international financial institutions.

Another regional case of violent political repression and free-market reform in the 1970s was neighbouring Argentina, which became another focus of CIIR's action on South America (see Box). A 1976 military coup led to intensification of a 'dirty war' in which around 30,000 people disappeared before the 1983 collapse of the military regime following its defeat in the Falklands/Malvinas war with the UK the year before.

Argentina's 'dirty war': CIIR denounces church repression

In October 1976, CIIR published *Death and Violence in Argentina*, a report compiled by a group of priests denouncing repression of Catholic Church members in the wake of March's military coup. Submitted as evidence to the Organization of American States (OAS), it received wide media coverage in Europe and the Americas, its account of abuses corroborated at a December CIIR press conference by Fr Patrick Rice, an Irish priest who had been tortured and deported by the junta.

One of the report's cases was the suspicious death of Bishop Enrique Angelelli of La Rioja (later revealed to have been murdered for his commitment to social justice and decreed a martyr by Pope Francis in 2018) for whom CIIR held a public memorial service in 1977. The event followed an earlier CIIR mass vigil against repression on the first anniversary of the coup attended by MPs, unions, churches, writers and artists at the Argentine embassy in London.

An international telegramme campaign in 1977 supported by CIIR led the regime to acknowledge the detention of leading human rights activist Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, who later won the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize. CIIR published a Comment on Argentina following its media work around Esquivel's autumn 1980 visit to London and renewed its calls for an end to UK arms sales to this and other repressive regimes in Latin America.

CIIR also supported the establishment of a UK-based Committee for Human Rights in Argentina. This partnership helped to generate media concern with the atrocities in the country as it prepared to host and win FIFA's 1978 football World Cup. Fr Rice's account was submitted to the European Parliament as it heard evidence on Argentina shortly before the start of the controversial tournament.

Challenging Brazil's authoritarian rule and questioning its 'economic miracle'

Brazil – under military rule since 1964 following CIA-backed destabilisation of the Goulart administration – joined Chile in becoming a longer-run focus of CIIR's South American education work at this time. In 1976, CIIR's success in mobilising public church action on Chile and Argentina was matched by nuns and priests supporting a vigil outside the Brazil's embassy during a UK state visit by General Ernesto Geisel, Brazil's latest military president, who was now facing growing pressure for change.

A CIIR Comment coinciding with the general's visit contrasted Brazil's so-called 'economic miracle' under military rule – projecting the country as a leading example of Third World industrialisation based on attracting foreign investment – with the deprivations facing the mass of its people.

Promoting the learning of a socially committed church

CIIR's awareness-raising on repressive authoritarianism and social inequality in Brazil under military rule drew on the insights of pro-poor church leaders, including bishops from the poor North East. CIIR hosted UK visits by Dom Hélder Câmara, archbishop of Recife. He addressed CIIR's 1972 AGM and, during a return visit in 1975, gave a CIIR-published talk on human rights in Latin America at a Leeds justice and peace commission event attended by an impressive 1,500-strong audience. He went on to take part in UK tours organised by CIIR in 1980 and 1981, following Pope John Paul II's mid-1980 visit to Brazil, the latter providing a productive opportunity for CIIR media work in the UK on the social justice role of Brazil's Catholic Church.

Painful legacy, living memories: images from Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina, which joined the list of South American countries under military dictatorship in the 1970s and 1980s and became another focus of CIIR's work supporting human rights defenders in the region.

From top: mural commemorating victims of repression from La Boca neighbourhood;



white head scarf image of the Mothers of the Disappeared in the Plaza de Mayo reminding the public of their struggle for justice for their loved ones;



image from the remembrance and human rights centre located on the site of the former ESMA torture centre, showing some of the faces of the 30,000 people who disappeared during the military regime.

©Jon Barnes



Another guest in 1978 was Cardinal Evaristo Arns, archbishop of São Paulo, the rapidly expanding city at the heart of the 'economic miracle'. A leading campaigner for human rights and democracy in Brazil, he met with the UK's minister for overseas development, MPs, bishops, church groups and development agencies. That year, CIIR produced an English-language version of the best-selling *São Paulo: Growth and Poverty* published earlier by the city's Justice and Peace Commission. It highlighted the human costs of rapid economic development and led to positive UK media reviews.

In 1979, CIIR published *For a Society Overcoming Domination*, a book of case studies produced in a multi-year international study on injustice organised by the National Bishops' Conference of Brazil (CNBB). The Brazilian hierarchy had asked CIIR to promote the project in the UK; a 'special correspondent' appointed by the organisation facilitated the participation of over 200 groups and individuals, including the Child Poverty Action Group. A visit to Brazil by CIIR's staff correspondent led to 1980 publication with CAFOD of *Good News to All: Impressions of the Church in Brazil*.

With Brazil's church committed to urban and rural social justice and often at the centre of 'liberation theology' debates arising amid the Catholic Church's official regional adoption of a 'preferential option for the poor' (see Box), the country continued to be a focus for CIIR awareness-raising throughout the 1980s. CIIR's work, drawing on the innovative strengths of the Brazilian church's pastoral planning, extended to organising international exchanges with church leaders and workers elsewhere. In 1982, three South African priests and east London Bishop Victor Guazzelli visited Brazil to learn about the social justice work of Christian base communities in the country.

CIIR promotes and defends the Church's 'preferential option for the poor'

CIIR's commitment to Latin America, which became a defining institutional trait, was driven from a faith perspective by the second Latin American Bishops' Conference held in the Colombian city of Medellín in 1968. CELAM, in response to mounting pressure for social and political change in the region and the Catholic Church's 1962-65 Second Vatican Council on relations with the modern world, advocated that the regional church should adopt a 'preferential option for the poor'. CIIR, as well as drawing the attention of its members and supporters to the crucial importance of the bishops' stance, acted in solidarity with those defending it against attack by conservative sectors of the Church, running information initiatives around the next CELAM conferences.

From Medellín to Puebla and Santo Domingo

CIIR ran an information centre to work with the media during CELAM's 1979 conference in Puebla, Mexico, when a staff member acted as a special correspondent for the *Catholic Herald*. CIIR translations of official Puebla documents, as well as publications providing summaries and reflections such as *The Poor: the Church's First Priority*, proved very popular with UK church groups and schools. In 1980, BBC Radio 4 broadcast a programme, *Jesus the Liberator*, based on CIIR interviews with Latin American theologians.

In 1992, CIIR travelled to the Dominican Republic to carry out similar work, filing reports for the *Tablet* and the *Catholic Herald*, during CELAM's gathering in Santo Domingo. The meeting coincided with the contested 'celebration' of the 500th anniversary of Columbus' so-called 'discovery' of the Americas and debates on the Catholic Church's role during and after the Spanish conquest. CIIR frequently hosted visits by leading Latin American theologians, including Fr Gustavo Gutiérrez, author of *A Theology of Liberation*.

Political change and worrying threats: rural violence

Over the decade, a vibrant popular movement, including Christian base communities, human rights organisations, landless workers and the urban trade union movement, created enough pressure for Brazilians to gradually win the return of civilian rule from 1985. The eventual restoration of democracy followed introduction of progressive new constitution in 1988 and the holding of a direct presidential election in late 1989 in which the Workers' Party, rooted in the country's social movements, challenged for power.

Despite the transition, the prospects for social justice, particularly in the countryside, remained uncertain as the rural poor and indigenous communities faced the growing threat of uncontrolled mining and agribusiness and violent landowner hostility to land reform. The dangers had attracted major international attention in 1988 with the murder of rural trade unionist and Amazon rainforest defender Chico Mendes. As the 1980s ended, CIIR's desk officer in charge of advocacy on the country, Francis McDonagh, worked with CIMI, the CNBB's indigenous affairs agency, to promote UK support for Yanomami people of northern Brazil against the growing threat of gold miners to their survival.



Raising awareness, debate and action on Latin America

Reflecting Latin America's rising strategic importance for the organisation from the late 1960s and early 1970s, Hugh O'Shaughnessy, a CIIR education committee member and at the time the Latin America correspondent of the *Financial Times*, launched and chaired a series of CIIR Latin American forums from 1975 to the mid-1980s.

CIIR's Latin America forums

The forums attracted a diverse range of leading Latin American political figures and experts on the region – former presidents Eduardo Frei of Chile and Luis Adolfo Siles of Bolivia, future Brazilian leader Fernando Henrique Cardoso, journalist Richard Gott, for example – and provided a novel opportunity to bring policy-makers, businesses, academics, development agencies and human rights groups together to discuss under-reported issues affecting the region. Among the topics were UK and EEC relations with Latin America, Brazil's economic model, the human rights responsibilities of private banks, and South American military regimes' use of national security doctrine to justify their mass repression.

Another session examined the fraudulent politics of the repressive Forbes Burnham regime in Guyana, a country case CIIR dealt with until the later 1980s as part of its regional advocacy portfolio. It highlighted the calls of Bishop Benedict Singh of Georgetown and Guyanese human rights organisations for justice and democracy and provided support for the Jesuit editor of Guyana's *Catholic Standard*.

CIIR's vibrant work on and in Latin America saw the organisation become the BCC's associate secretary for Latin America in the early 1980s, a position it used to promote ecumenical action on the region. CIIR also used its growing presence on the ground (see later section) to advise CAFOD on the agency's support for projects in the region.

Birth of the Latin America Bureau

In 1977, moreover, CIIR, building on the impetus of the Latin America forums and the impact of its overall education work, joined forces with Christian Aid and War on Want to create the [Latin America Bureau](#). LAB embarked on an impressive record of book publishing on development, politics and social justice issues over the next decades and continues today to provide vital news and analysis on the region. It runs a vibrant website, publishes a digital newsletter and produces occasional books on particular countries and topical issues, helping to overcome overall neglect of the region by the UK's mainstream media since the late 1990s.

A call to arms on human rights

A major concern for CIIR was UK aid and arms sales to repressive regimes, the topic of its 1978 Latin America forum jointly organised with LAB. Addressed by a UK minister, a World Bank representative and human rights organisations, it debated the complexities and vital importance of applying human rights conditions to the UK's relations with such regimes.

In 1977, CIIR, following contact with partners in military-ruled Bolivia, had publicised the harsh working conditions and repression of striking miners and persuaded the UK government to withhold a grant to the country's state-owned mining corporation as repression continued under the 1971-78 Banzer regime. At the start of the following year, CIIR's parliamentary lobbying with others led to UK cancellation of an arms deal with El Salvador in the grip of mounting military repression (see next section). CIIR's wider concern at this time with British arms sales to repressive regimes in the region involved collaboration with organisations such as Amnesty International and the Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT).

Changing the narrative on conflict and change in Central America

From 1977, Central America started to become the dominant focus of CIIR's education work on Latin America, and in the 1980s its 'advocacy' on the sub-region reached peak intensity (see Box below). Drawing parallels with US intervention in Vietnam, the US administration of President Ronald Reagan taking office in early 1981, under the guise

of fighting Soviet and Cuban-promoted 'international communism', had embarked on an intensified strategy of containing through repressive military means locally-rooted pressure for socio-economic and political change.

Locally rooted struggles, US Cold War intervention

In Nicaragua, Washington, alongside imposing sanctions and a trade boycott, nurtured and bank-rolled the violent attempts of counter-revolutionaries (the so-called *contras*) to destabilise the Sandinista National Liberation Front government now in power and

GEORGE GELBER

Giving 'advocacy' vital meaning in a pre-digital age

George Gelber was a CIIR desk officer for Latin America from 1982 to 1989 and went on to set up CAFOD's public policy unit, which he led until 2010. He has since worked as an independent evaluator and consultant, specialising in social protection, agriculture and food security.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, when CIIR was most active on Central America, advocacy – meaning the advancing of a cause through information-sharing and reasoned debate – was not widely used in NGO circles. But this, in another age before the internet and social media, is what CIIR did in the 1980s, the Reagan-Thatcher years.

Our tools were publications, notably CIIR Comments, short publications flatteringly described by the Foreign Office as 'bluffer's guides' to Central America; Justice Papers, such as *The Faith of Archbishop Romero* by Jon Cortina SJ; and speaking tours, especially by Jesuits from Central America, severe critics of the military regimes in Central America, critical friends of the early Sandinista government of Nicaragua and opponents of the military regimes in Guatemala and El Salvador. CIIR also organised parliamentary visits to the region. Lord Chitnis, now sadly no longer with us, was a steadfast friend and ally in the House of Lords. Alf Dubs, then an MP, was an election observer in Nicaragua in 1984.

Shining UK light on Washington's 'backyard'

As now, the British government had little interest in Central America, seeing it as firmly within the US sphere of influence. The only occasion on which Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher is known to have protested about US policy in its 'backyard' is when she was angered that the United States invaded Grenada in 1983 without giving her any prior warning.

The prominent role played by the Catholic Church in the defence of human rights throughout the region, and the terrible price it paid, especially in El Salvador and Guatemala, enabled CIIR to respond and expand interest in, and concern for, Central America with a combination of liberation theology in action, guarded admiration for the embattled Sandinista government and relentless criticism of the military regime in El Salvador. CIIR played a crucial role in ensuring that Central America and its issues were not brushed aside or dismissed as a predictable left-wing enthusiasm.

undertaking reforms, following the FSLN's 1979 insurrectionary overthrow of the decades-old Somoza family dictatorship. In the case of El Salvador and Guatemala, it escalated US military aid and advice to repressive governments using torture and death squads. Outsourcing of repression to paramilitary groups saw the term 'plausible deniability' gain currency in the political lexicon of counter-insurgency.

Elite resistance of peaceful demands for reform in the latter two countries had led to increasing human rights violations and, in the case of El Salvador, to full-scale civil war from 1979, as a US-backed army further stepped up repression against the local population in fighting a country-wide armed insurrection by the leftist Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). Over 12 years, the conflict and repression cost the lives of over 75,000 people.

Mass violation of human rights and rising conflict in Guatemala did not attract the same level of international attention as El Salvador, an imbalance CIIR sought to rectify. Yet the scale and brutality of repression in the latest phase of the country's 1960-96 civil war were equally if not more acute. State-sponsored violence against indigenous Mayan communities in the western highlands was alleged to have acquired genocidal characteristics in the first half of the 1980s. By the time of Guatemala's peace accord in 1996, up to 200,000 people had been killed or disappeared, the vast majority, as in El Salvador, at the hands of the security forces and paramilitary death squads.

El Salvador and Guatemala: defending a church for the oppressed

A vital priority for CIIR in the 1980s was to respond to the violence unleashed on the Church as it defended the voice of the poor and advocated social and political change as the foundation of achieving lasting peace in El Salvador and Guatemala. Its efforts were particularly intense in the case of El Salvador on which CIIR had been an early mover.

Building on close bonds forged with Jesuit partners and San Salvador's newly appointed Archbishop Óscar Arnulfo Romero in the later 1970s, CIIR had already started pressing the



JULIAN FILOCHOWSKI

Early solidarity with Romero and a rare victory on UK arms sales



Julian Filochowski, CAFOD's chief executive from 1982 to 2003, is the co-founder and current chair of the Archbishop Romero Trust. He was a CIIR volunteer in Central America and served as its Volunteer Coordinator in Guatemala and Honduras from 1969 to the early 1970s. He then became CIIR's London-based Latin America secretary and worked closely with Archbishop Romero and the Central American Jesuits.

When he was appointed Archbishop of San Salvador in 1977, contrary to the expectations of CIIR's Jesuit partners in Central America, Óscar Romero wholeheartedly embraced the cause of the exploited and landless peasantry; he worked audaciously to secure their rights, denouncing the torture, killings and disappearances to which the organised rural poor were subject. In his Sunday sermons, Romero challenged the oligarchy, Catholic to its core, and their military government to respond to the country's crisis with land reform and social programmes; but instead violent repression simply intensified. Romero became isolated from his fellow bishops and the ruling Catholic families, and the Jesuits asked CIIR to support Romero and his prophetic work.

Almost immediately, we learnt with deep concern that the British Ministry of Defence had agreed to sell to the Salvadorean military second-hand armoured cars, worth £850,000, that could and would inevitably be used for internal repression. CIIR launched a campaign to block the shipment. It involved MPs of all parties in parliament, parish Justice and Peace groups picketing Cabinet Ministers' constituency surgeries every weekend and, through the Trades Union Congress (TUC), dockers mobilising at the ports to block the vehicles being loaded.

Armed with questions

Questions were put down in the House of Commons but the government cleverly avoided giving oral answers. On taking his seat in the House of Lords, therefore, Pratap Chitnis, a member of CIIR's Education Committee, used his maiden question, which could not be sidestepped, to demand cancellation of the sale. With supplementary questions distributed to sympathetic Peers of all complexions, including the then Bishop of St Albans, Robert Runcie, the cross-examination of the hapless Lord Goronwy-Roberts, deputy leader of the House of Lords, went on and on.

But it was Madge Rondo, CIIR's Volunteer Coordinator in Guatemala, who from the local press provided the killer fact: that the vehicles could be used, in conjunction with the Guatemalan army, against British troops in any conflict with Belize – still then a British colony. With more questions and a motion in parliament, David Owen, the Foreign Secretary, proposed in Cabinet a delay to review the sale contract. Prime Minister, Jim Callaghan, was having none of it and insisted the sale be cancelled. Advocacy and solidarity: it was a rare victory in arms sales campaigning.

Over three years, six priests and dozens of lay catechists were assassinated and Romero himself was under threat. At CIIR's behest, 116 UK parliamentarians nominated Romero for the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize. Subsequently a parliamentary delegation visited Romero and investigated the human rights situation. They reported their shocking discovery of torture cells in the National Guard headquarters.

In the decades that followed his 1980 assassination, CIIR treasured that precious partnership with Romero, celebrated his martyrdom and kept alive his extraordinary inspiration to Christians to make a fundamental option for the poor.

UK government, with the support of sympathetic parliamentarians, to act on the mounting human rights violations by the military government. The work included urging the UK to cancel arms sales (see Box).

No vain sacrifice: Romero and rallying church action

The 24 March 1980 assassination of Archbishop Romero – just weeks before, CIIR had published his pastoral letter with Bishop Arturo Rivera y Damas entitled *The Church, Political Organisation and Violence* – was experienced as a personal loss by CIIR. Yet the tragic event also became a source of constant motivation as the organisation promoted church action on El Salvador over the decade, complementing wider UK and international solidarity with the country. In immediate response to the assassination, CIIR accompanied Bishop James O'Brien as the representative of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales at Romero's funeral in San Salvador, itself the scene of a massacre, and worked with Cardinal Hume to hold an April requiem mass in Westminster Cathedral.

In 1981, on the first anniversary of Romero's death, CIIR organised a memorial mass to celebrate his life in conjunction with CAFOD, Christian Aid, Pax Christi and the Commission for International Justice and Peace, and promoted significant UK media coverage of church persecution in El Salvador. It arranged the participation of Salvadorean Jesuit theologian Fr Jon Sobrino SJ, a close friend and adviser of Romero, in a Thames TV tribute forming part of its *No Vain Sacrifice* series on the lives of modern martyrs. In 1982, Sobrino contributed an analytical reflection to a CIIR book, *Romero: Martyr for Liberation*, which contained Romero's last two homilies and a foreword by Cardinal Hume. Released to coincide with the second anniversary of Romero's death, it proved so popular that a reprint was needed after two months.



Then CIIR staff member Julian Filochowski accompanying a late 1970s UK parliamentary delegation to El Salvador.

From front, left to right: Labour MP Denis Canavan, crossbench peer Lord Chitnis, Archbishop Óscar Romero, Conservative MP Peter Bottomley. Engaging policy-makers from across the political spectrum characterised CIIR's pluralistic approach.

Go forward one page
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The Archbishop Romero Trust

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Saint Oscar Romero

pray for us

The Archbishop Romero Trust

Welcome to the website of the Archbishop Romero Trust. Here you will find news, information and resources to celebrate the life and legacy of Saint Oscar Romero



Welcome to the Romero Trust

The Trust is delighted that Archbishop Oscar Romero was canonised on Sunday, 14 October 2018 by Pope Francis in Rome AMDG.

Annual commemorations for Romero became a rallying point for ecumenical church action in the UK on El Salvador, building on the impetus of an inter-church task force that CIIR had helped to set up and actively supported from the start of 1982. Some 39 Romero anniversaries were held around the UK that year alone, with the help of CIIR and its members, and the organisation went on to support the organisation of such events in future years. The 10th anniversary saw CIIR and Scotland's Catholic international development charity SCIAF organise a church delegation to El Salvador including bishops Maurice Taylor of Galloway and Patrick Kelly of Salford. In 2005 a major 25th anniversary took place as celebrations of Romero's legacy were sustained in the new millennium. Romero was canonised as a saint by Pope Francis in mid-October 2018.

Violent milestones

CIIR's promotion of church action on El Salvador and Central America extended to engagement and liaison with churches and church bodies in the United States, including the [US Catholic Bishops' Conference](#). Their horror at Romero's assassination had been rapidly followed by shock at the December 1980 rape and murder of four US churchwomen by El Salvador's National Guard. The victims included members of the Maryknoll Sisters congregation whose president addressed CIIR's 1983 AGM on the US church response to the crisis in Central America.

The two violent milestones, occurring in the final year of the Carter administration, anticipated the onset of Reagan's aggressive support for a military 'solution' to conflict in the region. CIIR intensified its pursuit of internationally coordinated church pressure on the crisis. In early 1984, CIIR disseminated the testimony of US bishops to Congress on the country's relations with Central America as a Church in the World publication. That year, to raise UK awareness of the situation in El Salvador, CIIR invited Romero's successor, Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas, to be a guest speaker at its AGM.

Just as the 1980s had started with such brutal acts of violence against church commitment to social justice, so the decade would end. In November 1989, members of the army's US-trained elite Atlacatl battalion murdered six Jesuits, their cook and her daughter on the campus of the Central American University ([UCA](#)), CIIR's longstanding Jesuit-linked partner. UCA, whose rector, Fr César Jerez, made frequent advocacy visits to the UK at the invitation of CIIR over the decade, had always advocated a negotiated political settlement to the civil war. The Jesuits' murder, the subject of CIIR's Church in the World publication *Martyrdom in El Salvador*, was a painfully significant turning point.

From 'crucible of repression' to turning point in El Salvador

Revulsion at this atrocity – alongside an FMLN 'final offensive' which sustained insurrectionary attacks in wealthy areas of San Salvador for the first time, in response to its continued political exclusion and the government's intensification of repression – created national and international pressure for UN-supported talks to take shape in 1990. By now, a military stalemate had been reached and 1988 US elections had produced a George HW Bush administration more inclined to take a pragmatic and less ideological approach to the conflict as the end of the Cold War neared. Despite continued repression, the talks led to the eventual signing of peace accords in early 1992.

CIIR also drew attention to the sharp challenges facing church members less in the political spotlight whose work had been under-reported, despite its major importance. In 1989, for example, it published *Death and Life in Morazán*, the story of a priest exercising his ministry in a war zone. Meanwhile, CIIR's [Sister Pamela Hussey SHCJ](#), who was awarded an MBE in 2000 for her work for human rights in Latin America, drew attention to the neglected issue of women's role in El Salvador's church in her CIIR-published book, *Free from Fear*. She stated that Christian commitment was "redefined, tested and purified in the crucible of repression".

Guatemala: helping to bear witness

In 1981, Guatemala's Catholic bishops stated that the church was suffering persecution as never before in its history. Their words reaffirmed the alarm that they and rural church workers had shared the previous year when CIIR joined a European church delegation to Guatemala on behalf of the BCC – its report, published in French, German and English, received wide coverage – and also carried out its own follow-up country research visit.

Concern at mounting repression and church persecution led CIIR to intensify its work on the country from early 1982 when General Efraín Ríos Montt, a right-wing Pentecostal with links to conservative US Christian fundamentalist groups, seized power in yet another military coup.

Backed by the Reagan administration, which resumed US arms sales suspended on human rights grounds since 1977, Ríos Montt undertook a 'scorched earth' campaign of repression

in Mayan indigenous communities already living in fear. They included communities in Quiché department, whose diocese had been closed in 1980 because of the violence. The situation had forced Bishop Juan Gerardi Conedera, a close contact of CIIR's and future (murdered) head of the Guatemala's human rights truth commission (see Chapter 3), into exile.

In response to the crisis, CIIR launched a series of public meetings and media and policy-maker seminars in the UK from late 1982, the first including a Guatemalan priest, Guatemalan labour lawyer Frank La Rue, and a US speaker from WOLA. CIIR also became the international support partner of Guatemala's Committee for Justice and Peace and organised a UK lobbying and advocacy tour for the group. The partnership informed CIIR's production of an information pack on massacres and the church's human rights and social justice work in the country. It proved popular in awareness-raising among church and solidarity groups in the UK.

Ríos Montt was overthrown by his own defence minister in August 1983, but the killings, torture and mass displacement of Guatemalans continued, as did repression of the church whose social organisation programmes were viewed with suspicion by the regime. In November that year, Fr Augusto Ramírez Monasterio was murdered in Antigua. In 1984, CIIR traced the historical nature of church repression by publishing Philip Berryman's *Christians in Guatemala's Struggle*. A CIIR-organised UK visit during the year by Fr Ricardo Falla SJ, author of a study on Guatemala's massacres, drew the attention of bishops and MPs to the army's 'beans and bullets' programme, which made food and relief aid conditional on communities supporting counter-insurgency.

El Salvador and Guatemala: unmasking the politics of reform and repression

Close relations with church partners strengthened not only CIIR solidarity in response to the violence they faced but also its broader international advocacy on the political process. This offered a far broader and more nuanced picture of struggles for social justice in the region. As well as helping observers better understand the complexities of the issues at stake and avoid over-reliance on official analysis and sources, it countered distortions by governments hostile to change. It also provided a counterpoint to mainstream media reporting often unable to get to grips with the underlying drivers of conflict and repression and the asymmetries of power affecting struggles for social justice.

CIIR, for example, used reports from the Archbishopric of San Salvador's human rights body Socorro Jurídico (Legal Aid), subsequently renamed Tutela Legal (Legal Protection), to challenge the claims of the Reagan administration, in seeking congressional certification of continued military aid, that the Salvadorean government was making progress in controlling human rights abuses. CIIR did so during a 1983 delegation to the US embassy in London.

Marshalling such evidence was vital in the UK in view of Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's ideological affinity with the US president. In the early 1980s the UK was alone in Europe in failing to support UN resolutions deploring abuses in El Salvador. In late 1982, CIIR organised a series of Latin America forums on British policy on Central America at the ODI.

CIIR's partner-informed commentary and analysis filled a crucial information gap as national and international political responses to conflict and crisis in Central America unfolded.

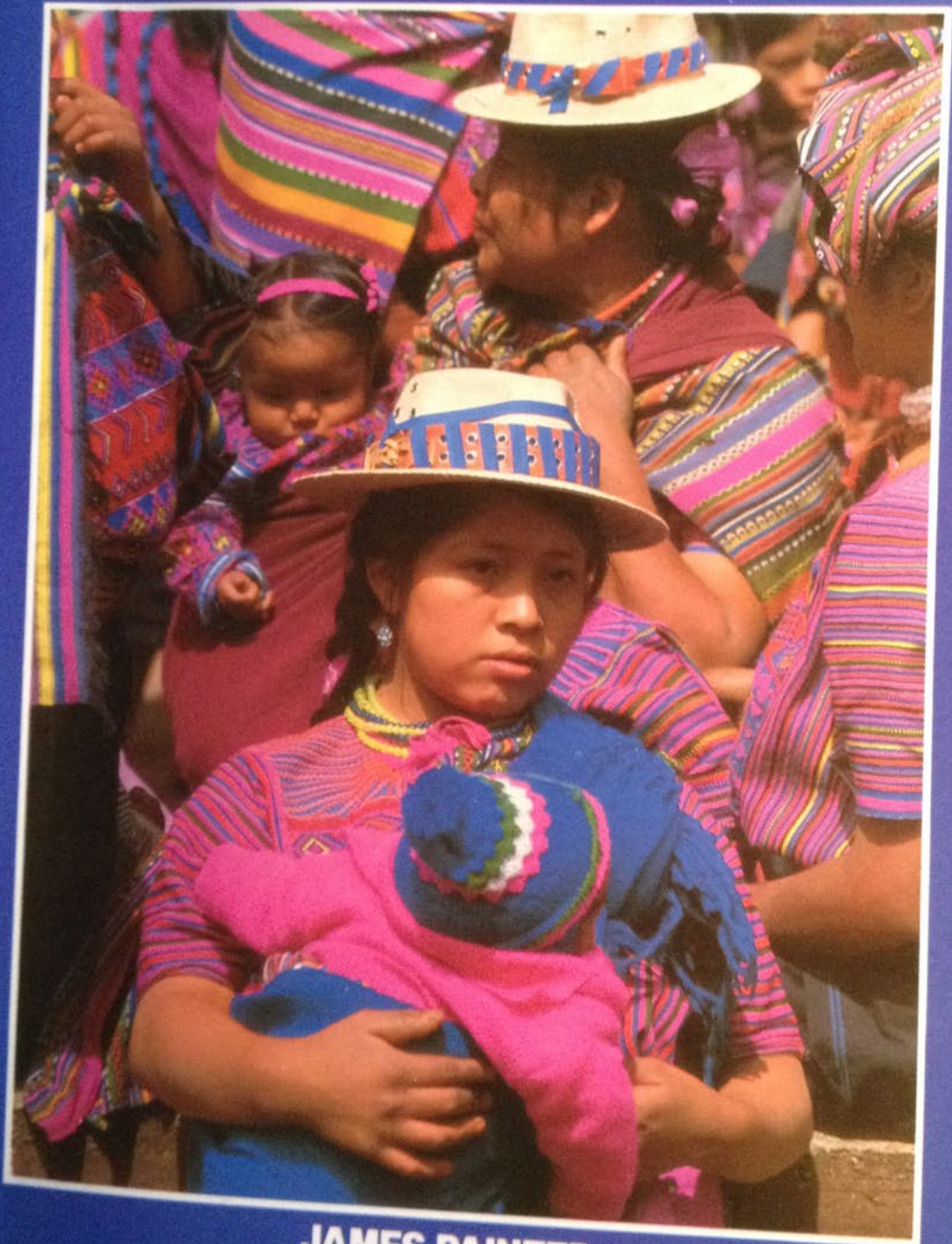
Civilian faces, military power

El Salvador, with US encouragement and support, held controlled elections throughout the 1980s, and apologists for army-backed governments sought to use this civilian facade to mask the military power and violence upholding the Salvadorean state. CIIR, targeting UK policy-makers and working with European and US partners to do likewise elsewhere, argued that elections, held in a climate of mass repression, political exclusion and voter intimidation, lacked legitimacy and could not be regarded as a solution to the country's underlying problems. Mgr Ricardo Urioste, San Salvador's vicar general, said plans for 1984 presidential elections were an attempt "to build a house starting with the roof".

Similarly, in Guatemala, the 1986 election of Vinicio Cerezo's Christian Democrat administration, ending direct military rule, left unjust structures of wealth, power and human rights impunity intact. Formal civilian politics and official promises of democracy, peace and human rights sat alongside a strategy of 'low-intensity' conflict in which targeted counter-insurgency repression and military control continued through methods such as 'model villages' and compulsory civil defence patrols.

GUATEMALA

False Hope • False Freedom

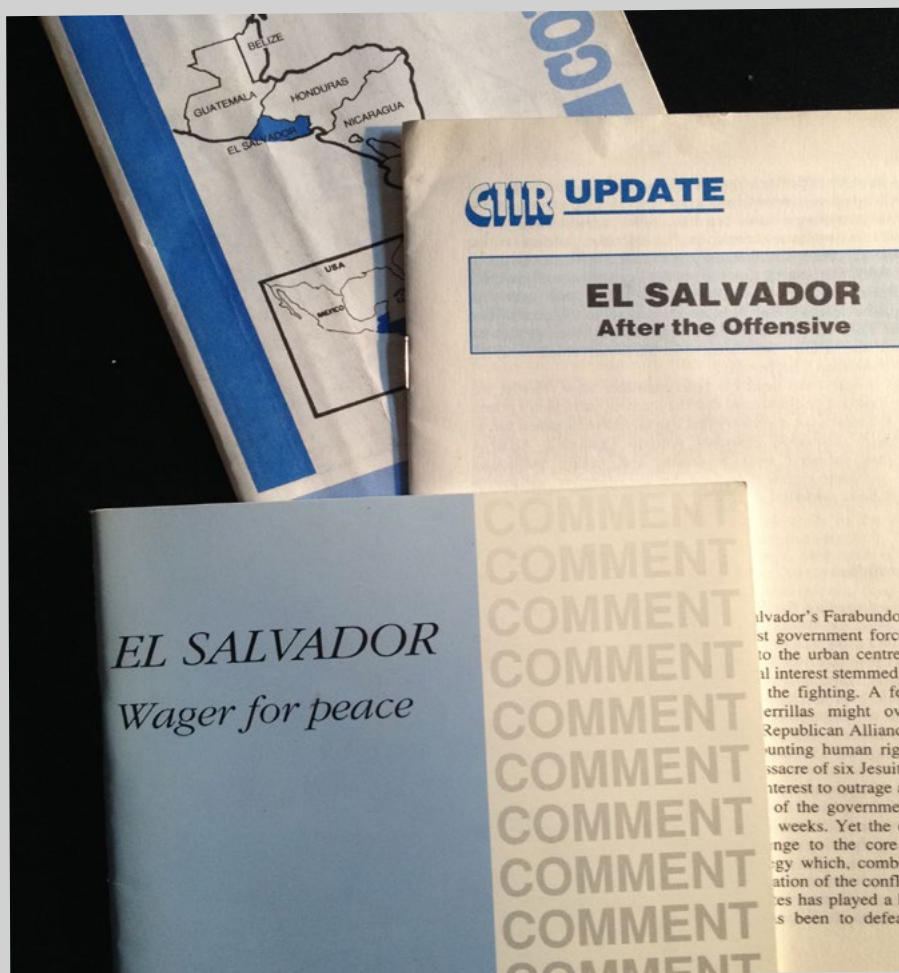


JAMES PAINTER
Preface by Rigoberta Menchú

Desk officer for Latin America, George Gelber (right), speaking with Salvadorean Jesuit theologian, Fr Jon Sobrino SJ, during a visit to CIIR's office.



CIIR's frequent Comment briefings kept policy-makers and CIIR members up to date on the changing political process in El Salvador and its bearing on the prospects for peace, human rights and social justice in the country.



CIIR's 1987 joint publication with LAB, *False Hope, False Freedom*, building on findings gathered during CIIR accompaniment of a UK Parliamentary Human Rights Group delegation to Guatemala, scrutinised Cerezo's purported reformist agenda. The latter had been given a somewhat unquestioning welcome by an international community keen for signs of progress towards political 'normality' in Guatemala and elsewhere in the region. A feather in Cerezo's cap was the UK's 1986 renewal of diplomatic relations with Guatemala, hitherto suspended over the country's claim to neighbouring former UK colony Belize.

A fairer picture on the struggle for a new Nicaragua

Providing a fairer and more accurate picture of developments in Nicaragua was also a priority. On taking power, the revolutionary government, with the support of a fifth of the population, organised a national crusade which sharply reduced illiteracy. Led by Fr Fernando Cardenal SJ – CIIR won the support of 130 MPs and Labour and Liberal party leaders to nominate the priest as a candidate for the 1981 Nobel Peace Prize – the campaign was part of an ambitious reform programme launched by the Sandinistas.

Positive gains, negative claims

The FSLN government's programme combined pursuit of stronger social welfare with post-war reconstruction based on a mixed economy aimed at improving the living standards of the poor majority. Alongside support for grassroots health promotion and vaccination campaigns, which sharply reduced the infant mortality rate by the mid-1980s, the government boosted access to education and undertook an agrarian reform programme distributing land to small-scale farmers and cooperatives.

For all the positive social gains and promising prospects for development in the early 1980s, media news and analysis in UK, Europe and the United States frequently suggested that Nicaragua was in danger of totalitarianism. Such a claim was also made by Nicaragua's Cardinal Obando y Bravo, even though church members were then working for change with communities in a climate of free debate and participation.

The charges of conservative Western political commentators that political freedom and human rights were under threat lent legitimacy to the Reagan administration's claims that its aggressive policy of intervention was justified to prevent the country from being taken over by 'communism' and supporting its spread in Central America by like-minded revolutionary groups. Such depictions continued, even after the FSLN's victory in the 1984 elections – witnessed by a CIIR-accompanied UK parliamentary delegation – were deemed free and fair by international observers.

Defending 'the right to survive'

Amid contested debates on the nature of Sandinista rule, CIIR published a book in 1987 to give a more balanced assessment of Nicaragua's performance on human rights. *Right to Survive* argued that basic rights such as the right to life, safety, food and health ought to be better recognised in policy discussions and that the FSLN government, in stark contrast with El Salvador and Guatemala blighted by death squads, had displayed positive gains and intentions in key areas. Such progress, the publication noted, was being undermined by the United States' economic blockade and its backing of the *contra* war against Nicaragua, which had already claimed over 20,000 victims. CIIR's widely circulated Comments defended Nicaragua's right to forge its own democratic process and independent development path free from external attack.

Defending health against the odds in Nicaragua's war economy

US-supported contras often targeted against health workers for attack because of their grassroots success in achieving early gains for people. CIIR's volunteers, thankfully, did not join the victims as the organisation continued to support vital projects in health and economic reconstruction. But as the US campaign of economic pressure and military destabilisation took its toll, Nicaragua suffered damage to its infrastructure, and shortages of medical supplies were affecting community health. A CIIR midwife supporting partners in the Estelí region in 1988 described how they were working against the odds: "The hospital suffers all the deprivations of a war economy. We're short of everything imaginable. 'Disposal' is not a word with any meaning! We recycle everything."

CIIR was aware of such threats to basic rights and development – and to those striving to halt the reversal of early gains – through the work of its own volunteers on the ground (see Box and later section in this chapter). Their daily support of local partners provided direct insights for CIIR's advocacy on Nicaragua, which also involved exposing British people to first-hand experience of conditions in the country.

In 1984, for instance, CIIR helped to organise an ecumenical delegation to take part in a 'witness for peace' solidarity initiative in which participants spent time in areas under attack from US-supported *contras* making incursions from their bases in neighbouring Honduras. On a previous visit, Anne Forbes of Leeds' Justice and Peace Commission and a member of CIIR's education committee had joined a Christian Aid delegation to identify and support projects. She heard how *contra* raiders singled out promoters of cooperatives and other community development initiatives for execution.

In 1984, CIIR's general secretary Mildred Nevile joined the Nicaragua Emergency Committee set up that year to coordinate the response of UK development agencies to the country's crisis and needs. A committee letter to *The Times* called for UK policy on Nicaragua to emphasise support for development, human rights and peace rather than an approach driven by misleading Cold War ideology. CIIR had urged the UK government to appoint a permanent mission in Managua, the capital, to monitor a rapidly changing situation, play a more independent diplomatic role and increase development support for the country.

CIIR and Central America solidarity: public opinion and political pressure

CIIR's role in the Nicaragua Emergency Committee was part of its wider contribution to what had become a vibrant Central America solidarity movement in the UK matching similar developments across the world.

Supporting a movement

As well as supporting the campaigning of the UK's El Salvador Committee for Human Rights on whose board it sat, CIIR helped set up the UK's Guatemala Committee for Human Rights in 1983 and worked with both to support the organisation of the UK's annual Central America Week. The week's programme of events raised awareness of the crisis, mobilised public pressure on the UK government, and built relations between groups in the UK and church, human rights and grassroots organisations and movements in Central America. CIIR slotted in the participation of leading figures from these sectors as part of its ongoing hosting of visitors from the region.

CIIR's work to educate public opinion in the UK lent complementary weight to its higher-level policy influencing. CIIR's involvement in parliamentary and church delegations to the region, UK lobbying and joint action with church and NGO partners in Europe and the United States, was aimed at turning the international political tide against the militarised approach of the Reagan administration. It targeted signs of concern in Washington and among Western governments that US policies were exacerbating rather than mitigating country conflicts and further driving human rights abuses, and urged Europe to adopt an alternative approach to Central America in its diplomacy and aid.

Peace moves and people's lives: assessing the gaps

By the mid-1980s Central American governments were realising that escalating conflict in the region was unsustainable in political and economic terms and embarked on joint talks. They eventually led to the signing of the 1987 Esquipulas II regional peace accords brokered by Costa Rica's new president, Óscar Arias, who won that year's Nobel Peace Prize for his role.

With envisaged measures on free elections, democratisation, the return of refugees, arms control and ending aid to irregular forces, the Esquipulas peace agreement marked a shift away from US blueprints to resolve the crisis. As CIIR observed, a 1984 commission on Central America, led by US former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, had refused to acknowledge the problem of US funding for the Nicaraguan *contras*, insisted on continued military aid to El Salvador and sidestepped the 1983-85 Contadora peace initiative promoted by Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia and Panama.

Still, as a CIIR delegation to the region and numerous Comments noted, a chasm existed between the lofty signs of political progress enshrined in Esquipulas and the situation of people in daily life. Nicaragua's economy had been battered and the governments in El Salvador and Guatemala, as noted above, were showing no will to curb repression, tackle human rights impunity or deal with the underlying causes of conflict. How to promote the

participation and influence of grassroots groups in precarious peace processes in order to close the gap became a priority challenge for CIIR's partners, and CIIR worked to highlight their views and proposals in its advocacy over the rest of the decade. Negotiating change in uneasy political transitions, including through the participation of women and recognition of their rights, became a focus of work in the 1990s, as explored later in Chapter 3.

SOUTH-EAST AND EAST ASIA

Taking a new regional turn: expanding advocacy on Asia

CIIR, hitherto concentrating on Southern Africa and Latin America, decided to extend its education work to South-East and East Asia in 1976. As described below, East Timor and the Philippines became the immediate priorities, with the former in particular commanding CIIR's concerted long-term attention. By 1981, the organisation had created a dedicated Asia desk, which enabled it to expand the range of countries and issues it took a topical interest in and developed specific advocacy programmes on.

Responding to development agency interest, for example, CIIR published *Vietnam: The Habit of War* in 1983, which called on the UK and the then EEC to re-establish aid programmes to support national reconstruction. US policy at this time was to isolate the country in the wake of its defeat in the Vietnam War and the communist government's 1978 invasion of Cambodia to remove the murderous Pol Pot regime. The publication followed CIIR's decision not to explore further work in Vietnam through its overseas volunteer programme, despite its short-lived volunteer presence in the country in the early to mid-1970s. It paid heed to inevitable Vietnamese sensitivities, following two national liberation wars, over the intentions of outsiders.

In addition to East Timor and the Philippines, Hong Kong – another case of problematic decolonisation – and then Korea emerged as the new main focus countries of CIIR's regional advocacy programme in the 1980s.

Quick off the mark on East Timor's struggle for independence

CIIR, starting a decades-long commitment, was the first UK agency to publicise the plight of East Timor in response to an appeal for support by a refugee priest. The request followed Indonesia's December 1975 invasion of the territory, which violently usurped a stalling process of Portuguese decolonisation. The Suharto regime's intervention came just days after the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (FRETILIN) had declared East Timor's independence as Lisbon's authority, as the administering colonial power, crumbled amid Portugal's 1974 'carnation revolution'. CIIR's involvement on East Timor, spearheaded by staff members such as Eileen Sudworth and Robert Archer, chimed with its work on the impact of Portuguese colonialism and its legacy in Southern Africa.

Bringing to light Indonesia's oppression

Jakarta's ruthless suppression of East Timor's self-determination caused the deaths of around 200,000 people, a quarter of its population, due to repression, fighting, famine and disease. The annexation, carried out with the complicity of the United States, Australia and the UK as they backed Indonesia as an anti-communist bulwark in the region and thereafter largely turned a blind eye to its atrocities, was to last almost 24 years. Though such Cold War motivations later faded, other factors such as Indonesia's growing economic status and the 1970s oil discovery in the Timor Sea hindered remedial international action. Australia and Indonesia haggled over petroleum ownership and exploitation rights and eventually signed the 1989 Timor Gap treaty, despite Portugal's opposition.

For all the seemingly insurmountable constraints, CIIR showed lasting determination in mobilising international support for the East Timorese people and their eventual 2002 achievement of independence described in Chapter 3.

One of CIIR's first acts, mirroring action on Latin America described earlier, was to mobilise UK parliamentary support for a wider 1977 campaign to prevent British Aerospace selling ground-attack aircraft to the Suharto regime in view of their likely repressive use in both Indonesia and East Timor. The move followed contact with groups such as the newly formed UK-based Indonesia human rights and democracy organisation [TAPOL](#) and CIIR's publication of a Comment on Indonesia, its first to deal with social justice issues in Asia. The pamphlet drew attention to the massacres that had accompanied Suharto's 1965 rise to power in which around 1 million people were killed in anti-communist purges. A CIIR Comment immediately ensued on the unfolding atrocities being committed by Jakarta in East Timor.

Breaking the international wall of silence

CIIR's Comments on East Timor helped to break the official wall of silence blocking international public awareness of Indonesia's repressive occupation and Timorese resistance to it. Indeed, a second edition in 1982 attracted press coverage in Australia, the United States and Britain. An editorial in *The Times* newspaper drew on its analysis and was then quoted in the US Congress.

CIIR's Comment drew on information arising from its collaboration with Australian Catholic Relief, which was shining light on East Timor's desperate situation. The agency had received a letter from the Catholic Church's then Apostolic Administrator in East Timor, Mgr Martinho Costa da Lopes, who had made public his alarm at repression and famine and become an outspoken critic of the occupation. Costa da Lopes' decision to speak out caused a stir in Australia whose Labor Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, reportedly dismissed his denunciation as "lies" and pressed for his removal.

Meanwhile, CIIR's Comment prompted the Indonesian embassy in London to make representations to CIIR and invite it to visit the territory, an offer it then withdrew after CIIR put forward a team of independent experts after discussion with interested non-government parties during a late 1982 visit to Jakarta.

CIIR's information work was accompanied by a drive to step up its UK and international lobbying and advocacy on East Timor, given concern over the UK's stance. In late 1979, President Suharto had made an official state visit to the UK, prompting a media-covered CIIR letter of protest. By 1982, CIIR had secured a statement from the UK government that London did not recognise Indonesia's occupation, and the organisation was working closely with the UK's Parliamentary Human Rights Group to press for UK and international government action in the UN to uphold East Timor's right to self-determination. In September 1983, Lord Avebury visited Lisbon on behalf of the group with CIIR's help. Its aim was to coordinate international support for East Timor with the backing of rekindled commitment on the part of the Portuguese government as the UN-recognised administering power.

Backing the Timorese church and mobilising support for UN action

Eric Avebury's Lisbon visit, one of the Liberal peer's many acts in supporting the international human rights work of CIIR and others, coincided with an international tour by Mgr Martinho Costa da Lopes that CIIR organised and helped to arrange. Much to the dismay of East Timorese Catholics and their friends abroad, the bishop had felt compelled to resign earlier in 1983 after his appeals for support from the international community and the Vatican were ignored. His itinerary, in addition to London, took in visits to Ireland, France and the Netherlands, as well Australia, the United States and Canada.

With the Church in East Timor the only institution able to connect its people with the outside world, CIIR went on to build links with Costa de Lopes' successor, Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo. His commitment to voicing the need for justice and change confounded Indonesia's expectations of a more compliant approach.

Bishop Belo's stance culminated in a famous February 1989 letter to the UN secretary-general in which he urged the UN to hold a referendum on the future of East Timor and called on Portugal, the Vatican and the international community to come to the aid of the East Timorese, who were "dying as a people and a nation". His appeal preceded Pope John Paul II's eventual visit to East Timor in October that year, a landmark in breaking the isolation and neglect of the territory, which saw pro-independence demonstrations violently broken up.

In the wake of the Pope's visit and with the aim of supporting a diplomatic solution guaranteeing the full involvement of the Timorese, CIIR used Bishop Belo's words to introduce a book of testimonies from people in East Timor, *I Am Timorese*, which it published jointly with other European NGOs in 1990. At the same time, CIIR published John Taylor's *The Indonesian Occupation of East Timor, 1974-89*, to document the background and landmarks in East Timor's crisis and remind readers of the international community's record of complicity and neglect.

Through its church links, CIIR had by now become a focal point in coordinating church and development agency action in Europe on East Timor. From the mid-1980s, it organised annual Christian consultations on East Timor with Catholic and Protestant churches from across Europe and, in order to encourage Christians to take a stand in response to the Timorese church's requests for help, published *East Timor: A Christian Reflection* in 1987 with the Justice and Peace Commissions of the Netherlands and Flanders and Pax Christi in Geneva. CIIR was among the agencies which spoke on East Timor before the UN's special committee on decolonisation in New York in 1986 when the Indonesian army launched another offensive to crush FRETILIN and continued its drive to relocate communities in villages under military surveillance.

timor LINK

No 1, January 1985

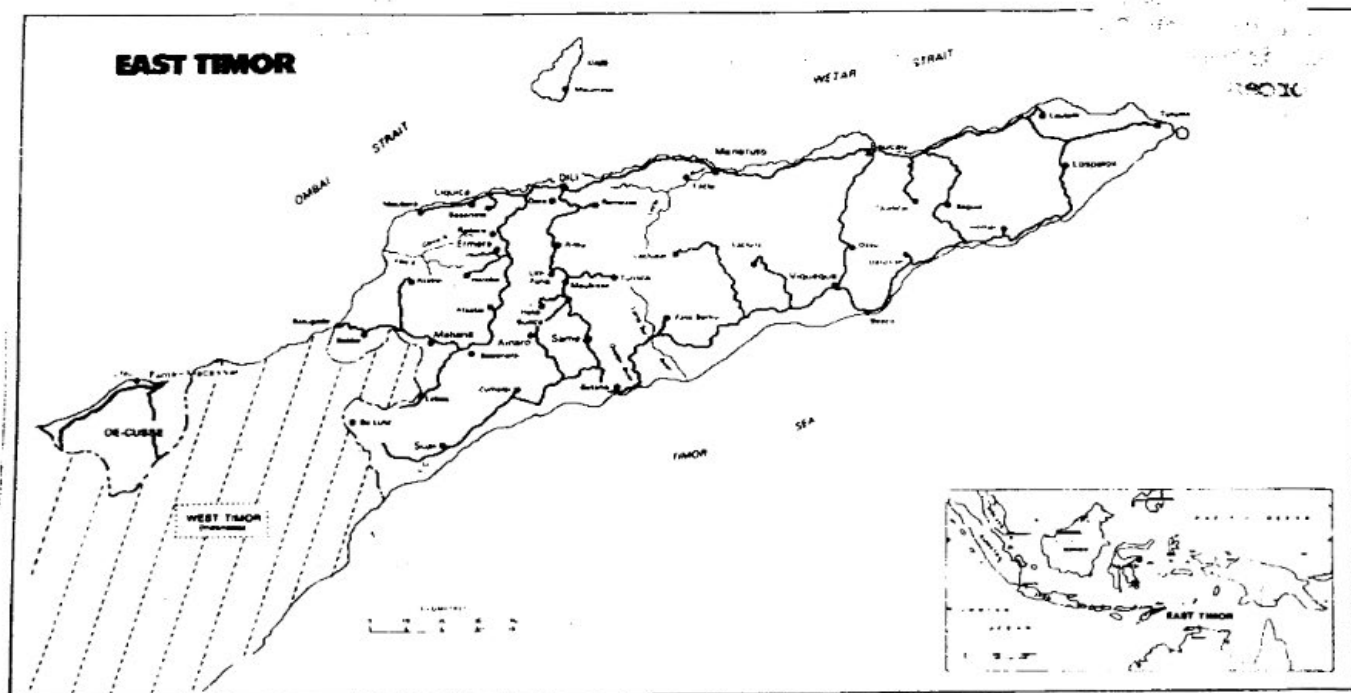
em **timor-leste**

a paz é possível

CIR



Since Indonesia invaded the Portuguese territory of East Timor in December 1975 over 100 000 Timorese - perhaps 20% of the population - have died. The Indonesian government claims that East Timor has been integrated into the Republic of Indonesia at the request of its people - a claim refuted by the people of East Timor through their constant resistance, carried on over nearly ten years, despite a massive Indonesian military presence and acute hunger, and mostly in isolation from the outside world. Their right to self-determination has been recognised formally by the United Nations General Assembly and by many of Indonesia's allies, including Britain. Nevertheless Indonesia maintains one of the world's tightest blockades around the territory, denying free access to the Red Cross and development agencies. One of the few links with the outside world is the Roman Catholic Church. TIMOR LINK is a response to the pleas of these Timorese Christians to make their situation better known.



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Timor Link: centrepiece of an information network

An important tool in promoting international solidarity was CIIR's 1985 launch of its *Timor Link* newsletter with the Lisbon-based A Paz é Possível em Timor Leste (Peace is Possible in East Timor). This ecumenical group had been set up in 1982 to mobilise support for the Timorese Catholic Church and press the Portuguese government to provide effective backing for Timorese self-determination. In the intervening years, the bishops' conferences of both Portugal and Indonesia issued statements of concern on East Timor's situation.

Published by CIIR until 2002, *Timor Link* was well-received by its users (see quote). The newsletter, drawing on sources from inside East Timor and carrying information from partners outside the territory on their lobbying and campaigning activities in the West, provided news largely unavailable elsewhere, raised international awareness, and nurtured the coordination of solidarity organisations and their sense of community. Its more frequent updates complemented the broader analysis of Comments, which were also timed to target topical developments relevant to the need for supportive diplomatic action. CIIR's third Comment on East Timor in 1985, for example, coincided with UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's official visit to Indonesia.

"Timor Link presented a healthy dose of reality for readers who had little chance to get anything approaching an authentic picture of the terrible dilemmas facing East Timor's church and resistance movements."

Arnold Kohen, Humanitarian Project, Washington DC, quoted in CIIR News, October 2000

The Philippines: challenging militarisation and the violence of 'development'

CIIR's work on the Philippines, as with East Timor, was launched with a Comment in 1977. It highlighted the mass repression taking place under President Ferdinand Marcos. Despite elections and the trappings of democracy, the Philippines had become a dictatorship in the wake of Marcos' 1972 declaration of martial law.

Moving against Marcos: CIIR's response to the crackdown on the church and social justice

CIIR's Comment, matched by a call for the UK government and British company GKN to stop planned sales of military equipment, came after CIIR's hosting of London visits by bishops from the largely Catholic country. Church members themselves faced arrest and deportation and church media censorship for denouncing torture and the suppression of political opposition and trade unions. As part of its response, CIIR published a joint pastoral letter of the Philippines Catholic Bishops' Conference, *Philippines: Exhortation against Violence*, in 1979 and also built close links with its [National Secretariat for Social Action](#) (NASSA).

Mounting repression and political conflict led CIIR in 1981 to join CAFOD, Christian Aid, Amnesty International and the Philippines Support Group in creating an informal committee in London to monitor and address the deteriorating human rights situation in the country, with the involvement of several concerned British MPs. By then, CIIR had produced a third version of its Comment on the Philippines.

Among the human rights cases taken up with MPs by CIIR at the time was the arrest and imprisonment of Fr Edicio 'Ed' de la Torre SVD, a leading Filipino Catholic activist, who, by the mid-1980s, had been detained for a total of nine years since the introduction of martial law and forced into exile. As part of its work to highlight the role of Christian base communities in the struggle for justice in the Philippines – the topic of CIIR's 1985 AGM addressed by Peter Batangan, author of *Faith and Social Change* – CIIR published De la Torre's own reflections on Christian commitment in the 1986 book, *Touching Ground, Taking Root*. De la Torre became a regular contributor to CIIR's education work in the 1980s and 1990s as a leading thinker and practitioner on theology and development and the politics of citizen participation and change with the Institute for Popular Democracy created after Marcos' fall.

ASIA

In Asia CIIR has an education programme on the Philippines, Hong Kong and East Timor. In the Philippines CIIR maintains relationships with church groups and popular organisations, and focuses on structural issues which determine the lives of the majority of the people. Examples in the past year have been land reform, foreign investment and migrant labour. In Hong Kong community organisations are working for greater participation and social justice as the territory prepares for reunion with China. CIIR publishes *Hong Kong Link*, which helps to make this work known in Britain. CIIR brings the tragedy and resistance of the East Timorese people to the attention of a wider public through an information network and regular publications.

THE PHILIPPINES

Vigilante killings and reform pledges

Peace is radically rooted in justice.
Peace is the flower of justice.
Unless the government sees to it
that justice is given to everyone it
is very hard to talk about lasting
peace....How can you achieve
peace if people are deprived of the
basic necessities of life?
Bishop Antonio Fortich
Diocese of Bacolod, Negros

The past year has seen Mrs Aquino apparently consolidating her power. She abolished the old parliament, and secured overwhelming backing for her new constitution. In May 1987 candidates endorsed by her secured a majority in the new parliament. During the year she survived coup attempts from within

the army, and dramatically the defence minister, Juan P. Enrile, who was presented as a main threat to her power.

And yet there are shadows in this picture of success. The role of the army is not clear. The struggle against the guerrillas of the People's Army has resumed. The Christmas cease-fire ended in the absence of political agreement between the government and the National Democratic Front. More alarming was the rapid escalation in early 1987 of citizen 'vigilante groups', armed in some cases with military and supported by some members of the local and national administration, but not under the direct authority of either. This appears to run totally contrary to the commitment in the new constitution to disband all such groups and to bring them under the regular army, and is an ominous sign in view of the brutality of such groups in the past. The vigilantes proclaim themselves 'anti-communist'. Referring to particularly notorious armed groups like the Alsa Masa in Mindanao, Bishop Franco Calida of the Philippines said: 'Anybody who does not support Alsa Masa is a communist. No neutrality.'

Church personnel were not immune from this atmosphere of hysteria. In January there was a grenade attack on the residence of Bishop Fortich, chairman of



'People's power': can Cory deliver?

Complementing its work on the national crisis of democracy, conflict and human rights, CIIR's contact with local church partners led to advocacy on the violent social injustices associated with economic growth initiatives being promoted under the Marcos dictatorship in the name of development with the support of foreign investors. CIIR and its partners noted that, amid increasing militarisation of rural areas, military action purportedly aimed at combating the communist New People's Army (NPA) was often a corrupt cover for agribusiness expansion involving 'land grabs'. A key concern was the rising use and violence of paramilitary groups, a problem CIIR highlighted in its work on palm oil (see Box).

Palm oil: pushing for business and UK accountability on foreign investment and human rights

Following a visit to Mindanao in 1981, CIIR embarked on several years' work to tackle abuses occurring in palm oil projects in the island's Agusan del Sur province. CIIR had discovered that a joint venture between the former British Guthrie Corporation (recently acquired by Malaysia) and the National Development Corporation (NDC) of the Philippines had employed members of the Lost Command paramilitary group as security guards at a plantation in San Francisco. The group, semi-officially engaged in military counter-insurgency operations, had allegedly seized land from farmers to make way for the project, intimidated workers and local residents and murdered community members near the plantation.

From partners to parliament: bringing rising pressure to bear

The abuses caused controversy in the UK as its official private sector development financing body, the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC), was planning to back the project and another palm oil scheme in nearby Loreto. CIIR, as well as engaging Guthrie's management in dialogue over its alleged complicity with the problems, produced and circulated to British ministers, MPs and bishops a 1982 report challenging the wisdom and value of investment in the light of the evidence of repression.

The report, *British Investment and the Use of Paramilitary Terrorism in Plantation Agriculture in Agusan*, also published in the province, led the UK's overseas development minister to hold meetings with CIIR, MPs and the CDC and also discuss the case in parliament. The debate attracted media coverage in the *Sunday Times*, the *Observer*, the *Financial Times*, the *Far Eastern Economic Review* and the *Catholic Herald*, and prompted the UK's Parliamentary Human Rights Group to send a delegation to Mindanao in September 1983. The two respectively Labour and Conservative MPs involved, Alf Dubs and Colin Moynihan, were accompanied by CIIR at their request.

In turn, CIIR, to keep up pressure, hosted a UK visit by Bishop Carmelo Morelos whose Butuan diocese covered the sites of the planned plantation investments. He addressed meetings in Leicester, Manchester, Newcastle and London where a 200-strong audience heard him describe the complex mix of political and socio-economic injustices affecting Mindanao.

Small victories, long-term battle

CIIR's international support for local partners achieved some degree of remedial action. Though the Lost Command reportedly continued operating in the area and visiting the San Francisco plantation, the Guthrie-NDC partnership removed its members from its security contingent and faced CIIR-generated pressure from the CDC to introduce human rights safeguards. Significantly, in late 1984, the CDC announced that it was withdrawing plans to support the Loreto plantation.

The decision meant CIIR had won its case for UK action, even if this hard-fought victory in relation to the Philippines was a small step in pushing trade and investment promotion agencies to acknowledge and address the structural human rights problems of supporting businesses operating in environments characterised by state-sponsored paramilitary violence.

CIIR's work on palm oil – it presaged the future rise of human rights activism on the issue in countries across the world – led to collaboration with others working on the role of British companies in the Philippines, including Barry Rawlinson of the Salford Justice and Peace Group.

Aquino and 'democratic space': from martial law to 'total war'

'People power' toppled Marcos in 1986 amid the intensification of mass mobilisation that followed the 1983 assassination of opposition leader Benigno 'Ninoy' Aquino. In a rapidly changing environment, CIIR's information work on the country, led by staff member Caroline Spires, continued to raise the human rights, social justice and democratisation challenges posed by the political process following the rise to power of his widow, Corazon 'Cory' Aquino, who had gone on to lead the anti-Marcos movement.

Indeed, the reformist credentials of the new president, backed by the Catholic hierarchy, were quickly tested and hard won 'democratic space' came to be squeezed, as CIIR analysed in another country Comment in 1989. Aquino declared that 1990-2000 would be a 'decade of peace' yet her rule, threatened by military pressure and coup attempts and despite early moves to curb members of the military old guard, had seen a campaign of 'total war' against the NPA and its political umbrella organisation, the National Democratic Front.

As negotiations to resolve armed conflict faltered, peaceful social and political demands for change faced unabated attack by army-linked paramilitaries and the growth of anti-communist citizen vigilante groups, despite the new 1987 constitution pledging formal control of irregular forces. Civilians, community leaders and groups involved in social organising rather than NPA fighters were their target.

Church workers remained in the firing line, as shown by a 1987 grenade attack on the house of Bishop Antonio Fortich, chairman of CIIR partner NASSA and a mediator between the government and guerrillas. In contrast with the military's large-scale displacement of civilians, the bishop, of Bacolod in Negros, had promoted the creation of 'peace zones' free of weapons. Redemptorist Brother Carlito 'Karl' Gaspar later told a CIIR meeting in 1989 how 'total war' had seen the murder of a diocesan priest and intimidation of church workers labelled as communists for supporting the rights of communities.

States of terror, challenges of faith

The problems of military repression and paramilitary violence in the Philippines had much in common with the situation in Central America and Southern Africa, and CIIR organised a 1988 London conference with partners from the three locations to share insights and raise awareness of the issues at stake. The event led to CIIR's publication of a major study on the topic, *States of Terror: Death Squads or Development?*, followed by an international conference in 1989 on 'faith and development', which examined the rise of right-wing Catholic and fundamentalist Protestant sects in the Third World and their role in repression. At the event, Sheila Coronel of the newly established [Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism](#) traced their 'appeal' in the context of the daily social upheaval, poverty and violence affecting most Filipinos.

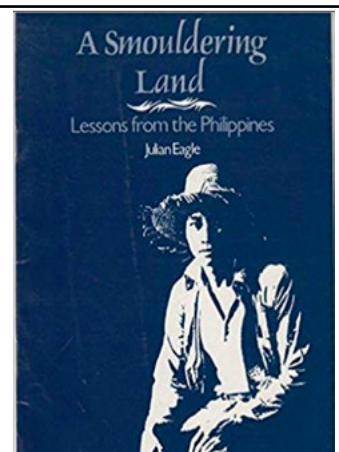
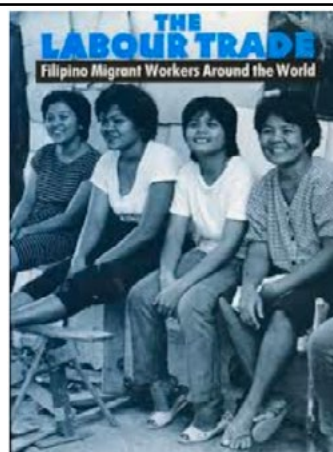
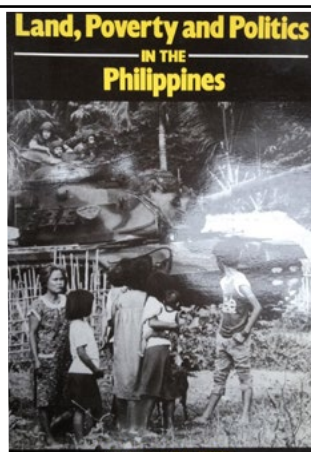
To boost solidarity with the social justice role of Christians in the Philippines, CIIR worked with other church-based organisations to launch the UK-based Philippines Ecumenical Network in July 1988. Canon Julian Eagle provided an account of his visit witnessing the relationship between religion and politics in the Philippines in CIIR's 1987 publication, *A Smouldering Land*.

It's the economy: structural challenges and the limits of reform

As under Marcos, CIIR looked at the problems of the political process in the Philippines under Aquino from the perspective of the structural problems of social injustice undermining peace, democratic participation and human rights. CIIR, building on its work on palm oil and following a 1987 conference, published a collection of papers as *Land, Poverty and Politics in the Philippines*, and subsequently drew on the critique of partners to highlight the unambitious nature of a 1988 agrarian reform law as indicative of the limitations of the Aquino government's agenda for reform.

While the crucial issue of land became a major focus of CIIR's future work, CIIR also sought at this time to cover other topics of significance for development in the Philippines. In 1987, in response to the requests of country partners, CIIR published *European Companies in the Philippines* which gave a detailed breakdown of their involvement in different sectors of the economy and looked at its impact on trade union activity. This growing interest in economic justice was also displayed in CIIR's launch of work on South Korea and Korean reunification (see Box below).

In 1987, CIIR also published *The Labour Trade: Filipino Migrant Workers around the World*, which considered the rights and development implications of the 1.5 million Filipinos who had come to work abroad since the 1970s. Worker remittances, taxed by Marcos, had become increasingly important, both as a source of income for relatives at home and to shore up the Philippines' heavily indebted economy. The publications followed discussions with partners such as NASSA, the [IBON Foundation](#) and the Freedom from Debt Coalition.



Transition in South Korea and Korean reunification: testing times

Following the 1987 overthrow of authoritarian President Chun Doo Hwan, CIIR ran an education programme for five years on the challenges of political change and social justice in South Korea. New leader ex-General Roh Tae Woo, elected to power on a minority vote, was struggling to manage transition from a military-dependent regime to an autonomous, democratically accountable civilian government. Despite promises of reform and a 'honeymoon' period around the 1988 Seoul Olympics showcasing a changing country, Roh's rule, under pressure from the military, became increasingly repressive from 1989, a year of protests and intense labour conflict.

Economic transformation, worker exploitation

With companies hiring private gangs to violently repress factory disputes and the government still applying national security legislation and draconian labour laws to imprison workers and trade unionists, labour rights became an important focus of CIIR's work. In the wake of the 1953 Korean War and a 1961 military coup, South Korea, buoyed by considerable foreign aid, had become an increasingly important industrial economy connected to global supply chains, yet the wealth generated in this dramatic transformation was unequally shared. Workplace conditions remained extremely harsh and exploitative and the situation of the country's increasingly urbanised workforce insecure, as CIIR noted in its 1988 book, *Disposable People: Forced Evictions in Korea*.

CIIR set up a multi-stakeholder Korea Forum and worked with British church agencies also belonging to the Korean Ecumenical Education Programme (KEEP) to raise human and workers' rights concerns with the South Korean embassy in London and organise UK visits by representatives of the South Korean labour movement and organisations supporting workers' rights.

In 1990, for instance, CIIR, at the time of its 50th anniversary celebrations in July, hosted a tour for three women trade union and civil society leaders. They included future national assembly opposition politician [Chun Soonok](#) of the Chonggye garment workers' union, whose brother had self-immolated in 1970 in protest at the exploitation of female workers in the textile industry, crying out: "[They are not machines](#)." The previous year, CIIR had organised a protest outside Tandy's Oxford St branch in London after a South Korean subsidiary had paid men to beat women trade unionists occupying a factory in protest at its sudden closure and their sacking in job cuts.

CIIR was also a member of the European Ecumenical Network on Korea and represented EUKONET at a European Parliament special meeting on human rights in South Korea in early 1992. Sparked by continued instances of police brutality, the prime minister and cabinet members had been forced to resign by mass protests the previous year.

Unhealed divisions and the wounds of war

With 1989 leading to the fall of the Berlin Wall and eventual German reunification, media debate of the end of the Cold War provided a topical opportunity for CIIR and its partners to draw attention to its resonance in relation to the continued division of South and North Korea. CIIR and EUKONET published *The Reunification of Korea*, which included the Glion declaration issued at a World Council of Churches meeting the previous year in which Christians from the North and the South had taken part. It drew attention to the high price of continued division imposed against their will by foreign powers and supported the right of the Korean people to form a unified country.

CIIR's work on the unhealed wounds of the past with Korean partners also involved publicising a campaign for Japan to compensate Korean women forced to become 'comfort women' for Japanese soldiers during the Second World War.

Hong Kong: championing democratic rights in UK handover to China

CIIR's work on Hong Kong provided a UK voice for local advocates and civil society organisations demanding democratic rights as London planned to return the colony to Chinese sovereignty in 1997.

Filling the representation gap in official diplomacy

CIIR's support for their cause got underway with the 1982 publication of a Comment targeting Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's official visit to the territory. Published in Chinese as well as English, *The Future of Hong Kong* attracted local press coverage, noting that Hong Kong's inhabitants had no voice in the UK-China negotiations. Then, in May 1984, as London and Beijing readied to seal the Sino-British Joint Declaration on handover with UK parliament approval at the end of the year, CIIR hosted a London visit of representatives from the diverse grassroots organisations it had forged relations with since 1981 – the first of many Hong Kong civil society delegations over the decade.

The concern of Hong Kong trade unions, community organisations and church bodies was that the transfer – the 1984 agreement pledged to maintain Hong Kong's economic and political systems for 50 years from 1997 – would rule out democratic change and the protection of freedoms and rights. They viewed Conservative elements of Hong Kong's business community and the British government as unwilling to ruffle Beijing's feathers in view of China's capitalist turn.



HONG KONG

Discussing the Basic Law

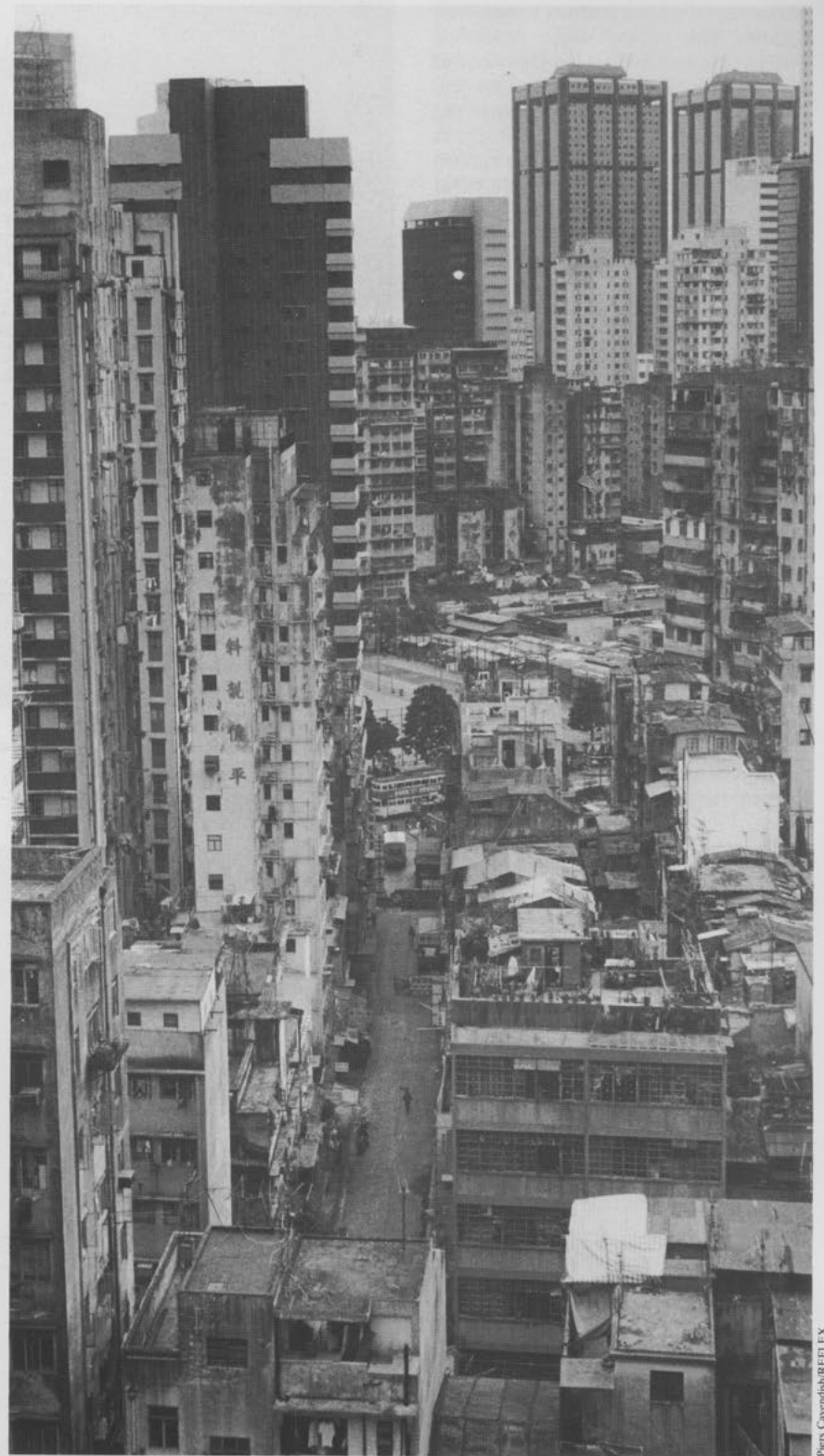
For Hong Kong, these are the years of crucial decisions: after prolonged discussion, in February 1988 the British Government published its White Paper, *The Development of Representative Government: The Way Forward*, and in April China made public the first draft of its Basic Law for Hong Kong, which will be ratified in 1990 after a period of public consultation from May to September 1988. By then, the basic shape of the territory's political and administrative structures will be defined until it rejoins China in June 1997.

Since mid-1987 the question of direct elections dominated political discussion. A government survey of public response to its proposals for reform showed conclusively that the great majority want to elect their own representatives but the Government has avoided asking the public clearly whether they wanted direct elections in 1988. Many newspaper polls suggested a near-majority did, but the White Paper refused to introduce direct elections in 1988 and promised only ten directly-elected seats (for constituencies of half a million people each) in 1991 — representing just 18% of the seats on the territory's current Legislative Council of 56.

Most observers accept that Britain's attitude is directly influenced by the Chinese government, which has said clearly that it does not want reforms to be introduced before China promulgates the Basic Law in 1990.

Current drafts of the Basic Law suggest that no more than 50%, and more likely 25%, of seats on the Legislative Council will be directly elected by 1997.

CIIR and Hong Kong Link, for which CIIR acts as the secretariat, have been directly involved in assisting Hong Kong organisations to make known their views about the White Paper and the Basic Law Draft. Two important Delegations for Democracy visited London in December and January, to lobby the British Government, parliamentarians and the press in advance of parliamentary debates on Hong Kong. The Hong



Piers Cavendish/REFLEX

Poverty and wealth side by side in Hong Kong

Kong student community has become very active, and Hong Kong Link members have begun to co-operate with Britain's resident Chinese community. *Hong Kong Link* newsletter has been complemented by a news cuttings service in Cantonese. In all, Hong Kong Link now has links in some 20 British cities and 30 colleges

and universities.

London is the third centre of influence on the territory's future, after Hong Kong itself and Beijing. What is done — or not done — in the next few months by the British government and parliament will crucially affect the success of Hong Kong's transition to China. ●

Hong Kong civil society organisations had long argued Hong Kong should have an elected government rather one based on colonial governor appointments. The fears of CIIR's partners that China's 'one country, two systems' principle would be skewed in Hong Kong against democratic rights and civil liberties were further stoked by China's violent repression of the Tiananmen Square protests in June 1989 and the crushing of the country's student democracy movement.

Monitoring and influencing through Hong Kong Link

To support its Hong Kong partners, CIIR worked with the BCC and the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) to create Hong Kong Link in 1985. Set up as an association in Britain to monitor events in Hong Kong and publicise the views of its people, Hong Kong Link, for which CIIR acted as the secretariat, produced an eponymous newsletter from 1986. By 1988, Hong Kong Link had established supporters in 20 British cities and 30 colleagues and universities, enabling the involvement of Hong Kong student and Chinese communities in Britain.

The impetus of Hong Kong Link's work boosted efforts to influence official drafting of the Basic Law codifying the post-1997 Hong Kong-Chinese government relationship. In 1989, Hong Kong Link gave written and verbal evidence to the UK parliament's Foreign Affairs Select Committee and organised a UK tour for a Hong Kong Saving Hong Kong delegation.

CIIR's final activities in its decade of work on Hong Kong included a Comment in 1990 when China ratified the now finalised Basic Law. The pamphlet noted the gap between Hong Kong's rising status as a global financial centre and its high levels of inequality and reaffirmed the importance of addressing the challenges of democratisation and equitable economic development. Indeed, while the settlement included articles stating universal suffrage to be a goal, only 40 of Hong Kong's Legislative Council's 70 seats were subsequently subjected to popular vote. China also retained control over appointment of the Chief Executive, despite continued pressure for direct election of this head of government position. Tensions over such control saw Hong Kong civil society groups, to chagrin within Hong Kong's financial sector, organise the peaceful Umbrella Revolution protests of late 2014.

In 1990, CIIR and other members of Hong Kong Link also turned their lobbying attention to the British Nationality Hong Kong Bill, as right-wing forces opposed the UK resettlement of Hong Kong families worried about the impact of changes on their lives. Controversy similarly surrounded British repatriation of Vietnamese boat people seeking refuge in Hong Kong at the time.

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

Prescient voices and pioneering thought and action

CIIR, alongside its concentration on country struggles for fair social, economic and political systems for which the organisation's work had generally so far been better known, gradually expanded its engagement in the 1970s on key global development policy issues. The aim of this work, which showed early interest in environmental sustainability, was to analyse and address the wider constraints and opportunities for people-centred development at national and international levels.

Fuelling ideas for a different world economy

During its first decade, CIIR relied on its growing publishing programme and events organised by a part-time world poverty secretary to set out and promote its ideas on global development challenges. CIIR's annual general meetings were particularly effective in providing a rallying point for awareness and action on issues it considered strategically important. In keeping with the world outlook inherited from the Sword of the Spirit, they drew connections with problems affecting Britain and the need for the country, despite the legacy of its imperial past, to play a positive social justice role in the world. 'Development' was not a discrete task to be supported elsewhere but entailed changes at home.

An early appeal for people and planet

In 1974, for example, former CIIR general secretary [Barbara Ward](#), who by now had introduced global audiences to the term 'sustainable development' as director and joint founder of the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), gave a prophetic AGM address. It advocated the need for a new global economic system to respect the planet's environmental limits, end oil reliance and promote and share renewable energy.

Her words not only resonated with the mid-1970s oil price rises and the impact of the rising costs of production and consumption on rich countries' economies – as marked in the UK by debate of the problem of 'stagflation' and growing domestic conflict over the distribution of wages and profits – but anticipated the looming challenge of climate change. She advocated policies to fight poverty and injustice and share world resources so as to protect the "inner limit" of human dignity and the "outer limit" of the planet's physical integrity.

What a new economy might look like became the topic of the next AGM, in 1975. CIIR's lead speaker, Ernst Friedrich Schumacher, author of the renowned *Small is Beautiful: a Study of Economics as if People Mattered*, highlighted the limits of growth and the advantages of small-scale development and 'intermediate technology' solutions – an approach in many ways being taken up by CIIR's grassroots skill-share initiatives with partners in its overseas volunteer programme (see later section).

Such contributions saw CIIR's general secretary invited in 1976 to join a UK government advisory committee on development education and, in 1978, CIIR boosted its own potential for greater institutional specialisation and impact when it set up a dedicated development desk. The desk rapidly engaged with debate and action on reforming relations between rich and poor countries and tackling the problems afflicting the world economy and its management.

No place like home: Britain and a new international economic order

One of the development desk's first publications was a 1978 Comment on the challenges facing the UN general assembly's 1974 call for a New International Economic Order (NIEO), building on its analysis of the role of UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in taking this agenda forward. The Comment looked in particular at proposals on trade in raw materials following the commodity boom of the early 1970s and argued that an NIEO, in order to close the gap between the developed and developing countries, would need to transcend continued reliance on exports earning less than manufactured goods.

The following year, CIIR began to examine the requirements of a more ambitious approach and its implications for the UK by publishing *Restructuring British Industry: The Third World Dimension*. The booklet, while arguing that openness to Third World exports could provide a win-win stimulus for economic development and revitalisation, cautioned against indiscriminate export-led growth now being promoted by countries such as South Korea and Brazil. Their growth strategies, noted the booklet, did not necessarily maximise benefits for the poor majority, and moves by rich countries such as the UK to open their markets to Third world competition needed to be accompanied by a well-coordinated strategy of industrial restructuring and economic regeneration. Overseas aid and effective support for people at home needed to go hand in hand if workers and consumers in both the UK and in the developing world were to benefit from a new 'international division of labour'.

In 1980, CIIR assembled a diverse group of experts drawn from the media, academia, the trade union movement and UNCTAD to deepen its overall analysis by considering the challenges and impacts of a changing world economy on specific sectors such as textiles and clothing and electronics. It published a selection of their papers and conference discussions as *Adjustment or Protectionism: The Challenge to Britain of Third World Industrialisation*.

From Britain to Brandt

Such outputs, which received positive media coverage, were in keeping with further topical global development policy developments of the time. They examined from a UK angle some of the challenges for a fairer and more stable world economy that the Brandt Commission, the initiative chaired by West Germany's social democratic former chancellor, would explore in its two reports for the World Bank, *North-South: A Programme for Survival* published in 1980 and *Common Crisis: North-South Cooperation for World Recovery* issued in 1983.

CIIR encouraged its members to join a mass lobby of the UK parliament on the Brandt recommendations in 1981 and drew the attention of European NGOs to the commission's observation that, alongside humanitarian assistance and aid, the development agenda required new structures and rearranged international relations. The proposals of both the NIEO and Brandt, however, were now being overtaken by the rise of a very different new order based on so-called Washington Consensus free-market reforms, following the election of US President Ronald Reagan.

Catalysing UK and European pressure for international trade justice

After the UK's 1975 referendum decision to stay in the European Community, engaging UK policy-makers and working with other UK and European NGOs to influence the EC's rising role in international affairs became a prominent feature of CIIR's development work.

The Lomé Convention and EC support for development: a moral responsibility

The challenges facing Europe and a regionally connected UK, following its final admission to the EC in 1973, had been passionately voiced by the then Labour MP, the Rt Hon Shirley Williams. In her address to that year's AGM, she stressed that European integration should not entail UK and EC abdication of responsibility for their respective colonial legacies, in Britain's case for the situation and countries and citizens in the Commonwealth (see quote).

"CIIR and many other bodies will have to drive home to the politicians and civil servants of the new Europe, insistently, sometimes unpopularly, that they cannot leave on one side the problems of India, the Caribbean or Africa... We have a moral responsibility to the Commonwealth sugar producing countries. The people of Mauritius and the Caribbean are literally dependent for their life on the sale of cane sugar to Europe.

"A second aspect that is particularly disturbing is the plight of migrant workers, many of whom live and work in conditions which are an affront to the new Europe. In Britain, we have a great deal to answer for in our treatment of Commonwealth immigrants and in particular the retroactive Immigration Act of 1971 which has placed the security of 1.3 million people in jeopardy..."

From speech by Rt Hon Shirley Williams MP to CIIR's 1973 AGM

CIIR's development desk quickly began work on the EC's role in international trade. In 1978, on the back of a joint study with the Irish Catholic development agency Trócaire, it held a high-level seminar in London on the 1975 Lomé Convention framing Europe's development cooperation with its former colonies in the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific regions. It brought ACP diplomats together to debate the trade, aid and development issues at stake with EC and UK officials. The aim, one of the first such efforts in the UK, was to enable ACP voices and development perspectives to be better recognised in renegotiation of the agreement.

CIIR went on to engage with the Lomé renegotiation rounds held in the 1980s and continued in the 1990s to address the aid, trade and development implications of the convention (and plans for its eventual replacement). This work helped to pioneer the emergence of wider UK and European NGO engagement on trade, both in terms of Europe's post-colonial development responsibilities in relation to the ACP countries and the overall challenge of international trade justice.

Agricultural trade and food security quickly became the main theme in CIIR's work on Lomé, given the role of the EC's common agricultural policy (CAP) in protecting its member country food producers from external competition. Lomé, while guaranteeing 'preferential' duty-free treatment of ACP produce at favourable prices, involved restrictive quotas and import tariffs on particular products, which denied ACP farmers much greater and fairer access to the EC market.

A long campaign of education and advice

In the first half of the 1980s, CIIR mounted a major education campaign targeting



development agencies and policy-makers in the UK and Europe on the need for Lomé renegotiations to tackle the development challenges of changing EC-ACP relations. An important tool was production of an ongoing series of *Lomé Briefings* on key aspects and aid and trade which CIIR launched with a first paper by Commonwealth secretary-general, Shridath S Ramphal.

Authored by leading European and Third World development specialists, European and ACP trade unionists, as well as other high-profile figures, the briefings were translated into different languages and circulated to EC institutions, governments and parliaments, the ACP diplomatic community, as well as development agencies and think tanks with an interest in the convention. CIIR also used the briefings in its written policy submissions and oral evidence-giving to UK and European parliamentary inquiries and to inform its organisation of multi-stakeholder events. They included 'The Lomé Convention: Where to Now?' seminar chaired by Edward Mortimer of *The Times*, which led to a follow-up report bearing this title in 1984.

As well as promoting use of the briefings by UK development agencies and NGOs such as CAFOD, Christian Aid and the World Development Movement, and in its advice to the BCC, a cornerstone of CIIR's initiative was to work with and through the EC-NGO Liaison Committee to target the Brussels institutions. The EC-NGO Liaison Committee, whose sub-group on development education CIIR had come to chair, had several hundred members and they used the *Lomé Briefings* in their own advocacy events, lobbying and public awareness-raising. CIIR became an adviser to its committee on Lomé and also contributed to a European Ecumenical Commission for Development grouping different churches involved in work on food security.

Europe's CAP: a recipe for international hunger

In the second half of the 1980s, CIIR's work on Lomé was steadily dovetailed with a growing focus on the problems of the CAP and the EC's overall approach to agricultural trade, a challenge CIIR explored in a 1986 Comment and a UK conference on European and Third World agriculture. Through the subsequent production and concerted promotion of a Lomé-style series of *CAP Briefings*, CIIR challenged the CAP's damage to developing countries and the livelihoods of their farmers. The CAP's heavy subsidisation of large European producers and EC dumping of surpluses on world markets at prices not reflecting real production costs placed less-supported or unsubsidised Third World producers at a competitive disadvantage in their domestic and export markets alike. CIIR's 1988 book by Philip Raikes co-published with James Currey, *Modernising Hunger*, assessed the structural causes of hunger and the damage of EC surpluses in sub-Saharan Africa.

CIIR, through its *CAP Briefings*, sought to inject the views of poorer, under-supported Third World producers into EC policy discussions, and to explore the potential for common cause with small farmers in Europe and North America. The latter, in comparison with large landowners and large-scale producers, benefited far less from subsidies, and more and more small farms were facing financial difficulty. Tax-payers and government budgets were footing the bill for such rural imbalances and problems.

As part of such bridge-building, CIIR became a member of the Network of European Agencies on Agriculture and Development ([RONGEAD](#)) in 1985, which enabled it to reach out to farming organisations in France, Belgium, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. Meanwhile, in the UK, CIIR's work on the CAP was part of the momentum that led to the creation of the [UK Food Group](#) in 1986. The group boosted opportunities for CIIR networking and advocacy targeting the UK as an EC member on the CAP, agricultural trade and food security.

GATT: from fixing the rules to reshaping the trade narrative

By now, the EC was involved in fierce trade battles over the CAP with the United States and its equally powerful agribusiness lobby. The US government was increasing pressure to reduce European and international barriers to its own heavily subsidised agricultural exporters as part of the emerging push for global 'trade liberalisation'. Talks under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) were starting to gather pace and anticipated the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1994. The looming changes in world trade arrangements were of crucial relevance to CIIR's work on Lomé, given the risks to ACP exporters if EC-ACP arrangements providing preferential access for their key products were eroded in the supposed freeing and opening of agricultural markets under GATT and the WTO.

CIIR, as part of its expanding work on trade and development, highlighted the skewed nature of trade liberalisation being pursued and tussled over by the United States and the EC. CIIR events on the GATT noted that the policy approaches of rich countries, despite talk of creating a "level playing field", remained stacked against poorer developing

MODERNISING HUNGER

PHILIP RAIKES



countries. Unlike the EC and the US, which would maintain high levels of subsidies, they were less able to financially support their agriculture, including as a result of economic adjustment programmes, and faced the prospect of disciplines being imposed on their right to do so under emerging GATT-WTO trade rules.

Bringing small farmers into the discussion

Partners and informants at CIIR events argued that the needs and interests of smaller-scale farmers needed to be recognised in decision-making on agriculture, particularly in the developing world where the sector was essential for people's livelihoods (see quotes).

"How can we start from free-market principles when the majority of people in my country are excluded from the market by poverty and landlessness? When we speak of food our starting point must be justice and the needs of the people, not the dictates of national and international markets."

Filipino peasant leader speaking at a 1988 shadow GATT conference in Montreal organised by CIIR

"There is a world of difference between subsidies, such as those used by the EC and the US, to finance over-production and distort world markets... and subsidies used to achieve greater food self-reliance, protect rural employment and encourage ecological sustainability in the South on the other."

Jamaican government official, quoted in CIIR's 1990/91 annual review

CIIR, building on discussions at a 1988 international conference it had organised in Montreal to shadow a GATT negotiations review summit held in the Canadian city, went on to work with small farmer, development and environmental groups to develop a food security charter on the GATT in February 1990. Its demands for GATT to uphold the right of developing countries to achieve food self-reliance, and to stop rich country agricultural dumping, followed hearings held with GATT officials and national trade delegations in Geneva. Another CIIR-supported conference, organised with the European Ecumenical Commission for Development, saw church leaders from the developed and developing world, target another GATT summit held in Brussels at the end of the year.

Opening closed-door talks to public light

CIIR's drive to target the GATT negotiations from the later 1980s led to growing media interest in the hitherto neglected development issues at stake. By the early 1990s, the development desk was securing coverage in newspapers such as *Le Monde Diplomatique* and the *Guardian* as well as interviews in news programmes such as the BBC's *Newsnight* and *Nine O'Clock News*.

Part of the problem with the GATT talks, in addition to their domination by the rich countries of the global North, was their somewhat secretive nature and the lack of public involvement beyond government negotiators. CIIR's development desk officer, Kevin Watkins, was an early mover in questioning the transparency and accountability of the GATT talks and bringing into public view their problematic implications for developing countries. His efforts culminated in a 1992 book for CIIR, *Fixing the Rules: North-South Issues in International Trade and the GATT Uruguay Round*, which drew attention to the risks of new global rules on services, investment and intellectual property rights as well as agriculture.

Sectoral alliances

Another achievement of CIIR's development desk was its promotion of cross-sectoral alliances on CAP reform and GATT. Such efforts, as well as building links between the

NGO development community and farmer groups, sought to engage environmental and consumer organisations. In the UK and the EC, as well as the United States, industrial agriculture and chemical farming techniques were damaging the countryside and posing health problems. It was in this context that other UK initiatives, such as the 1991 launch of the Sustainable Agriculture, Food and Environment (SAFE) alliance (later merged into [Sustain](#)), were born.

Third World debt: making the connections with a wider crisis of development

CIIR's work on international food security, which included acting as a consultant to the World Council of Churches (WCC) and advising the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, also encompassed analysis of other policy problems in the 1980s compounding the damaging impact of EC and global trade policies.

The damaging trade of economic austerity

Indeed, Third World governments, afflicted by foreign debt and soaring interest payments to rich country creditors, were introducing structural adjustment economic austerity programmes, with international financial institutions (IFIs) making their adoption a condition for financial aid. As reforms to reduce state intervention and public spending were introduced, small-scale farmers in particular were hit by cuts in public support for agriculture reducing credit and technical support. They became less able to take advantage of the higher prices that were supposed to arise from the removal of price controls, freer markets and trade liberalisation.

CIIR drew attention to the damaging interaction between the lack of sufficient, flexible international financial support for politically sensitive structural adjustment reforms and the injustices of international trade policies in its 1985 Comment, *Africa's Development Disaster*. Published in response to African famine that had attracted major UK media coverage as a result of the Ethiopia crisis and the 1984 launch of the Band Aid campaign, the Comment was actively used by UK development agencies. CIIR joined them in organising a 'Fight World Poverty' mass lobby of the UK parliament attended by 20,000 people in October 1985.

A further Comment in 1987, the *World Development Crisis*, urged ambitious policy action to tackle Third World debt. It pointed out that developing countries' crushing debt repayments to IFIs and Western banks, hitting their economies and social welfare hard, were far outstripping the levels of international aid they received. They were net exporters of capital rather than beneficiaries of rich country 'generosity'. The continued reluctance of rich country governments to deal with the structural problems of debt stood in contrast with the private solidarity of thousands of individuals now donating to initiatives such as Comic Relief founded in 1985.

Anticipating pressure for a new deal on global development

A combination of rising NGO public pressure in the global North and civil society protests in the global South, together with rich countries' worries over Third World political stability and the vulnerability of their own banks to defaults, eventually led to cautious incipient official plans to relieve some of the pressures. They included the G7 Toronto proposals on the poorest African countries and the 1989 US Brady Plan for market discounts to reduce Third world debt and servicing costs. The 1980s had been dubbed a 'lost decade' for Latin America.

CIIR analysed the stalling initiatives in its follow-up 1991 Comment, *Third World Debt: The Lingering Crisis*, which, in addition to taking stock of the crisis' social and ecological toll, challenged the arguments against debt cancellation. It called for IFIs and rich countries to support a coordinated international strategy of ambitious debt reduction, in exchange for developing countries investing the money saved in meeting human needs. The latter would demonstrate the benefits to Northern taxpayers. The bargain would also entail international support for country reforms aimed at inclusive economic development rather than wholesale implementation of free-market policies being dogmatically prescribed by Washington, and it would require a rich country new approach to international trade. "It is no good asking a debtor country to liberalise its trade and then blocking its exports," the Comment argued.

CIIR's Comment saw debt cancellation as a matter of justice rather than charity and argued rich countries should accept their share of responsibility for causing and addressing the problems. Indeed, the debt crisis had been fuelled by irresponsible lending. In Africa, official lending had been provided for governments with poor democratic credentials and human rights records. In Latin America, Western private banks, with little regard to sustainable borrowing and the accountable use of funds, had been allowed to recycle the

glut of petro-dollars generated by the mid-1970s oil price rises that Ward and Schumacher had referenced in their AGM speeches.

The development desk's engagement on the debt crisis and economic adjustment in the Third World was more focused on high-quality information work rather than the concerted advocacy it carried out on the distortions and damage of EC and US trade policies. Still, CIIR's analysis made its own important contribution to wider thought and emerging action on the issue. It anticipated the contours of low-income country debt relief and poverty reduction plans introduced after the 1998 G8 summit in Birmingham when 70,000 people urged world leaders to take action, and also the integrated debt-aid-trade demands of the UK Make Poverty History campaign of 2005.

Building for change – grassroots action

CIIR's overseas development worker programme in the 1970s and 1980s

Sharing skills and knowledge to strengthen organisations for better lives and fair societies

Thanks to UK government funding of its participation in the multi-agency British Volunteer Programme, CIIR's work in the developing world itself grew in size and significance between 1975 and 1989. The gradual consolidation and expansion of CIIR's overseas programme took place despite initial fluctuations in the numbers of volunteers (renamed development workers in the 1980s to reflect their professional experience and referred to as DWs in this section) and the range of focus countries involved. In Central America, for example, the intensification of mass repression and armed conflict forced CIIR to suspend its 'volunteering' in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua during the 1970s.

By the late-1980s, however, CIIR's overseas work had a settled focus on country programmes in Honduras and Nicaragua in Central America, Ecuador and Peru in the Andes, Zimbabwe in Southern Africa and North Yemen and Somalia in the Middle East and Horn of Africa region. Prospects were also emerging for future programme expansion in the Dominican Republic, resuming work in El Salvador with the 1990 advent of peace talks, and starting a new programme in Namibia as it approached independence (see the country portfolio [chart](#) in the Introduction).

Volunteers in development: a CIIR statement of the challenges and aims

"The process of under-development is extremely complex, but from our own experience certain common characteristics can be identified. At a national level they include: Lack of resources and appropriate technologies;

Lack of national and local leadership with which the population identifies;

Lack of administrative and organisational infrastructure;

Dependency of rural markets on urban markets and skills;

Lack of government services;

Lack of a sense of national identity between rich and poor.

"At an international level they include:

Involvement in international trading systems which operate to the advantage of the industrialised countries and are controlled by them;

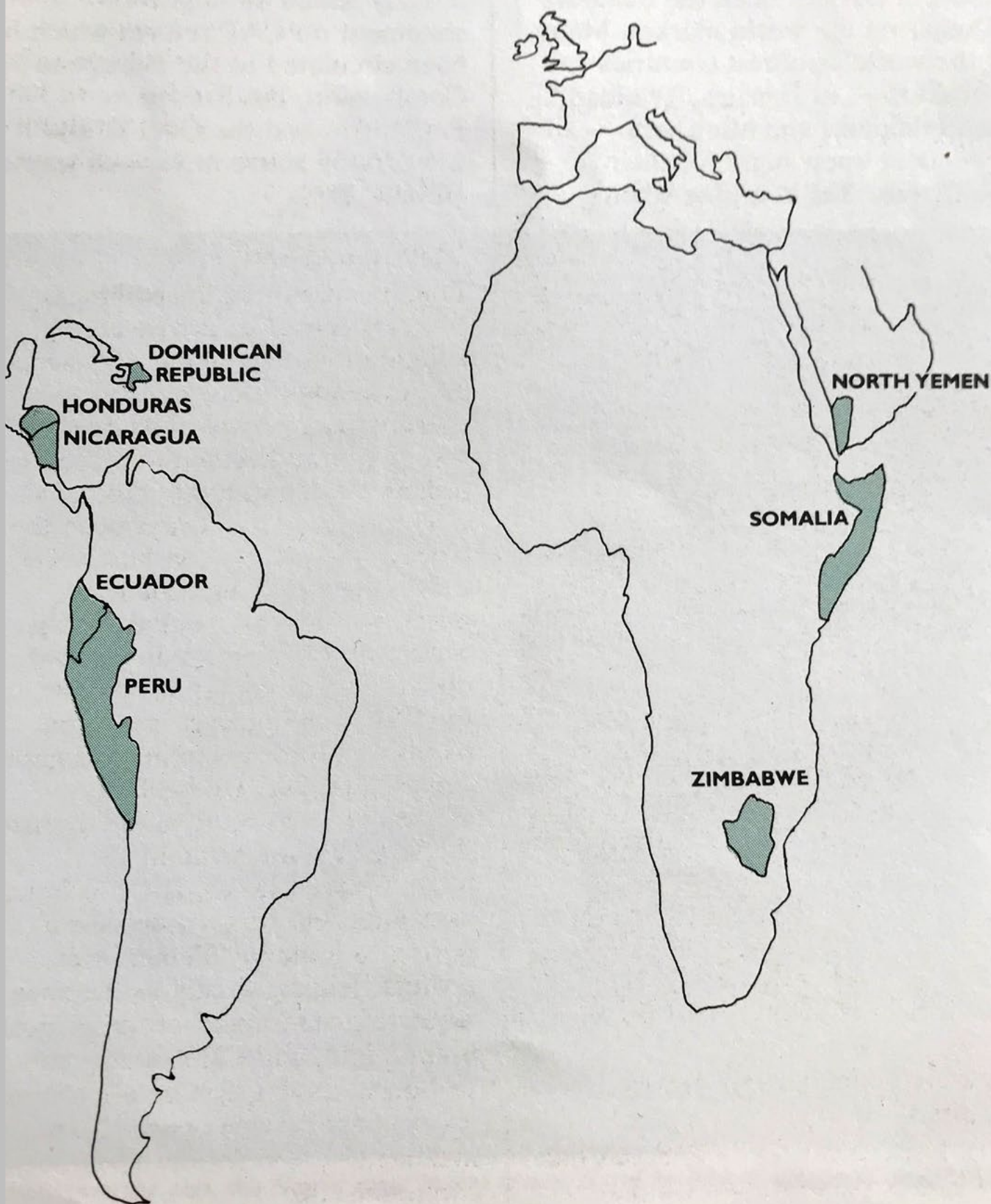
Over-reliance on foreign investment, aid and expertise;

Vulnerability of small countries within the international community.

"The rationale for a volunteer programme is for people coming from the rich countries to be able to identify and work with those groups and communities trying to become more self-reliant and break out of the vicious circle of dependency. This means a volunteer programme cannot be evaluated in terms of numbers but in the relevance of the volunteer projects to the needs of the country and in the selection of suitable volunteer personnel."

Source: CIIR annual review, 1975





Map displaying the main countries where CIIR was placing development workers in the late 1980s. They would be joined by El Salvador and Namibia early in the next decade.

Consolidating foundations for sharper practice and growth

The approach of CIIR's overseas programme reflected and informed the evolution of the organisation's overall policy thinking on development change, with a 1975 statement outlining its understanding of the contextual challenges facing volunteers in supporting local partners (see Box above). Development, CIIR later reasserted in 1989, could not rely on economic growth as a means of automatically improving living standards and tackling poverty; rather, it required a process whereby poorer people themselves were in a stronger position to change their lives and tackle the structural barriers that hindered support for their ability to do so.

Role of the development worker: from mutual exchange and learning to local self-reliance

As part of the struggle for fairer societies and a more just world, CIIR's overseas work in its focus countries was aimed at enhancing the organisational strengths and self-reliance of partner organisations and supporting their agendas for change in working with communities. CIIR, in placing skilled professionals in development initiatives, saw its role as promoting two-way exchange and learning between DWs and partners, with the contribution of DWs meeting clearly identified organisational needs and ideally becoming unnecessary as organisations strengthened their ways of working and impact.

From the early 1970s CIIR strengthened its systems to recruit, select and prepare DWs for placements. Its selection weekends tested candidates for their personal and professional aptitude for cultural sensitivity and collaborative working respecting partner leadership, and an intensified system of pre-assignment orientation (induction) for successful applicants, both before departure and on country arrival, reinforced the crucial importance of such qualities. The process, though led by staff, also drew on the external contribution of experts and practitioners with deep knowledge and experience of particular countries, issues and methodologies.

CIIR's approach meant that DWs, in carrying out their placements, not only aimed to facilitate the sharing of expertise and knowledge with partners; they also often underwent personal and professional change themselves as they learnt from their daily experience of supporting the organisations' work with communities.

A return with interest: supporting development education and awareness

Such self-development and solidarity commitment also produced additional benefits in terms of DWs' potential for promoting international exchange and development education in their countries of origin and supporting CIIR's recruitment efforts. A special volunteer de-briefing, recruitment and action-on-return seminar held in Bristol in 1977 with existing, returning and prospective volunteers, for instance, bore the title 'Underdevelopment begins at home – or did you leave it overseas?'

In the UK, the main recruiting ground in the 1970s and 1980s before the subsequent rise of recruitment in the global South (see Chapter 3), CIIR also contributed to the work of [Returned Volunteer Action](#). RVA, as well as representing the interests of volunteers in the BVP, provided an outlet for local and national awareness-raising in the UK on development as well as advocacy on the overall approach of sending agencies. Drawing on CIIR's approach, it recommended practices geared to optimising the potential strengths and leadership of Third World partners rather than volunteer recruitment driven by external perceptions of need.

CIIR reflected on the complex dynamics of partnerships and local development change in its annual reviews and newsletters (see quote below) and began to capitalise on its growing programme experience to contribute to CIIR's publishing programme, which had hitherto been largely focused on the work of the organisation's education department. Analysing and addressing the micro-level practicalities of positive development change was crucial if partners were to challenge the wider structures that disadvantaged poor communities and groups.

CIIR and 'capacity-building': partner support based on contextual understanding

'Capacity-building' was becoming the blanket term used by development agencies to describe their diverse activities to help partner organisations strengthen their institutional structures and external operation and performance. Capacity-building practice, however, could often be confined to specific training events and one-off programmes, whereas CIIR's (volunteer) development worker approach involved the sustained daily accompaniment of partners over several years, based on the values of mutual exchange and learning described above.



“Many members of rural cooperatives are illiterate. To promote full participation and to prevent those who can read and write for taking all the leading roles, literacy classes are an essential element... The same holds true for technical and administrative skills. If the cooperative’s members are mystified by the ‘professionalisation’ of those who run the cooperative, they will be unable to understand and therefore participate in decisions related to the administration of the cooperative.

“The volunteer programme avoids sending volunteers to jobs that involve policy-making by the volunteers and prefers instead to help in the implementation of policy decided by the members. It would be absurd for a foreigner to decide what is best for a Panamanian peasant farmer or a Guatemalan [indigenous person].”

Source: 1980 annual review reflection on CIIR’s work to support rural cooperatives in Latin America

From the mid-1980s, CIIR, aware that building solid foundations for development initiatives took time, placed more and more emphasis on longer-term commitment. Wherever possible, it extended DW placements beyond the minimum requirement of a two-year contract. It also frequently supported a cycle of evolving DW assignments with the same partner so as to ensure continuity and adaptation over a longer period of time as project initiatives progressed.

In recruiting, selecting, preparing and supporting DWs to take up their individual assignments and maximise their impact, CIIR’s approach from the early 1970s, moreover, had increasingly combined a thorough analysis of ‘project context’ with ‘whole-organisation’ understanding of partners’ needs. One its practitioners describes the features of this approach as it evolved (see Box below).

CIIR’s ability to meet partners’ needs in this way, as noted by Dinny Hawes in his contribution in Chapter 1, was greatly aided by its decision to appoint country-based volunteer coordinators from the late 1960s, who were later renamed country representatives (CRs) in the 1980s and given full local responsibility for programme development and management. With their strong grasp of local politics and the various state and non-state actors involved in development, CIIR’s country representatives were able to develop relations with potential partners and assess their support needs.

The CRs, later nationals themselves, also increasingly employed locally recruited country office staff rather than British ex-patriates from the mid-1980s. The closeness of country staff and offices to the difficult challenges affecting partners and people on the ground became another radicalising factor in producing the locally driven social justice nature of CIIR’s overall development outlook and its approach to capacity-strengthening.

Internal effort, external recognition: strengthening programme advice and guidelines

In 1978, an independent evaluation of the BVP by the University of East Anglia complimented the strengths of CIIR’s programme development and management practices, validating its approach as a foundation for future progress.

At that time, CIIR also created an advisory committee for its overseas programme to match the one supporting CIIR’s education work. Its members, comprising former CIIR volunteers, agencies and academic institutions, helped to enrich the thinking and practice of CIIR’s grassroots work. UK community development specialists and experts from other international development

This advisory body complemented the exchange of learning and best practice increasingly taking place between CIIR’s country representatives, who began holding a two-week

BRENDA LIPSON

A shared journey for positive change



Brenda Lipson, a former development worker and CIIR staff member, is an independent consultant on civil society capacity-building. She served as a member of the board of trustees of CIIR and Progressio from 2002 to 2009.

My involvement in CIIR's overseas programme from 1980 to 1995 provided the bedrock of lived experience of capacity strengthening which I still call on today as an organisational development consultant.

I 'cut my teeth' on capacity-building in the context of international development [as a DW](#) working with local NGOs, social movements and trade unions in the coastal region of Ecuador. Over seven years I had the opportunity to share and adapt the experience I had gained of using media (visual and oral) for social change in inner city London. I learnt so much from my Ecuadorean colleagues and members of civil society organisations (CSOs). This experience served as a strong foundation for my subsequent roles in CIIR as an overseas Country Representative and as London-based Joint Programme Manager covering four Latin American and Caribbean countries (Ecuador, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Nicaragua).

Beyond technical fixes

Throughout this early period, I had no doubt that at the heart of CIIR lay a vision of strong CSOs with the capacity to respond to the practical needs of their members and beneficiaries whilst simultaneously seeking long-term changes to tackle structural injustices and inequalities. CIIR understood that a technical 'fix' was insufficient by itself and made a strategic approach to partner capacity-building a core aim. This involved understanding and considering the 'whole organisation' even if the support being requested and provided might be focused on one or several technical areas. CIIR's long-term commitment to partner organisations was sometimes complemented by specific short-term DW placements that sought to reinforce capacity in particular areas.

CIIR's country strategies were also informed by partners' perspectives and based on a rigorous analysis of the socio-economic and political context they worked in. We ensured that the overall focus areas selected for capacity-building in any country programme were constantly challenged to prove their value-added, and we made every attempt to avoid 'gap-filling', even if this meant difficult conversations with partners.

Key features still relevant today

Many aspects of CIIR's (and Progressio's) approach are today understood as key to effective capacity strengthening. Back then, we didn't use the adjectives and terms they are known by today – adaptive, context-specific, systemic, co-creation and so on. It is worth highlighting what CIIR's emerging approach involved in practice:

- It was common practice from the early 1980s to jointly define the profile, role and responsibilities of the DW with the partner, based on a shared assessment of the organisation's support needs. CIIR would only finalise selection of a DW if partner approval of the proposed individual was forthcoming.
- Project assessments, in taking an in-depth look at the technical areas proposed for DW support, considered the core values of the partner and the main characteristics of its internal operation.
- CIIR's rigorous, targeted recruitment and selection process involved exploring the 'values-match' between potential DW candidates with the partner.
- CIIR's adaptive and tailored approach meant that while traditional skill areas might form the core of a country programme (in relation to primary health care and agriculture, for example), country strategies identified the need for new skills and expertise in response to changing partner needs and emerging programme issues and sectors. So it was that, from the 1980s, the organisation increasingly sought to recruit DW specialists in areas such as alternative medicine, local government participatory planning, popular communication, marketing, and environmental advocacy.
- Peer learning initiatives were promoted wherever possible. The formation in some countries of 'clusters' of DWs with similar expertise areas provided opportunities for them and their partner colleagues to visit and support each other as well as participate in shared workshops and learning events. Peer learning was also achieved through the introduction, in the late 1980s, of South-South recruitment of DW specialists from within the same region as the country programmes in which they were placed.

Finally, the value of 'accompaniment' should be stressed. The physical presence of a DW accompanying the partner organisation on a daily basis facilitated the continual monitoring of change and adaptation of the type of support provided. But it was more than that. It was about creating a space for mutual learning and personal and organisational change in the context of solidarity. It was about collaboration on a shared journey for positive change in our societies and our planet.

international review and planning conference each year with London-based staff from 1973 onwards. This gathering, which became a perennial fixture in CIIR's calendar, quickly showed its impact in shaping the strategic approach of CIIR's overseas work and strengthening its programme development and management systems.

Indeed, in 1974, the coordinator conference agreed project development guidelines. These emphasised the importance of analysing the political, social and economic context of each country, the potential for committed leadership of the development process by country partners, and the need to boost the participation of local communities in project decision-making. The move, as well as representing a positive step in the overseas programme's evolution, had also been reportedly needed to resolve differences of opinion between coordinators and volunteers, and between these groups based in the so-called 'field' and London staff, over the suitability of projects. By 1977, a coordinators' handbook had also been prepared.

From a crisis of numbers to sizing up programme strengths

While the greater rigour and selectivity of CIIR's new guidelines on project involvement was in line with internal pressure for the organisation to boost the quality and relevance of its partner support, the difficulties of embedding their application led to an unintended crisis. The total number of professionals CIIR was immediately able to place in partnerships fell to a low of 29 volunteers (five of whom were coordinators) in the late 1970s before rising steadily in the next decade. By then, the organisation had organised a programme development drive in a smaller number of focus countries to turn its principles into practical reality. Over the 1980s, CIIR's overseas programme, in seeking to marry programme quality and size, had an average total of between 50 and 80 professionals in place, rising to 100 DWs in 1991.

By the end of the 1980s, CIIR's overseas programme, overseen during the decade by staff such as Patricia Silkin and Cowan Coventry, could show a range of innovative approaches and important achievements, as outlined in the next section. Its dynamism saw the UK government's Overseas Development Administration (ODA) increase its core funding for CIIR's overseas work by 21 per cent in the 1988/89 financial year.

The rising importance of CIIR's overseas DW programming meant that, at the end the 1980s, it accounted for over two thirds of CIIR's overall budget. By that stage, country offices had been consolidated and further professionalised with stronger systems for programme support and administration and financial and human resources management.

The additional ODA funds, as well as strengthening work in Southern Africa and the Horn of Africa, enabled CIIR to turn its remotely supported project engagement in the Dominican Republic since 1976 into a fully-fledged programme run by a country office, with the initial support of staff members Brenda Lipson and Lambert Rae. In expanding CIIR's Latin America programme beyond its focus countries in the Andes and Central America, this move also gave CIIR a more established presence in the Caribbean. It provided a bridgehead for greater involvement with Haiti, where CIIR had placed a small number of DWs during the 1970s and 1980s.

From health, education and agriculture to the recognition of women: promoting a platform for change

Health promotion was a central feature of CIIR's overseas country programmes placing project development workers (DWs) in the 1970s and 1980s, and this focus provided a connective catalyst for work in other sectors and on other issues. The work took place in the context of the World Health Organization (WHO) declaring a goal of achieving 'health for all' by the year 2000.

Health and giving birth to new approaches

CIIR's initiatives, focused on preventive rather than curative solutions, involved a primary health care (PHC) approach, which placed emphasis on local people and professionals understanding and tackling the underlying causes of health problems in their communities. This was considered a much more socially responsive and cost-effective way of meeting the health needs of the poor.

As an integral part of its support, CIIR worked with partners to demonstrate, promote and mainstream the benefits of PHC approaches more widely so as to influence and transform wider health systems. Projects were seen not as discrete initiatives promoting isolated

gains in wellbeing but showed on-the-ground advocacy intent. This approach had wider social benefits too, particularly in relation to women. Projects aimed not just to meet women's needs as traditional carers but also promoted gains in their self-esteem, confidence and social status, enabling them to become stronger, recognised actors with rights in the development process.

Boosting maternal and child health in Yemen

In North Yemen, for example, CIIR's training of local women as PHC workers and promoters, as well as bringing benefits to communities, enabled recognition of their role and boosted their public standing. This often involved an ongoing process of engaging male leaders to overcome mistrust.

A particular focus in Yemen from the mid-1970s, with the support of volunteers then coordinated by Paddy Coulter, was on maternal and child health, with CIIR recruiting DW midwives to train and support traditional birth attendants (TBAs) known as *jiddat*, often non-literate older women, hitherto relied on within families to attend baby deliveries. CIIR's professionals also nurtured the skills of female PHC workers, *murshida* (one who guides), so that they could become trainers of the TBAs. Over time the women were able to offer a wide range of health support beyond ante-natal and delivery care. It included vaccinations, home visits to children at risk, and nutrition education.

The PHC initiatives had emerged following the success of a pilot project in the Raymah rural highlands in 1976, which led to PHC workers there being recognised by the government and given a salary. Following this success, captured in a slide-tape show that CIIR used to promote UK awareness of its overseas health work, the ministry of health invited CIIR to launch a project in Abs on the country's hot coastal plain between Hodeidah and the border with Saudi Arabia from 1983.

This new phase was able to draw on the lessons of existing work, which was captured in CIIR's 1980 publication of *The Training of Traditional Birth Attendants* by Maureen Williams, a former CIIR development worker. By 1987, CIIR was in a position to start handing over the general planning and management of its PHC initiatives to Yemeni partners in cooperation with the ministry of health. The new phase also involved the launch of pilot literacy programme. This followed a 1986 feasibility study which highlighted that a mother's education level was often the main factor determining the survival and future health of children. The programme, in which a CIIR worker supported literate female school-leavers to become literacy trainers, was formally recognised by the ministry of education.

Meanwhile, following a decision to turn lower-level project work in Somalia into a country programme in 1984, CIIR sought to replicate its Yemeni success in promoting TBA support for maternal and child health in the Horn of Africa through a trainer-of-trainers partnership with nurses on courses at the Mogadishu Institute.

Low-tech, high value: valuing existing health resources and knowledge

Gradual PHC service expansion and official recognition in North Yemen was an important achievement in that the value of PHC approaches was not well recognised in the country at the time. National policy-makers were inclined to prioritise support for prestige hospitals and heed medical professionals schooled in and wedded to Western-style care. Commercial pressures were also a factor and CIIR's work also highlighted and challenged powerful interests damaging maternal and child health.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, CIIR's volunteer (DW) coordinator in Yemen, James Firebrace, monitored the promotion of breast milk substitutes. They were causing serious levels of illness because of the lack of safe water for their use and also threatening to undermine breast-feeding in the country as elsewhere. In 1979, he produced a paper with War on Want and submitted it as evidence to WHO and the global children's agency UNICEF, urging the UN bodies to uphold global recommendations for tackling 'bottle updated and expanded version in 1981, *Infant Feeding in the Yemen Arab Republic*.

Avoiding reliance on traditional medical treatment and expensive drugs geared to richer social groups was an important part of CIIR's support for partners. In Honduras and the Dominican Republic, for instance, CIIR supported projects to gather and promote knowledge about traditional medicine, including use of medicinal plants, as an integral feature of community health practice. By the mid-1990s a manual on 50 medicinal plants in Honduras, produced with CIIR's support in 1989, reportedly filled the shelves of urban health professionals, rural health promoters and community leaders and workers.

CARMEN MEDINA

The lessons of people-to-people health education: a lasting model for supporting partners in El Salvador



Carmen Medina, an architect and feminist, worked for 23 years as CIIR's and Progressio's country representative in El Salvador

In 1993, when I received Ilú Valenzuela from Nicaragua as the first development worker (DW) to be recruited by CIIR's recently opened overseas country programme in El Salvador, I did not know that it would begin an experience that would last so long over time. With Ilú, I began to discover one of the features that made the organisation's DW model a unique methodology for helping to lay solid foundations for development.

As Ilú was an education graduate, she did not seem to have much to do with an organisation dedicated to health such as CPAS. However, I soon grasped that Ilú's substantive contribution consisted of sharing knowledge and expertise. CPAS had highly experienced doctors and knew a lot about health, but they had little idea about how to teach other people, especially people with scant levels of schooling. With much dedication and creativity, Ilú helped CPAS to establish a methodology for training community health promoters – a crucial need in areas affected by the civil war and deprived of government resources.

Individual creativity, collective value and enrichment

This successful experience provided the basis for a methodology that I was able to use with the various DWs who began arriving to take up placements with other partners. Together, we were able to continue improving the approach, taking advantage of the creativity and knowledge of each and every person.

Ilú contributed so much to the methodological tools of CIIR's country programme that even over 20 years later, in assessing Progressio's last projects, we continued using the guide that she had developed for the final evaluation of her own work as a DW. The guide ensured that her report included the voices of all the people she had worked with, in order to gauge the success of her individual support and the extent to which the mission of CIIR's overseas programming – sharing DW knowledge and expertise with counterparts to strengthen partner organisations – had been fulfilled.

Over 20 years a total of 65 DWs carried out this simple but difficult mission with great dedication and to the evident satisfaction of the 36 partners CIIR and Progressio supported. As a symbolic recognition, I wish to name the DWs who made this contribution possible, with all my thanks and appreciation.

They were: Adrian, John B, Paul, Sarah, Janet, Ilú, Robyn, Marlon, Rafael, Jamie, Lucía, Tracey, Isidro, Graeme, Felicia, John E, Isabel, José Luis, Susana, Nils, Andrea H, Edgar, Begoña, Andrew, Viviana, Mercedes, Lula, César V, Mo, Ismael, Juan Carlos, Rafael, Jo, Tony, Eva, Azahara, César C, Rina, Hans, Juan Pablo, Mónica, Angélica, Beatriz, Silvina, Marco, J Bayron, Alison, Beiby, Sanne, Marcos S, Adriana, Gloria, Juan, Andrea B, Natalia, Nicoletta, Marcos C, Héctor, Noelia, Javier, Mayita, Maggie, Virginia, Sergio, Santiago.

From Nicaragua to Zimbabwe and beyond: sharing PHC expertise

CIIR's support for partner efforts to integrate PHC approaches within national health programmes made progress in other countries. In Nicaragua, CIIR's development workers supported the health brigades set up in the wake of the 1979 revolution, praised by the WHO for their success in eradicating diseases, and CIIR midwives supported training-of-trainers programmes on maternal and child health. As noted earlier, Nicaragua registered important health gains in the early stages of the revolution, aided by organisations such as CIIR, which had been able to resume its country programme and place DWs with partners freely following the overthrow of Somoza.

In the 1980s, CIIR also facilitated the sharing of lessons from Nicaragua on grassroots health promotion with partners in Zimbabwe whose pre-independence services had been centred on the needs of the white minority. District medical officers supported by DWs helped to build the PHC capacity of rural medics and local health centres, which freed higher-level hospitals to act as more specialist training and referral centres. During its first decade of independence, Zimbabwe's health promotion drive, supported by international donors and agencies such as CIIR, made significant progress in tackling infant mortality.

CIIR's replication of PHC in Zimbabwe through the training of village health workers went hand in hand with the efforts of DWs, recruited with a minimum of three years' professional physiotherapy and occupational therapy experience, to promote community-based rehabilitation in rural areas. Rehabilitation services had been concentrated in urban centres and on the white population. This field of work was an important priority for CIIR in Zimbabwe, due to the high levels of disability caused by injury during the national liberation struggle and the subsequent flight of qualified white professionals with the advent of 1980 independence. CIIR's work with partners on community rehabilitation was documented in its 1990 publication *Zimbabwe: Steps Ahead*.

CIIR's accumulated learning also helped to inform later initiatives training PHC promoters and traditional midwives in new country programmes about to be fully established at the end of the 1980s and in the early 1990s. The benefits were seen, for example, in future work with the Woman and Health Collective ([COMUS](#)) in the Dominican Republic and with El Salvador's Centre for Alternative Health Programmes (CPAS). One development worker's creativity in helping CPAS undertake health education with poor communities meant that her approach to sharing expertise and knowledge became a model for work not just in health but in other sectors too (see Box above).



Linking health to integrated community development and better livelihoods

As the approach of traditional health systems and professionals was centred on richer groups at the expense of poor communities, particularly those living in remote areas, there was sometimes a risk of CIIR's medical and health professionals, in seeking to make up for this gap, being drawn into a more curative approach. This was the case in a longstanding initiative to support indigenous communities in Peru where CIIR and the partner organisation discussed the issue and altered their approach. The adjustment involved strengthening health promotion through an integrated drive to address wider problems affecting isolated communities in relation to sanitation, safe drinking water, environmental safety, transport and land rights (see Box).

Water is health

An integrated approach was also taken in CIIR's Somalia programme where DWs helped train community health workers to promote action on water safety and sanitation and rubbish collection in a project supporting nomadic pastoralists in the northern Sool region. The latter's movements were determined by the availability of food and water for their livestock. The project helped to set up small health centres near water sources providing a fixed meeting point, which were run by village health committees involving male and female elders with community authority.

Reflecting on a journey and adjusting course in the Peruvian Amazon

By 1988, CIIR was completing a decade's work with the Aguaruna and Huambisa Council (CAH) representing scores of such indigenous communities living alongside rivers in the Peruvian Amazon, yet a joint review of the partnership found it had been too inclined towards curative action. With many Peruvian medical professionals reluctant to work in a remote region, and in the absence of close state services, a series of CIIR-recruited doctors had been placed with CAH to tackle the gap. Though they had brought gains by training CAH health promoters and helping with the supply and administration of drugs and vaccines, CAH and CIIR decided the next phase of partnership should place greater emphasis on prevention.

Towards a wider and stronger preventive approach

In response, CIIR, as well as placing a dedicated health education and health promotion professional, recruited a water and sanitation expert, to bolster CAH's preventive strategies. CIIR had already provided a mechanic to help set up a services and repair centre for motorised canoes used by promoters to visit Aguaruna and Huambisa communities. In the 1980s, CIIR had also recruited a legal adviser to help strengthen CAH's management and governance as an institution as well as its ability to guard against encroachment by outside settlers. Over the years the communities' health problems had been exacerbated by colonisation and missionaries.

That was then, this is now

Whatever the future challenges facing the CAH and CIIR's support, the gains that the partnership had achieved over the years were significant. In 1977, when the first CIIR-recruited doctor took up his placement to work in the area, neither CAH nor its health programmes existed and Aguaruna and Huambisa communities were deprived of even the most basic health care. Now CAH had structures to run health, education and livelihoods programmes. It was also negotiating support from the ministry of health and active in advocacy through AIDSEP, the organisation representing indigenous peoples in Peru's Amazon.

One ground-breaking water-related health initiative was in Nicaragua where national progress in increasing water infrastructure – the number of installations since the Sandinista revolution had doubled by 1987 – was yet to be matched by vitally needed improvement in water quality.

CIIR, in support of the FSLN government's official national water plan, helped promote a pilot project in Boaco in which a portable Oxfam kit developed at the University of Surrey was successfully used to carry out water tests. As documented in CIIR's 1989 publication *Nicaragua: Testing the Water*, the success of the pilot laid the basis for a nation-wide water-testing scheme, which was introduced in partnership with the ministry of health and the financial support of the EC. CIIR went on to make plans with partners and DWs to replicate use of the kit in its country programme in neighbouring Honduras.

Healthy approaches to agriculture and farming

Support for economic reconstruction and development was a vital priority for CIIR's partners in Nicaragua in the 1980s, not least in the face of the United States' economic blockade forming part of its destabilisation campaign. The US embargo hit imports of spare parts and inputs and threatened Nicaragua's economy dependent on earnings from agricultural exports such as cotton, bananas and coffee. In response, CIIR recruited a range of DWs, including engineers and mechanics, to support Nicaragua's struggle



Top: peace mural from the English-speaking Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua. Communities there were the target of violent attacks by US-backed counter-revolutionaries, who sought to exploit local tensions with central government and destabilise the Sandinista administration.

© Jon Barnes



Bottom: image from CIIR annual review with story on the successful progress of a CIIR volunteer-supported water project. It was one of many initiatives in Nicaragua aimed at enabling local partners and communities to achieve people-centred development against the odds.

NICARAGUA

Success in providing safe water

The success of a CIIR project to provide safe drinking water in one area of Nicaragua has led the government to make it a model for the whole country.

Innovations

In January 1986 a CIIR water engineer and microbiologist began work in a pilot scheme to provide safe drinking water in the region of Boaco. This project features two important innovations: firstly, the close collaboration between INAA (the National Water Board), the Ministry of Health and local popular organisations and, secondly, the training of local people to monitor the quality of the water supply regularly and to repair and maintain the water equipment.

The provision of safe drinking water is a priority throughout Nicaragua. Unfortunately many local supply systems have failed because so far emphasis has only been given to the provision of water and not to training local monitoring and repair teams. In the Boaco region for example, the initial survey showed that of 62 water systems checked, only 9 supplied water of acceptable quality.

British research

The success of the Boaco project is due in part to research in Britain at Surrey University. A mobile water monitoring kit, contained completely in a one-person backpack, was developed for Third World use. It allows locally trained technicians to test water supplies on the spot. Results from these crucial tests can now be obtained in a matter of hours. Water samples from Boaco had previously to be sent to Managua for testing. The delays caused by the long journey to the centralised laboratory changed the chemical composition of the samples, making the test results useless.

The integrated approach of the Boaco water project has been so successful that the Nicaraguan government aims to use it as a national prototype and is currently seeking the necessary funding to extend it throughout the country. ■



'Contra' damage to a coffee factory in Nicaragua

LATIN AMERICA

for economic survival. With the population mainly engaged in agriculture and rural communities benefiting from government support for health vital to economic productivity and livelihoods, however, an important strand of DWs work was to help partners to link stronger food and crop production with health promotion.

One initiative launched in 1984, for example, saw a CIIR-recruited pest control specialist work with a team from the University of León to do away with costly use of insecticide to kill mites on local banana plantations. The inexpensive non-chemical solutions identified proved far more effective in dealing with the problem and showed how reducing use of imported pesticides could create a safer and healthier environment for rural workers and their families. It was another example of how an alternative based on stronger local knowledge and skills proved better than supposedly superior commercial products and solutions brought in from abroad.

Health, community organisation and women's leadership

CIIR's support for partners involved in promoting rural development in other countries took a similarly multi-dimensional approach. In making health an integral key focus, the programmes also sought to strengthen the role and recognition of women. This was the case in the western Intibucá and Lempira departments of Honduras, for example. CIIR development workers supported partner initiatives in the 1980s which combined efforts to diversify agricultural production with health promotion achieving better food hygiene and diets.

The joint contribution of CIIR-recruited agronomists, health educators and midwives in the two Honduran departments helped farming families to introduce new crops, particularly vegetables, for community consumption and wider market sale, and to set up and train village agriculture and health promotion groups including men and women. Elected women leaders played an increasingly important role in promoting healthier food preparation, improved community nutrition and the marketing of produce.

Scores of villages took part in the initiatives, with 14 involved in the Integrated Development Project in Lempira's Gracias parish in the late 1980s. A significant benefit of the agriculture, nutrition and health programmes in Honduras was the sense of increased personal and community confidence that participants gained through their collective organisation. This was just as important as emerging improvements in food production, income, nutrition and health, CIIR noted in commenting on work in Intibucá in 1983. This progress was achieved despite the constraints of insufficient public spending on rural health as the government prioritised security and defence amid the Central America conflict and neglected support for peasant agriculture and agrarian reform.

This work in Honduras built on pilot efforts in the early 1970s when CIIR volunteer Sally O'Neill – who later became CIIR's first volunteer coordinator in Peru in 1976 – worked with Caritas to promote 'home-makers clubs'. Meanwhile, volunteers Hilary Wilson and Lincoln Young, both agricultural specialists, had supported the efforts of the Concordia development coordination agency to promote local awareness of food and nutrition issues through a community radio network supported by three CIIR radio maintenance trainers. Support for community radio was part of CIIR's work in Guatemala at this time.

Popular education and the self-confidence to organise and act

As in Honduras, organisational confidence was also a prime consideration in Ecuador. CIIR, in placing DW agronomists, health promoters and midwives with peasant organisations and federations in the country during the 1980s, sought to build 'popular education' into its support for their integrated agricultural development and rural health promotion programmes.

The importance of popular education – a process enabling disadvantaged people to think and learn for themselves rather than uncritically receive knowledge through traditional teaching methods reflecting the views of the powerful – was shown in one account of how it influenced the approach of a CIIR-recruited audio-visual and communication specialist in her work with partner-supported peasant communities (see quote below). Increased knowledge and self-confidence in their capacity for change were vital for peasant farmers seeking to boost their productivity, following their success in pushing for large landowner estates to be broken up in a land redistribution programme.

WORKING OVERSEAS WITH CIIR

project described it, it will be a 'technical college in the jungle'.

Graduates of the 'technical college' will receive certificates and go on to work in the river and community workshops which are the second and third tiers of the network. It is from these more locally based workshops that much of the mechanical work will be undertaken, leaving the CRAM free to concentrate on more difficult jobs and training.

This new venture opens a new chapter in a story which goes back over ten years, when CIIR placed its first health workers in the region. Health work is flourishing and new projects to advance primary health care in the region are being developed. The move into mechanical services is a further sign that the Aguaruna and Huambisa Council is developing and planning for the future. ●

ZIMBABWE

Education for life

CIIR supports a new approach to education and training related to the needs of the community.

Expenditure on education is now the largest element in Zimbabwe's budget, but in addition to increasing spending one of the government's key aims is to restructure education to make it accessible and relevant to Zimbabwe's people.

The ministry of education's target is to have a primary level institution within no more than 4km from every child in the country. At secondary level the maximum distance will be 10km. Because of the large numbers of young people involved and the wide geographical spread of communities, the building programme will not be complete before the mid-1990s.

Redesigning the syllabus

As well as a severe shortage of schools and facilities in 1980, Zimbabwe also inherited a curriculum which was largely inappropriate to the country's pressing needs. This system was mainly based on the courses found in Britain, often some decades before. History books, for example, were written from the standpoint of Zimbabwe's former

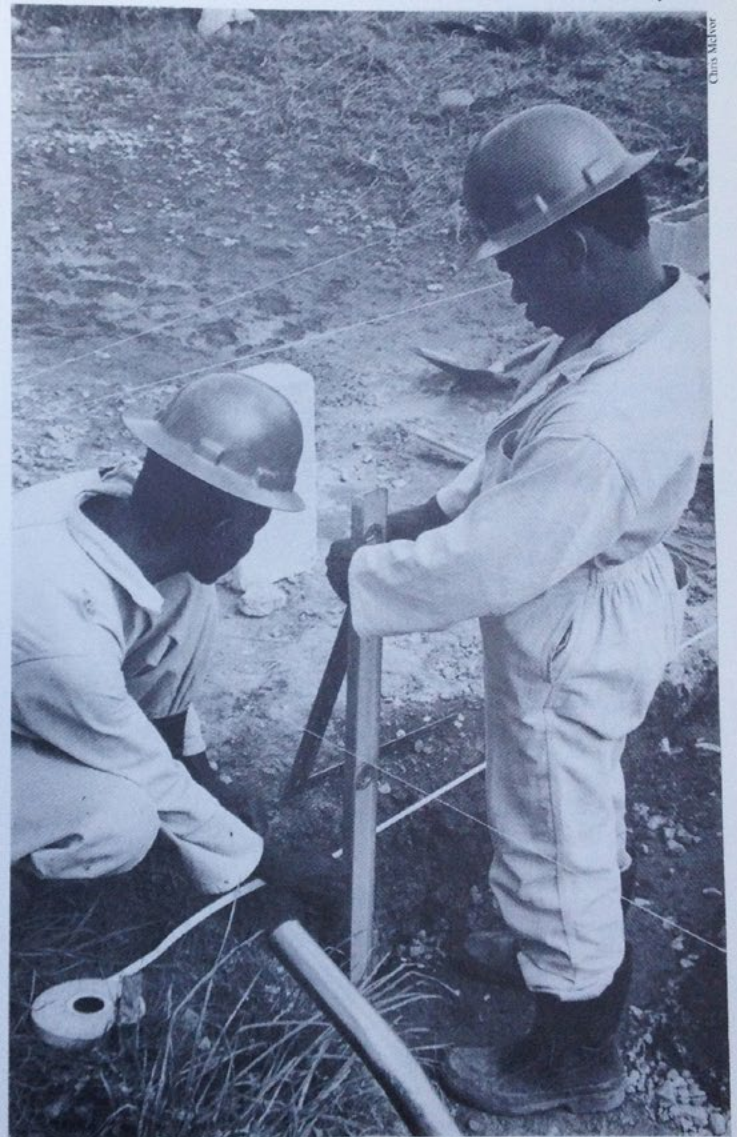
colonisers. The first few years of independence, therefore, saw major attempts at rewriting textbooks and altering course content.

The colonial system also emphasised an academic education which ignored and in some ways looked down on the teaching of practical subjects. Unemployment increased in the rural areas, while students completed exams and learned skills which did not match the requirements of local industries and communities. The situation worried the relevant ministries.

Vocational skills

To remedy this situation Zimbabwe has embarked on an expanded programme of vocational skills training for its younger population. This new thrust is in a direction that CIIR is pleased to support, and this year we have recruited practical skills trainers in building and clothing technology for a training centre near Mutare in the eastern part of the country. CIIR plans to expand its involvement to other technical skills areas over the next year.

At the Mutare centre, run by the



Trainees at the Magumba youth training centre.

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Story in CIIR's 1989 annual review explaining the value of its on-the-ground support for vocational training in Zimbabwe's first decade of independence. CIIR's programme, overseen at the time by then country representative Chris McIvor, would go on to concern itself with other key issues such as the rights of farm-workers. Their situation became a focus of joint work with CIIR's education department in the 1990s.

© Chris McIvor

“One of her early experiments was to scrap the soundtrack of a slide set that offered an analysis of campesino [peasant] problems: instead the campesino ‘audience’ provided their own commentary at the slide viewing, developing and articulating their own analysis... The CIIR worker has found that the process of producing materials and the way they are used are both as important as the materials themselves.”

Commentary in CIIR’s 1982 annual review on the work of a CIIR audio-visual specialist working with a peasant federation in Ecuador’s Tungurahua province

CIIR’s work with partners to adopt popular education techniques in Ecuador and its other Latin America country programmes was driven by strengths within the region itself. Widespread use of the methodology reflected the influence of popular educators such as Paulo Freire of Brazil where it shaped grassroots work for social change. This included the approach of the country’s progressive church and liberation theology movement touched on earlier.

Teacher training for productive inclusion and social wellbeing

The challenge of knowledge acquisition centred on the interests of the many was no less significant in Zimbabwe. But with the post-independence government making education a budget priority and seeking to rebuild and change the country’s education system, opportunities existed for CIIR development workers to work through more formal channels.

One of CIIR’s first initiatives, in partnership with the Zimbabwe Foundation for Education with Production (ZIMFEP), was to recruit teachers to provide vocational skills training in schools receiving refugees returning from Southern Africa. For example, at a school set up in Rusununguko on a former white-owned commercial farm and part of ZIMFEP’s school network, a DW trained students in construction, carpentry, metalwork and agriculture, and sought to do so in ways that boosted recognition of practical labour. The aim was to strengthen both the expertise of the students and the wellbeing of wider community as they contributed labour and learnt on the job.

Before independence less than 10 per cent of Zimbabwe’s school-age children, most of them white, were reaching secondary school, and the academic nature of the colonial education system was ill-suited to the new Zimbabwe’s need to build an economy employing a better skilled majority labour force. Over the 1980s, vocational training became an increasingly important area of CIIR’s work with partners in the country. Its benefits for stronger livelihoods complemented the contribution being made by CIIR’s support for progress on community health and rehabilitation for the disabled.

Urban action: tackling economic ills, supporting women’s welfare and rights

The challenge of forging a positive relationship between economic livelihoods and local health was also sharply illustrated by CIIR’s work in Peru’s port city Chimbote, 500km north along the coast from the capital Lima. Economic crisis in the early 1980s had hit the city hard, in particular its fishmeal and steel industries. It had left most of the local labour force unemployed, exacerbating the problems of people living in overcrowded shanty towns. They already lacked basic sewerage and water services. Illnesses such as dysentery, diarrhoea, typhoid and tuberculosis were rife.

Engaging with the politics of self-help

As well as helping to develop a Peruvian community-based health education team and set up and run a clinic for acutely sick children using inexpensive techniques such as oral rehydration, CIIR’s recruited doctor and sociologist worked with neighbourhood health committees to investigate the causes and patterns of health problems in their communities. The aim of the research was to arm communities with information and evidence to press the state for better services. While self-help was important – CIIR’s professionals helped to train dozens of women from local organisations to promote more widely the work of the health team – it was deliberately linked with community mobilisation and advocacy to try and challenge the underlying problem of state neglect.

CIIR's work had impact outside Peru. Its value was recognised by the UK's Institute of Child Health and the International Broadcasting Trust, which drew on CIIR's advice in producing a documentary about health in Chimbote shown on Channel 4 in 1983. The year after, to sustain momentum, CIIR pulled together the lessons of its work in the publication *Poverty and Ill Health in a Third World City* and investigated in further depth issues causing infant mortality. As in Yemen and elsewhere, the marketing of infant milk products in the context of Chimbote's lack of access to clean water was a major concern. CIIR produced an awareness-raising briefing, *¿Pecho o Biberón?* (Breast or Bottle?).

Tackling neglected issues and promoting support services

With Peruvian women bearing the brunt of coping with ill-health in their communities, as well as social problems arising from poverty and gender inequality further worsened by economic difficulties affecting men, CIIR stepped up work on women's sexual and reproductive health and rights. This was another issue largely neglected by the state. In 1985, CIIR recruited a professional to help Chimbote's [Casa de la Mujer](#) (Women's House) to develop an alternative community health education service for women, which included tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence.

This experience was followed later in the decade by a partnership with the Lima-based women's rights organisation [Mujer y Sociedad](#) (Women and Society). Its integrated health programme, targeting female adolescents and young women in some of the capital's poorest areas, spanned work on domestic and sexual violence, forced prostitution, illegal abortion and family planning. Advice, support and practical assistance from state and non-state bodies was largely unavailable, and CIIR's professionals, building on the lessons of Chimbote, helped the partner develop its clinics and health promoters as well as content for events, information campaigns and radio programmes.

The projects pointed to the growing commitment of CIIR's overseas programme to supporting women's rights and tackling gender inequality, even though project development guidelines at the time couched this priority as one of 'addressing women's needs'. They also reflected CIIR's interest in Peru in tackling community development problems in an urban setting to match its rural-based work.

Similarly, in Ecuador, CIIR had recruited development workers to support community housing and urban planning projects, which promoted low-cost housing to meet the needs and improve the living conditions of poor communities in the bustling coastal city of Guayaquil. Amid debate about a divide between an impoverished countryside and growing urbanisation, projects in the country's highlands sought to address rural-urban migration challenges and create rural-urban opportunities by promoting links between food producers and urban residents.

Work in Yemen and Peru concerned with maternal and child health showed early commitment to female empowerment through the promotion of literacy and community education and awareness. Supporting women's rights and gender equality became a core aim of programming.

© (left): David Tanner



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Rising to the challenges of the new world (dis)order

Promoting democratisation, human rights and people's empowerment in the era of 'globalisation' and poverty reduction (1990-2005)



CiIR

PROGRESS!O

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AS CIIR CARRIED THE IMPETUS of its work into the 1990s, the overall political and economic context it had operated in underwent significant shifts, nationally and internationally, posing new challenges for the organisation's pursuit of change over the decade and into the new millennium.

Politics and economics: birds of a feather flock together?

Following the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall and the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, mainstream Western discourse often proclaimed that the scene was set globally for a post-Cold War 'peace dividend'. In line with the 'end of history' thesis associated with US political scientist Francis Fukuyama, a new era of social and economic progress based on liberal democracy and the market economy and their purported symbiotic relationship supposedly lay ahead. In tandem, the 'new world order' would involve states further removing national barriers to foreign trade and investment and the movement of capital (but not necessarily people) as part of so-called 'globalisation'. Held out reassuringly was the promise, recycling a phrase from the somewhat different policies of the Kennedy era, that a rising economic tide would 'lift all boats'.

Events in Mexico, explored by CIIR as part of its topical engagement on the need for meaningful political reform underpinned by economic development advancing social justice and human rights, revealed the cracks in this new narrative of modernisation (see Box). Its up-beat framing was at odds with the complex realities being dealt with in CIIR's core work on development justice with partners in the global South.

Mexico: a new dawn cracks

The Zapatista uprising in the neglected, largely indigenous state of Chiapas in southern Mexico showed all was not well in the world of elite-driven approaches to globalisation. Coinciding with the country's January 1994 introduction of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the United States and Canada, it was quickly followed by further political turmoil after the March 1994 assassination of presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio. The turn of events contrasted sharply with the Western financial media's rapturous praise hitherto of Mexico's 'progress' in political reform and free-market restructuring of its economy, the latter driven forward on the back of rigged 1988 elections.

CIIR's response

CIIR drew the attention of members to Mexico's underlying crisis of social inequality and corrupt politics by inviting a church human rights speaker from Mexico to speak at its 1994 AGM on behalf of Bishop Samuel Ruiz of Chiapas' San Cristóbal de las Casas diocese. The bishop had been unable to leave the country amid tensions with the government over his analysis of the crisis – published by CIIR as *The Lessons of the Zapatista Uprising* – and his attempts to mediate. Some 67 MPs signed a parliamentary motion on Mexico after the AGM.

In 1995, CIIR organised delegations to Mexico's London embassy calling for a peaceful solution to the crisis and organised with Oxfam London meetings for Mexican electoral reform campaigners. The following year, CIIR published a Comment on *Mexico, Free Market Failure*, which took stock of the country's structural problems, including in the wake of its 1995 'tequila' financial crisis which had plunged the economy into its most difficult period since the debt crisis of the 1980s.

As CIIR found in both its international advocacy work and its overseas programming, transitions to more open political systems were far from straightforward. Even where greater democratic space was being opened or had been won under social pressure, high levels of poverty and inequality persisted as economic policies exacerbated the problems or failed to make adequate progress in tackling them effectively. In response, CIIR renewed its efforts to help partners promote conditions in which social gains might be made.

Responding to the shifts, tackling new priorities

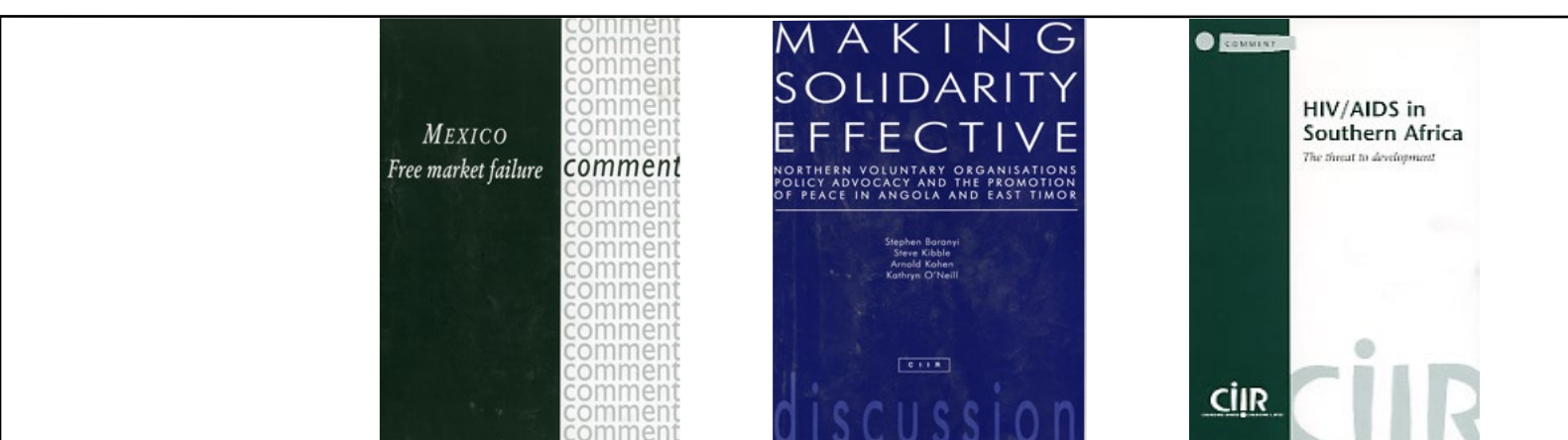
During the 1990s and early 2000s, CIIR's international policy work made democratisation and human rights and international economic justice its two overarching and often inter-related themes. The two themes were also relevant to CIIR's overseas work. Its country programmes, while involved in a much expanded and increasingly diverse range of project



initiatives with partners in different sectors and work areas, grappled overall with how best to tackle the new policy environment affecting DWs' support for partner organisations.

Indeed, the process of political change and economic adjustment was redefining the roles of, and relationship between, governments, social movements, NGOs and grassroots civil society organisations, though its nature and evolution varied across CIIR's focus countries. In Latin America and the Caribbean, CIIR's grassroots work was carried out against a stronger tradition of civil society organisation, while in Africa and the Middle East it took place in the context of new state-building.

As the 1990s advanced, CIIR strengthened its engagement on issues that had already been emerging as a major focus of work or that acquired rising significance and urgency as a result of external developments. CIIR's two departments, for example, made the underlying gender focus of their work more explicit. The move took on topical relevance around the UN's 1995 Beijing summit on women. Meanwhile, CIIR stepped up its targeting the European Union as an increasingly important policy actor and development donor, following the EU's emergence under the 1992 Maastricht Treaty and its pledge to take account of development objectives in all policies affecting developing countries. Work to tackle HIV and AIDS became crucial as the pandemic affected CIIR's on-the-ground work in Southern Africa in particular.



CIIR's policy and programme engagement on environmental issues also began to take stronger shape in the context of the rising 'green' movement and the UN's 1992 Rio and 2002 Rio+10 'earth summits'. Across the board, participation and governance became a key concern, with CIIR, in both its international policy and DW programming, supporting partners to open and exploit greater space for poor people to have their voices heard and 'turn the tide' in their favour.

Pressure for change in the new millennium: from a new government in the UK to the MDGs

As CIIR made its own contributions to alternative policy approaches and bottom-up capacity for change on the ground during this period, pressure was building globally for better development outcomes. The signs included campaigns for an end to economic austerity and Third World debt as well as for trade justice. These were issues that the organisation had helped to put on the international development agenda in the UK, as Chapter 2 noted.

The late 1990s, for example, saw the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) eventually launch the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) initiative for poorer, heavily indebted developing countries, and foundations were laid within the UN for the 2001-15 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In 2003, following developing country opposition to US and EU policies, the WTO global trade talks collapsed in Mexico, just as they had four years earlier amid the street protests of the so-called 'Battle of Seattle'. Such developments intensified debate on how existing policy models could incorporate measures to improve their social performance, or whether they needed radical reform and structural transformation in order to put people at the heart of a more ambitious strategy for development progress.

Such shifts saw a trend within the overall international NGO community to focus on poverty reduction and adopt rights-based approaches to development, both long since features of CIIR's work. In the UK, the 1997 election of a new Labour government, ending the long period of Conservative rule since 1979, led to the creation of the Department for International Development as a ministry in its own right with a mandate to mainstream development aims across government departments. DfID superseded the Overseas Development

Administration (ODA) attached to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and became a leader among official international development donors.

Existence of the UK's new ministerial department, along with continued NGO pressure and encouragement, gave impetus to development as an issue on the new government's agenda. The result, following the UK-led Commission for Africa, was debt, aid and trade and African development gaining prominence during the UK-hosted 2005 G8 summit. CIIR was part of the **Make Poverty History** NGO campaign that urged progress on these key issues at Gleneagles.

Bracketed within the 1989-2005 period were two Gulf Wars between the West and Iraq and the onset of the 'war on terror' in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States. The events posed difficulties for CIIR's work in the Horn of Africa and elsewhere.

New leaders and a changing CIIR

Having celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1990, the advent of the new millennium involved a period of institutional change within CIIR. In 1999, CIIR suffered the loss of its long-serving president, Cardinal Basil Hume OSB, who had been particularly committed to CIIR's contribution to the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. He was replaced as president in the new millennium by the new Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor. In 2001, **Ian Linden** also stepped down as general secretary and was replaced by **Christine Allen**, a former Justice and Peace worker and previously head of public affairs at the UK's National Housing Federation, who now took the title of executive director.

By 2005, CIIR had made moves to merge its international policy and advocacy work with its overseas capacity-building programme, as the end of this chapter describes. Finding greater synergies and the gradual process of integration from the early 2000s stemmed from the impact of a changing NGO and donor environment in the UK and the global North as well as the growing interest of CIIR's Southern partners in strengthening their own advocacy expertise with the organisation's support.

Pressing for change – policy work in action

CIIR's advocacy in the 1990s and the start of the new millennium

DEMOCRATISATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Putting the politics of transition and post-conflict development to the test

From the start of the 1990s, CIIR's education department – renamed the international policy department (IPD) in 1996 to reflect more accurately its involvement in research and advocacy to target and influence decision-makers – stepped up analysis and awareness-raising on the new policy environment.

CIIR's work with partners on democratisation and human rights engaged with the peace and social justice challenges still pending in the global South despite the end of the Cold War, while its work on international economic justice, as well as sustaining its focus on trade and development, dealt with the development and human rights implications for developing countries of foreign direct investment and finance playing an ever stronger role in the world economy. This new emphasis, which resumed in a 'free-market' policy

In the 1990s, general secretary Ian Linden adjusted CIIR's work to focus on the conflict and social justice challenges of a post-Cold War world now undergoing 'globalisation'. In 2001, leadership of the organisation passed to Christine Allen, who sought greater synergies between CIIR's advocacy and overseas programming placing development workers with partners.



environment CIIR's previous interest in the overseas role of UK companies, was encouraged by CIIR's department heads, first Phil Bloomer and then Hilary Coulby.

Brave new world: negotiating change against the odds in the global South

In line with its traditions of the past, CIIR's work on democratisation and human rights frequently involved publishing initiatives or events to draw public attention to some of the major geopolitical and regional conflict issues grabbing the headlines of the day. A leading example early in this period was its work on the first Gulf War and the future of the UN (see Box), which matched its similar awareness-raising on the situation in Mexico described earlier.

Overall, however, the priority in its daily advocacy work was to help Southern partners highlight internationally the impact of national and international policy shifts affecting the prospects in their countries for ending conflict and advancing peace based on social justice. As Third World conflicts affected by Cold War politics gave way to often difficult political transitions from the late 1980s and during the 1990s, CIIR drew attention to the deeper structural challenges at stake. It stressed the need for the international donor community, in particular the EU, to play a supportive role in peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction.

This work also highlighted the rights of refugees and displaced people as countries such as Malawi hosted up to a million Mozambicans in the early 1990s as a result of apartheid. In commenting in *CIIR News* on CIIR's preparations for a mid-1992 international conference, 'Forced Migration and National Sovereignty', general secretary Ian Linden contrasted Southern efforts to cope with the challenge with the growing unwillingness of the UK to take in a relatively tiny number of refugees. With right-wing media carrying headlines about 'bogus asylum-seekers', he voiced fears of a future Fortress Britain based on xenophobic nationalism and hostile to internationalism.

Ruling for peace or ruling for war? From crisis in the Gulf to long-term challenges for the UN

CIIR stressed the problematic implications of shifts in global power and governance when it published *Beyond the Gulf War: The Middle East and the New World Order* in 1991. Edited by John Gittings of *The Guardian* and launched with former Commonwealth secretary-general, Sir Shridath Ramphal, on the first anniversary of Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, the book's contributors questioned the motivations and conduct of the US-led military intervention and whether options for peaceful solutions following UN procedures had been exhausted.

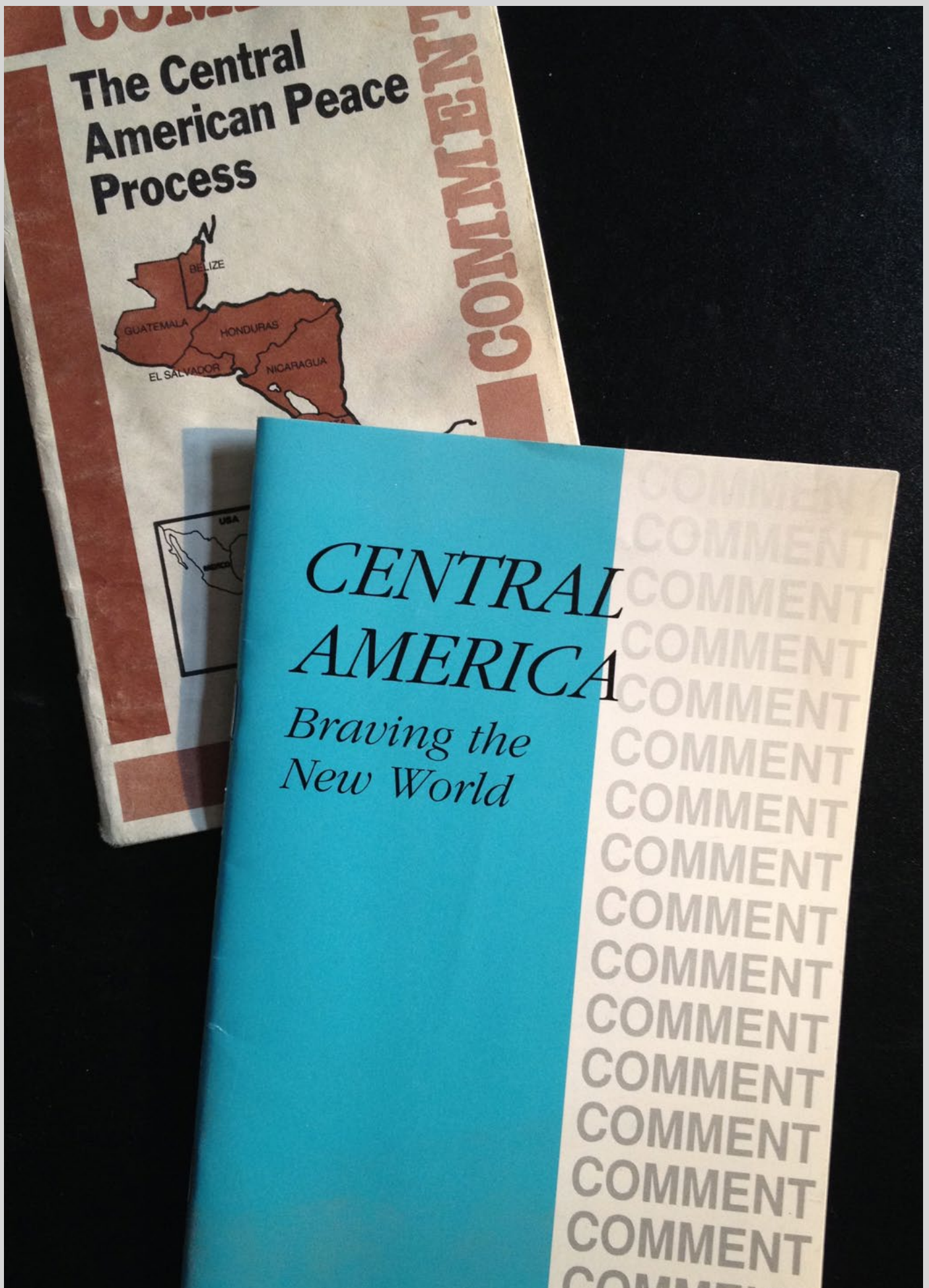
CIIR had direct concerns over the war due to the implications for its development work in newly unified north and south Yemen, which now faced donor aid cuts for its stance on the crisis. Western ally Saudi Arabia inflicted punitive economic dislocation on Yemen by expelling 800,000 Yemeni migrant workers for their country's unwillingness to back US action against the West's hitherto regional ally, Saddam Hussein.

In 1994, CIIR explored the overall prospects and options for global governance promoting peace and development in its book, *Challenges to the United Nations: Building a Safer World*. Edited by Erskine Childers, a former UN senior adviser, it was launched to coincide with the global body's 50th anniversary.

Cold War thaw, peace and justice for all?

As highlighted by CIIR's 1991 'Negotiating Change' conference, addressed by leading speakers such as Noam Chomsky and UCA's Fr Rodolfo Cardenal SJ, partners in countries of existing CIIR concern faced complex peace and justice challenges as they pressed for change at the start of the new decade. Some political transitions were still pending or caught in a violent cycle of repression and resistance (East Timor and South Africa); others remained fraught with the acute problems of 'low intensity conflict' as supposed political openings, including elections, were accompanied by new forms of continued military control and repression and a failure to tackle impunity (Philippines and Guatemala).





Meanwhile, cases where popular political movements had been in office (Nicaragua) or turned military strength into high-level political bargaining power (El Salvador) raised the question of whether the democratic space opened could be sustained in order to address the structural social justice issues lying at the root of conflicts.

Managua's Sandinista government, having retained power in the first post-revolutionary democratic elections in 1984, lost the 1990 contest amid public fatigue with the US-fuelled conflict and handed over office to a centre-right administration with unclear intentions. The transition would prove controversial as Sandinista leaders kept control of public assets, and how civil society should interact with the FSLN became an issue of debate over the years, not least over future FSLN administrations' position on women's rights. In El Salvador, the UN-brokered Chapultepec peace accords of 1992 paved the way for regularly held elections during the decade, which were won by the conservative Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) party. ARENA, rebranding itself to shed its past association with death squads and present a modernised civilian image, promised a new period of business-led peace and prosperity.

As the 1990s unfolded, CIIR played a productive role in supporting the promotion and achievement of change in difficult circumstances, two cases being South Africa's transition from apartheid and East Timor's successful pressure for a transition to independence.

Providing crucial support for the end of apartheid and responding to political shifts in Southern Africa

Though Nelson Mandela's 1990 release and the unbanning of the African National Congress (ANC) signalled the advent of change in South Africa, continued international pressure was vital to see through the fraught Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) talks ending white rule. As apartheid entered its terminal phase under the new FW de Klerk regime, violence and repression escalated, producing a series of crises. They included the 1992 Boipatong massacre, in which supporters of the ANC-rival Inkatha Freedom Party led by Chief Buthelezi killed 45 residents of the township, and then the 1993 assassination of popular leader Chris Hani.

CIIR, South Africa's 1994 elections and beyond: keeping change on track through communication

At the request of South African partners, CIIR seconded staff member Maggie Paterson to take up a crucial communications role with the international Ecumenical Monitoring Programme of South Africa ([EMPSA](#)). EMPSA had been set up by church leaders to monitor state repression, so-called 'informal violence' and the troubled negotiation process that eventually led to the 1994 elections bringing the ANC to power. It played an indispensable role in the transition.

Some 500 EMPSA monitors from 32 countries worked in small teams to promote and support peace in conflict areas and 289 observers were deployed during the elections themselves. EMPSA, with its on-the-ground presence and national and international communication work keeping all interested parties accurately informed and committed to change, was crucial in helping to avert the serious threat of the elections being violently derailed.

CIIR's immediate critical support for the transition was also matched by its efforts to explore the future challenges of majority rule. It produced publications on reform of South Africa's police, the implications of the ANC moving from a liberation movement to the party of government, and the competing demands of national reconciliation and wealth redistribution. CIIR drew on its regional experience to explore the latter topic with 1995 publication of *South Africa: Lessons from Zimbabwe*.

Two years into the first ANC government, CIIR took stock of the future challenges and opportunities for South African NGOs in the new political climate by publishing a CIIR 'circle' talk in London by Kumi Naidoo, then director of the country's national NGO coalition, [SANGOCO](#). Its own assessment of the relationship, 'South African NGOs: Whose Agents?', appeared in *African Topics* magazine. CIIR published another stock-take in 1997, *Making the Transition: Civil Groups in South Africa before and after Apartheid*.

From Mozambique to ongoing conflict in Angola: tackling apartheid's regional legacy

CIIR also showed commitment to addressing apartheid's regional legacy. In 1994 CIIR observed Mozambique's first multi-party elections as part of an EU team supervised by the UN and also promoted a briefing paper by Alex Vines, *No Democracy without Money*. It stressed the need for international donors to step up aid to meet the country's major reconstruction needs after the punishing damage inflicted by apartheid South Africa.

A key priority for CIIR, however, following its initial 1991 Comment on the country, was to help mobilise international action on the protracted difficulties of the Angolan peace process. Reprinted several times, its 1993 briefing, *One Hand Tied: Angola and the UN*, drew attention to the problems of the UN peace-keeping mission in demobilising troops, particularly those of UNITA which had resumed fighting with the MPLA government after the rebel movement's defeat in the 1992 presidential election. The return to war caused the devastating loss of a further 120,000 lives.

Though the two parties restarted talks and signed the 1994 Lusaka Protocol upholding the terms of 1991 peace accords, major problems with UNITA compliance persisted. CIIR worked hard to play its part in keeping the fragile situation in Angola on the international agenda during the second half of the decade. It urged the UK government to push for EU-wide implementation of UN Security Council sanctions to force UNITA rebels to comply with the Lusaka peace deal, working as closely as possible with like-minded concerned organisations. CIIR's work in partnership helped generate momentum for the creation of a British Angola Forum (BAF) of which it was an active member.

In 1997, CIIR organised with Christian Aid and Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA) a seminar to bring EU policy-makers, Angolan partners and UK and international NGOs together in dialogue on the still pending challenge of lasting peace. Both the UK and the EU would reaffirm their commitment to the UN embargo aimed at preventing the supply of arms. Yet Angola's situation remained precarious, as analysed in Alex Vines' 1998 briefing for CIIR, *Peace Postponed*, and CIIR worked with partners in a Southern Africa inter-agency group to encourage UK action for peace in meetings with the FCO.

CIIR also urged European policy-makers, donors and NGO and civil society groups to step up support for grassroots organisations in Angola involved in peace, development and human rights. To this end, it worked closely with Angolan organisations such as the Mosaiko Cultural Centre and Action for Rural and Environmental Development (ADRA).

As shown by the initiatives described above, a major strength of CIIR's advocacy in Southern Africa – as elsewhere – was its commitment to supporting wider joint initiatives and pursuing its aims through alliances, coalitions and networks. This approach helped to galvanise wider action and impact, though the shifts to national liberation movements wielding power posed new challenges for CIIR, internally and externally, as one former staff member reflects (see Box).

STEVE KIBBLE

**Southern Africa:
political change,
paradoxes of work**

Although we worked closely with the liberation movements, especially the ANC, we were never a classic solidarity movement like the Anti-Apartheid Movement, with which we often collaborated. Though 1994 was a highpoint in celebrating 'success' (a rare occurrence in the oppressive conditions that had afflicted Southern Africa), it later became apparent that movements in the region that had benefited from international solidarity, on attaining power, were rather more interested in attracting capital, some of it used for less than developmental purposes. Political change also had practical implications for CIIR. Funding from secular and church-linked European NGOs began to dry up when the more mainstream development organisations felt able to meet the liberation movements themselves, rather than through CIIR.

High level threats, legacy of a system

South Africa's 1994 general elections, in securing majority rule, heralded a national and regional sea change. But even then, the difficulties of overcoming the legacy of apartheid, with all the fears it had generated, were apparent. Indeed, as the violent threats of the far right, marked by bomb attacks in Johannesburg, threatened to derail the polls, there were also lighter but no less significant examples of the system's continued impact as voting took place locally.

In taking part in observing South Africa's 1994 election, for instance, I was sent to the Karoo region and worked with mostly Flemish co-workers, who had the advantage of understanding Afrikaans. At one remote polling station in Bethesda in the Little Karoo no one had voted for hours, which enabled the electoral officials and party observers to stage an impromptu game of cricket which they rather reluctantly abandoned to attend to us.

At another station, a small 'coloured' (as the apartheid system classified her ethnicity) farm servant was fearfully waiting to vote. As she consented to the observers watching her vote, she ran her finger for ages up and down the long ballot paper with the photos, names and symbols of leaders and parties.



It dawned on us that she had been told to vote for de Klerk of the erstwhile ruling National Party, who would normally have been at the bottom of the ballot paper. That was until Chief Buthelezi of Inkatha, having initially boycotted the elections, joined in at the last minute and confused matters by taking this slot on the paper. In the end she decided she had the 'right' white man. Even the National Party observer made a silent "No" by shaking his head as she picked the far-right ex-General Constand Viljoen of the Vryheid (Freedom) Front.

Working in coalition, speaking with 'opponents'

CIIR's advocacy on Southern Africa threw up interesting paradoxes itself. One arose from the organisation's name – being Catholic-rooted but not a structural part of the church, let alone a praise-singer for the Vatican; international relations being those conducted by people rather than diplomats. As a seasoned NGO worker opined, after Voltaire: "Hmm, CIIR – a bit like the Holy Roman Empire – neither holy nor Roman, and certainly not an empire."

Another paradox was that in lobbying, research, publishing and election observation work, CIIR often worked more closely with other organisations than colleagues within the institute, with the exception of the three of us in the Southern Africa team at the time. Working with outsiders was advantageous in that we were often in at the beginning of coalitions such as EMPISA, the Southern Africa Coalition and the British Angola Forum. In the new millennium, CIIR, now called Progressio, went on to play an important role in the Zimbabwe Europe Network (ZEN) and the Ecumenical Zimbabwe Network. It also partnered with Somaliland Focus in international missions to observe elections there [see Chapters 4 and 5].

Another complex trait, occasionally prompting strong internal debate, was our preparedness to engage with actors holding different views and positions. Our argument was that "you don't talk only to your friends and those who agree with you if you want to change things", hence our frequent adoption of a soft diplomacy approach. So it was that, during the apartheid years, we lobbied a then pro-Buthelezi Southern Africa desk at the FCO and then, as part of the British Angola Forum, held discussions with BP in the later 1990s on the need for ethical company practice in the country.

We also kept in constant dialogue with EU bodies such as the European Commission on the situation in Zimbabwe, even though our work through ZEN, which called for Zimbabwean civil society voices to be supported, was dismissed to my face on one occasion by an EU diplomat as "maximalist and mechanistic", to the embarrassment of Zimbabwean colleagues witnessing the exchange. We took part in a ZEN meeting in the European Parliament chaired by an MEP from the UK Independence Party as a result of the parliament's system of political rotation. These are just a few examples of the open approach taken.

By-products and benefits

One unintended by-product of our work, as was often the case with people who got involved in supporting CIIR, was the possible influence it had on them as they took up positions elsewhere. One volunteer from the early 1990s, for example, went on to work for other UK development NGOs and later became deputy head of the UK mission in Zimbabwe, ambassador to Cuba and an official adviser to the government on relations with Africa.

Two things that struck me during my early days with CIIR were its international thematic conferences, which attracted local partners and international luminaries from the global South, and the Comment series of briefings, which set out an institutional position on issues. Coming from Leeds, where the only famous people I had met were Ralph Miliband and Denis Healey, it was an eye-opener to be a minder for figures such as Albie Sachs and Noam Chomsky, accompanying them for media interviews. CIIR enjoyed a strong reputation, so when it published Comments, under the name of the institute rather than the individual author, they carried weight.

Through my research trips I made good friendships, and the many people that put me up saved CIIR and Progressio thousands of pounds (trillions of dollars in Zimbabwe by 2009) in accommodation costs: thanks to them all. But whatever the memories of CIIR and Progressio and its ups and downs, one has to trust, following the organisation's closure, that its values and strengths will be maintained by others in the arenas it worked in.



Steve Kibble worked for CIIR and Progressio from 1990 to 2014, having joined the organisation from Amnesty International. He was a Southern Africa desk officer and then policy and advocacy coordinator for Africa, the Middle East and Asia. He helped to organise and took part in several election observer missions in CIIR/Progressio focus countries and chaired ZEN.

Southern Africa futures: positive changes, worrying challenges

The 1994 end of apartheid in South Africa promised an era of regional **peace and prosperity**. Yet a decade on, as CIIR discussed in reports based on a 2003 regional symposium held in Namibia with regional partners and experts – *Futures for Southern Africa* and *What Happened to the post-Apartheid Moment?* – Southern Africa faced growing problems and challenges. They ranged from the persistence of the structural inequalities in South Africa and the crushing costs of the regional HIV and AIDS pandemic to the political, social and economic crisis in Zimbabwe, which became CIIR's main regional advocacy concern in the 2000s.

Stepping up action on the crisis in Zimbabwe

Alongside its in-country capacity-strengthening work (see later section below), CIIR monitored the breakdown of confidence in Zimbabwe's state institutions. In turn, it worked with NGO and church partners to promote international action and diplomacy calling for an end to political violence and intimidation and the opening of political space. They included the Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition formed in 2001 involving scores of different civil society and church-linked organisations.

Up until the new millennium, Zimbabwe's churches had been somewhat disunited and largely silent on the deterioration of the country's situation, despite the courage of some clerics such as Archbishop Pius Ncube of Bulawayo in speaking out. In 2003, however, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) released its strongest statement yet condemning repression and the collapse of the rule of law, and the Protestant Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe also called for political dialogue and an end to human rights abuses. International church solidarity with Zimbabwe also grew in the face of the crisis. CIIR welcomed the May 2003 call from the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, for prayers for peace and justice in the country.

Supporting the transition to multi-party rule in Malawi

For all the challenges of Angola and the emerging crisis in Zimbabwe, however, the first half of the 1990s, amid the sense of significant change taking shape in Southern Africa, did bring new opportunities for CIIR's regional advocacy. Indeed, CIIR played a part in supporting Malawi's 1994 transition from president-for-life Hastings Banda's authoritarian regime to multi-party rule. A 1992 Malawi Catholic Bishops' Conference statement, published by CIIR in its Church in the World series, provided encouragement for a growing campaign for a referendum on introducing multi-party rule, in line with UN recommendations for a free and fair contest.

CIIR, as part of a Council of Churches of Britain and Ireland network, hosted a conference in 1993 with speakers from the Public Affairs Committee, the Malawian coalition campaigning for a referendum. Coinciding with the eventual holding of the contest, CIIR published a Comment, *Malawi: A Moment of Truth*, to raise awareness of the country's struggle for democracy. This work, and CIIR's continued dialogue with partners in the country, generated the relationships and trust that aided the opening of a CIIR country capacity-strengthening programme in the new millennium (see Chapter 4).



CIIR and the prize of East Timor's independence

The value of CIIR's country solidarity commitment to positive political change amid continued repressive violence was impressively demonstrated in the case of East Timor. After more than 20 years of CIIR support for [international pressure](#) on Indonesia and Western powers, agreement was reached to hold a UN referendum on the territory's future in 1999. The breakthrough was due to various external factors, not least President Suharto's 1998 resignation in the aftermath of the political and economic turmoil of Asia's financial crisis, which had hit Indonesia. Still, CIIR had made its own contribution to the eventual success of Timorese calls for a referendum.

Applying joint pressure, building a just diplomatic case

As well as ongoing production and dissemination of Timor Link, CIIR had continued during the 1990s to coordinate international church support for Timorese lobbying at the UN on human rights and the need for a diplomatic solution. It did so through the Christian Consultation on East Timor, whose annual meetings planned joint advocacy. To deal with the EU's weak support for Portugal's diplomacy on behalf of the Timorese, for example,

38 Catholic and Protestant organisations from Europe, North America and Asia developed a common position in 1996 urging effective EU and UN action.

In September that year, CIIR launched its second Comment of the decade on the country, *East Timor: The Continuing Betrayal*. It called for restrictions on arms sales and diplomatic measures against Indonesia, pressure for the reduction and withdrawal of Indonesian troops, the release of political prisoners, on-site human rights monitoring by the UN, effective aid for Timorese civil society and church organisations, and active support for inter-governmental and intra-Timorese talks within the UN.

The recommendations were part of a joint strategy CIIR agreed with sister agencies now involved in a British Coalition on East Timor. In the case of the UK, CIIR vigorously opposed British arms sales to Indonesia. It voiced strong disappointment at the new Labour government's refusal, following its election in 1997, to cancel delivery of aircraft and grant export licences for other military equipment, despite its stated commitment to an 'ethical foreign policy'.

Turning points

Publication of CIIR's Comment coincided with award of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize to exiled Timorese resistance leader, José Ramos-Horta, and Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo, both longstanding CIIR partners who valued the organisation's work and loyal commitment (see quote). The joint award added significant impetus to international pressure for progress in the UN-sponsored talks between Portugal, Australia and Indonesia. Journalists reporting on the peace prize made use of the Comment's analysis and recommendations, with Channel Four News and the BBC World Service calling on CIIR for expert comment.

“CIIR is one of the few organisations whose work on East Timor goes back to 1976. The first background briefing on East Timor was produced by CIIR, and we made use of it over the years. The organisation has been very serious and consistent in its work on East Timor.”

José Ramos-Horta, representative of the East Timorese resistance in exile, awarded the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize with Timorese Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo

In 1995, CIIR, coinciding with an International Court of Justice ruling on Portugal's contestation of Australia's treaty with Indonesia on Timor Sea oil reserves, had issued a major study, *International Law and the Question of East Timor*, which challenged the overall legality of Indonesia's continued occupation. The book, produced in partnership with an international platform of jurists and also launched in Australia, made an effective evidential case for change.

By now, Western audiences were increasingly aware of the continued repression and injustices in East Timor and the need for their governments to reverse their previous backing or convenient diplomatic acceptance of Indonesia's annexation of the territory.

A key turning point had been international revulsion at the November 1991 massacre of 200 people in the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili, the capital. The bloody events were captured in British cameraman Christopher Wenner's (alias Max Stahl's) footage for the Yorkshire Television *First Tuesday* documentary, 'Cold Blood'. John Pilger and David Munro's 1994 documentary, *Death of a Nation*, further reinforced UK and Western audience awareness of the continued injustices. In the aftermath of the massacre, CIIR petitioned the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation in 1994 on behalf of mothers who still had no information on the whereabouts of their children who had 'disappeared' during the incident.

In 1997, CIIR helped to keep up the pressure on the UK by coordinating meetings and high-profile British and international media coverage for José Ramos-Horta during his visit to the country for talks with the new Labour government.

From the violence of change to helping to build a new nation

When the referendum on East Timor's status was finally held in 1999, the consultation saw three quarters of the population vote for independence. Disturbingly, it took the intervention of international security forces to ensure Jakarta's acceptance of UN hand-over. Indonesian army-backed militias had violently attempted to thwart the outcome of the vote, killing hundreds and setting ablaze the house of Bishop Belo. A pre-referendum CIIR delegation had expressed concern to the UN's East Timor mission about the risks of



post-ballot violence, as did a follow-up CIIR mission to observe the vote itself. Led by Tony Lloyd MP, the delegation, which included fellow British parliamentarian Lord Frank Judd and Rev Ngenon Zacharias Nakhamela of Namibia, briefed British police acting as UN civilian police in the territory.

Despite the turmoil, the referendum result paved the way for East Timor's first free elections in 2001 – and for CIIR to sustain its support for the country through its subsequent opening of a new overseas programme. It was not long before development workers were placed with local partners to support the process of nation-building.

A priority for CIIR's work in East Timor with the onset of the new millennium was for women's rights to be recognised and promoted in the new government's policies and the political process. CIIR had organised an all-women delegation to observe preparations for the 2001 vote, and supported a campaign for a 30 per cent female representation quota to be introduced. Though its specific demand for a quota did not prosper, the initiative generated enough momentum for a quarter of East Timor's elected parliamentarians to be women.

CATHERINE SCOTT

From East Timor to Timor-Leste: enduring solidarity and winning a lost cause

Inspired by a mesmerising AGM address by Filipino Catholic activist Ed de la Torre in 1986, I joined CIIR as a member before the fall of the Berlin Wall and came to learn about the occupied territory that would eventually win independence and become Timor-Leste. I'd never heard of the place until *East Timor: A Christian Reflection* plopped onto my doormat the following year. Little did I know that, over the next five years, not only would I become a CIIR staff member, but would lead its work on this beleaguered half-island the other side of the world.

At that time, the work of CIIR's 'Education Department' was classified as education and information-sharing rather than solidarity. We were still working in an environment where NGO advocacy in this 'ideological phase' was either 'political' (siding with the left) or 'independent' – striving for neutrality. We held ourselves distinct from 'solidarity groups' while exchanging information and analysis with them.

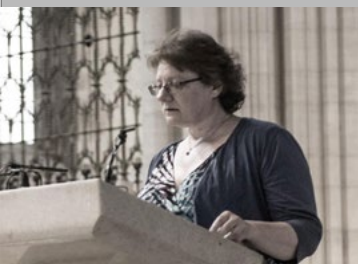
Post-1989, the situation changed and I was more than comfortable, from the perspective of Catholic Social Teaching and its influence on CIIR's work, with calling our work 'solidarity'. Our information sources, particularly at the beginning and pre-internet, were from the Church in Timor-Leste after all. We faithfully interpreted and explained the words and actions of Bishop Costa da Lopez and Bishop Belo as they defended the innocent against overwhelming odds. As another Church ally, Bishop Soma of Japan explained at a 1993 solidarity mass in the Philippines: "God is raising people up everywhere to walk beside the Timorese."

Struggles within the struggle

Following the 1991 Santa Cruz massacre, East Timor's struggle became better known, though we were still criticised even by CIIR's own board for raising supposedly unrealistic hopes among the Timorese. This missed the point. They were Timorese hopes, not ours, and they defended them – we just publicised them and made sure governments internationally understood. Against all odds, they won – at not inconsiderable cost in lives and infrastructure.

CIIR was among the first in the UK and internationally to advocate self-determination for East Timor, and later on the struggle within the struggle – the voice of East Timorese women aspiring to be an equal partner in the new independent nation. There was success with both. Launching a new CIIR development worker programme there at the beginning of the 21st century felt like a natural progression and though our resources were miniscule in comparison with the army of NGOs which turned up then, our involvement was symbolic as well as constructive – sharing skills that would last in the longer term after the majority of international organisations moved on again a few years later.

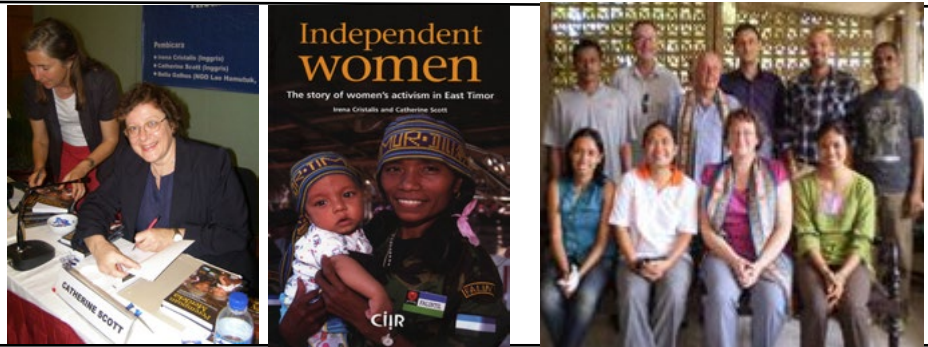
As with many of the liberation struggles supported by CIIR in the 1980s and 1990s, we completed our task by making a valuable practical contribution to the development of newly independent nations. I am sure the organisation will be remembered above all for such enduring solidarity. Solidarity, in the words of Pope John Paul II, "is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good, that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual because we are all really responsible for all".



Catherine Scott worked at CIIR and Progressio from 1988 to 2011. She worked as an administrative assistant, policy officer and joint programme manager for Asia, and later served as regional manager for Africa, Middle East and Asia. After a period freelancing, she worked with Down to Earth Indonesia and now works with the Catholic missionary organisation, *Missio*, managing 1,600 volunteers.



CIIR staff member Catherine Scott signing copies of a book she would co-author on the role of Timorese women in the struggle for national independence. She is pictured (front right) with colleagues and partners in the country.



Whatever the challenges ahead, for those in CIIR long involved in solidarity with the struggle of the Timorese, the **steps to Timor-Leste's independence** had been a victory for perseverance against the odds (see Box above). CIIR analysed the new moment in its 2001 Comment, *Transition to Statehood*.

From hopes of change to work on prolonged crisis in Haiti

At this time CIIR also stepped up work on other conflict countries beyond its dominant focus of the late 1980s on Central America and Southern Africa and East Timor and the Philippines in Asia. One of the countries was Haiti, which had already become a focus of advocacy concern following the 1986 popular overthrow of the Duvaliers' dynastic rule since 1957.

From the rise and fall of Aristide to 1994 US intervention

In late 1988, CIIR published a Comment on Haiti and organised a mission to the country led by Fr Michael Campbell Johnston SJ, concerned that continued military repression and intervention were thwarting people's hopes for free elections and a wider process of social change. The visit followed a massacre only a few months before at the St Jean Bosco church in the capital Port-au-Prince. Members of the pro-Duvalier *tontons macoutes* paramilitary group had killed and wounded scores of people attending a service addressed by pro-poor Salesian priest, Fr Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Claudette Werleigh, a former Caritas Haiti director and future prime minister, addressed CIIR's 1989 AGM on the challenges of change in Haiti.

CIIR's mixture of hope and concern for the country was further kindled when Aristide, an advocate of liberation theology, became Haiti's first democratically elected president in December 1990 – he took part in a round of CIIR-organised briefing meetings on Haiti's prospects during a July 1991 visit to London – only to be overthrown in a September 1991 military coup. The putsch reportedly involved figures from the right-wing paramilitary group FRAPH supported by the CIA. CIIR organised joint UK development agency meetings to lobby the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and released a joint statement condemning the coup.

Eventual US military intervention under the new administration of President Bill Clinton in October 1994, amid rising human rights violations and political instability under the coup regime with its links to the drugs trade, restored the exiled Aristide to power. But this was only for the little over one-year remainder of Aristide's existing term, not the time his presidency had been deprived of. Later in the decade, CIIR joined an **international campaign** for the United States to release documents it had seized from Haiti's military rulers at the time of Washington's intervention, so as to support prosecution of the individuals responsible for human rights violations during the coup regime.

Aid conditions and economic 'reform': compounding a country's woes

Haiti's governments in the 1990s were required to restructure the economy as a condition of foreign aid, with trade liberalisation exposing vulnerable food producers to heavily subsidised international competition they could not withstand. The economic damage, starkly illustrated by the impact of increased imports on local rice production, compounded the country's woes. A rapid succession of prime ministers led to uncertainty and a lack of continuity.

CIIR, building on close links forged with civil society, human rights and alternative media partners, published a Comment in 1996, *Building Democracy*. It stressed the need for international donors to step up support for Haiti based on different policies and greater backing for civil society's role in state-building and holding the government to account. In turn, in 1997, CIIR worked closely with partners such as the Haitian Platform for the

Promotion of Alternative Development (**PAPDA**) to promote pro-poor economic policy recommendations based on local research. This advocacy included organising partner visits to Brussels, while a London seminar with PAPDA speakers led to joint publication of *Haiti: Responses and Alternatives to Structural Adjustment*. A French translation was produced to aid PAPDA's own in-country advocacy.

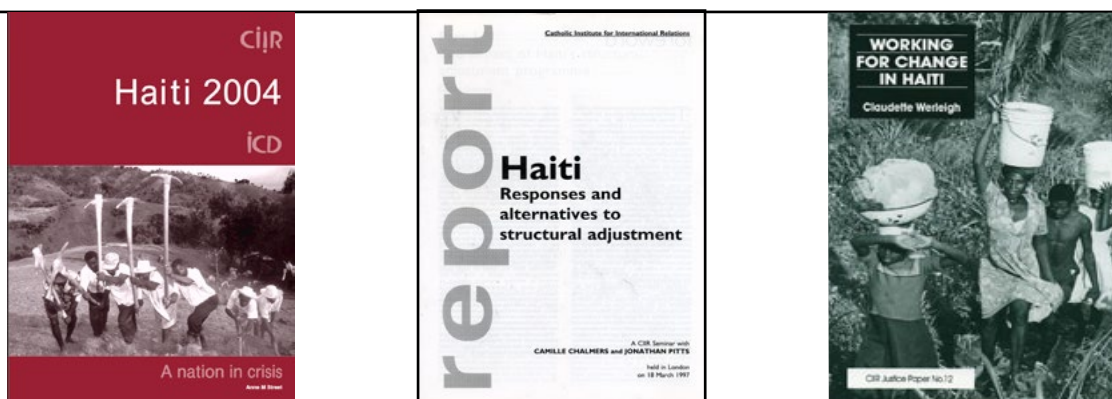
At this time, CIIR also set up a British inter-agency group in Haiti and helped it to commission a study in 1998 to analyse the nature and impact of EU policies on Haiti. The EU was Haiti's third largest donor, yet knowledge of its role was relatively low. Information and awareness were needed if the inter-agency group was to lobby the regional grouping for greater, more appropriate support.

A new political impasse in 2004

Aristide, following a landslide election victory boycotted by opposition forces in late 2000, was returned as president at the start of the next year. Aristide supporters endured renewed right-wing paramilitary attacks, however, and his Lavalas government faced an international aid freeze in the context of disputed earlier legislative and local election results and the hostility of new US President George W Bush.

To meet donor conditions for support, Haiti was required to pay 'odious' foreign debts incurred by the Duvaliers, with 2003 payments taking away from the Aristide government's efforts to strengthen social and political reforms and increase investment in social programmes. One reform that did take place was the disbanding of the army but the Haitian police force, in the absence of adequate funding from an aid-dependent government, was ill-equipped to guarantee public security effectively. The government similarly struggled to curb Haiti's legacy and ongoing problems of corruption.

With no let-up in the political impasse, and as a deteriorating socio-economic situation took its toll on the population, the government faced mounting unrest and intransigent political opposition. It was fuelled by a business- and media-led campaign but also joined by former Aristide supporters within civil society and the progressive political class who had become critical of development progress under Aristide's presidency, notwithstanding his traditional appeal among the urban and particularly rural poor. Amid allegations of rising repression by the government and its supporters and a climate of political polarisation, Aristide faced US pressure to resign and was again deposed and flown to exile in February 2004. His ouster followed the decisive military intervention of ex-army and former FRAPH paramilitaries. A UN peace-keeping force was dispatched to the country.



Assessing the aftermath, urging a different future

In response to the events, CIIR published *Haiti 2004: A Nation in Crisis*. It analysed the fraught complexities of Haiti's political and economic situation in the context of its historical struggle for post-slavery independence and future self-determination, with social justice affected by the damaging interplay of local elite interests and foreign intervention.

As well as highlighting the problem of recent local politics relying on force rather than dialogue and negotiation, the briefing urged international donors to resume aid and ensure it was centred on local development benefiting the poor. This meant abandoning inappropriate trade liberalisation and economic adjustment policies and prioritising investment in historically neglected rural areas. It meant moving away from the promotion of low-tax and low-wage multinational assembly-for-export plants in free trade zones.

With Haiti highly reliant on external support, the briefing launched another push by CIIR and others to urge international donors not only to increase aid but also address the problems associated with their considerable policy leverage. Indeed, in the absence of

stable government and properly functioning public institutions, the preponderant influence of donors raised major questions on the democratic accountability of aid and its responsiveness to the country's humanitarian and long-term development needs. CIIR urged donor commitment to strengthen both state and civil society as a prerequisite for overcoming Haiti's governance crisis. Such a process needed to be locally led rather than driven and supervised by outside forces.

In London, CIIR, matching the briefing's stock take of Haiti's acute problems of rural poverty, environmental degradation and prevalence of HIV and AIDS, organised a photo exhibition to highlight the tough realities of life affecting people in one of the poorest countries in the world.

Conflict in Colombia: separating image from reality on democracy and human rights

In the early 1990s Colombia became another new country priority for CIIR's advocacy on democratisation and human rights in Latin America. As conveyed by its first Comment on Colombia published in 1992, *Image and Reality*, CIIR challenged standard portrayals of the country as a liberal democracy haplessly trapped between guerrilla violence and that of the drugs trade.

Through conferences, reports and media work, CIIR brought to the fore the underlying causes of conflict and human rights violations, rooted in elite systems of social, economic and political exclusion. It worked with partners such as Colombia's Jesuit think tank **CINEP**, the Latin American Institute for Alternative Society and Laws (**ILSA**) and the Colombian Commission of Jurists (**CCJ**) to raise awareness in the UK and the EU on the limitations and possible opportunities of political reforms and peace plans for ending the conflict and human rights abuses.

"I cannot tell you how important the advocacy work you have been doing on Colombia from the UK has been in advancing our human rights work at an international level in these very difficult times."

Member of the Colombian Commission of Jurists, 1999

Shedding international light on a hidden crisis

This work became increasingly important as successive governments in the 1990s, in seeking increased foreign investment to boost economic restructuring, projected Colombia as a changing country following 1991 constitutional reforms. In 1993, for example, reformist President César Gaviria signed an investment treaty with the UK to provide a 'stable and certain' policy environment for companies such as British Petroleum (BP), which had taken a stake in the Cusiana and Cupiagua oil fields. This particular investment would later attract human rights controversy (see later section). CIIR, to mark Gaviria's official visit to London, released a media-covered briefing, *Colombia's Hidden Human Rights Crisis*.

CIIR kept up the pressure as new President Ernesto Samper replaced Gaviria in 1994. To coincide with the presidential elections, CIIR published *Facing the Awkward Facts: Human Rights and Democracy in Colombia* and went on to help organise a major conference on the country's critical human rights situation at the European Parliament in February 1995.

The conference, the culmination of an international Human Rights Now campaign, attracted over 250 participants and enabled representatives of Colombia's human rights movement and victims of abuses to engage with Colombian government officials and international human rights experts. Among the participants was ILSA's human rights coordinator, Amanda Romero Medina, for whom CIIR helped to organise a follow-up speaker tour of England and Wales. During her stay, she met with MPs, the FCO and human rights and development organisations.



Top: leader addressing meeting in community living alongside the Calima river in Colombia's Valle de Cauca department.

Bottom: President César Gaviria (right) mingles with Colombian Afro-American representatives at a 1992 announcement of promised constitutional changes protecting the rights of the country's black communities.

© Jon Barnes



Backing human rights defenders

CIIR's support for partner lobbying visits to the UK and Europe and its organisation of delegations to Colombia – often coordinated with the [ABC](#) group of British agencies working for peace and human rights in Colombia and the Brussels-based International Office for Human Rights Action on Colombia ([OIDHACO](#)) – were strongly valued by CIIR's Colombian counterparts (see quote above). The work not only drew policy-makers' attention to the structural causes of Colombia's human rights problems. It also crucially aimed to defend human rights workers against violations by the state's armed forces and right-wing paramilitary groups which the Colombian government was unable or unwilling to curb.

In 1999, for example, CIIR successfully lobbied the UK government to urge UN action to protect Colombian human rights defenders. Within the UN, CIIR supported Colombian partner pressure for more effective monitoring of the human rights crisis, both in Geneva and in Colombia itself following the 1997 establishment of a UN High Commissioner for Human Rights office in Bogotá, the capital.

This work often achieved small yet highly significant gains at political and grassroots levels. In 1996, CIIR, in collaboration with Colombian and European partners, forced the resignation of Colombia's ambassador to the EU because of his alleged links with paramilitary repression of peasant families during a land eviction. Pressure led the Colombian government to resettle the victims and grant them land elsewhere in the country.

Defending people's land, livelihoods and environment on the Pacific coast

As in other countries (see Box), land rights and the role of resource extraction in fuelling conflict and social injustice became a concern in CIIR's advocacy on Colombia. CIIR worked with church and civil society partners defending indigenous and Afro-American communities on Colombia's historically neglected yet ecologically-rich Pacific coast region. They faced the threat of unregulated mining and forestry and official plans for large-scale economic development and infrastructure projects. Colombian leaders had long harboured visions of turning the region into a platform for trade with Asia and the Pacific Rim, with mega-development initiatives connecting this putative hub with Colombia's Caribbean and Atlantic trade outlets in the north.

Raising the issues on land, conflict and rights in Brazil and the Philippines

CIIR highlighted the conflict and human rights problems of agricultural expansion and economic development and in its work on Brazil and the Philippines in the early 1990s.

Rural repression, human rights courage

CIIR distributed bulletins produced by the Brazilian church agency for indigenous issues, [CIMI](#), to raise international awareness of the threats to indigenous territories and need for their land to be demarcated so as to receive legal protection. In 1993, a massacre of Yanomami people had taken place, prompting CIIR to organise an inter-agency delegation to the Brazilian embassy in London which was covered by Brazilian and UK media.

CIIR also continued to support church bodies and church human rights defenders coming to the aid of small farmers and rural labourers facing attack and murder, with publications highlighting their crucial role and inspiring courage. In 1994, for instance, CIIR published *Rio Maria: Song of the Earth*, the diary of Ricardo Rezende, a parish priest from a small town in the Amazon facing death threats from landowners for his work with the church's Pastoral Land Commission ([CPT](#)). CIIR's Francis McDonagh had earlier organised UK visits for Rezende, who received the 1992 Anti-Slavery Award, and a return solidarity visit to Rio Maria by Labour MP John Battle. CIIR's 1992 Comment on Brazil warned that its democracy would be fragile if deep inequality was not systematically addressed, a message also conveyed by a 1995 CIIR report of a Pax Christi delegation to Brazil examining rural injustices and urban violence.

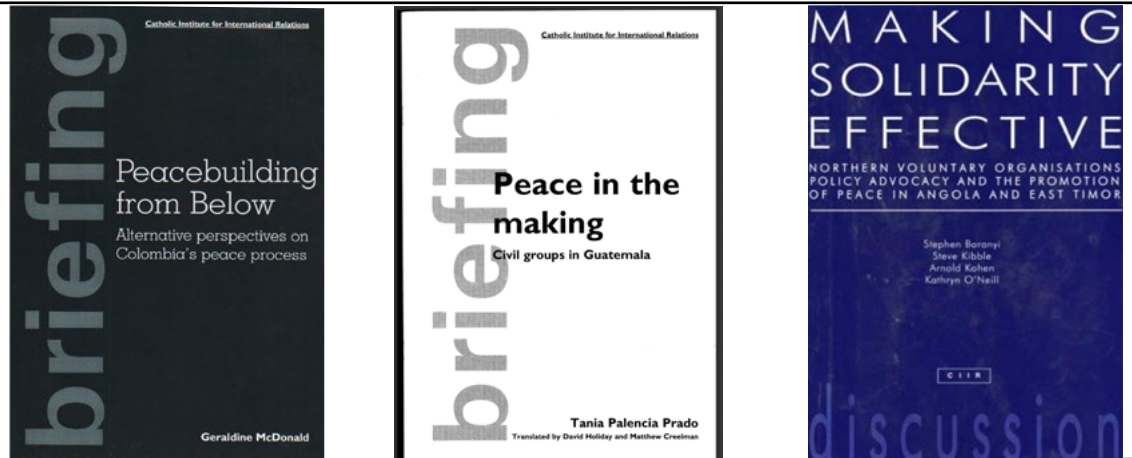
Promoting research on sustainable alternatives

As part of its Asia programme, CIIR ran a three-year project on land rights and foreign investment in the Philippines in partnership with academic James Putzel, one of the authors of CIIR's 1988 book, *Captive Land: The Politics of Agrarian Reform in the Philippines*, who worked closely with Filipino partners.

The project involved publication and dissemination of a Philippines Development Briefing series, which examined the social and environment problems of large-scale agribusiness projects seen by the state as vital for national growth. The briefings advocated alternative approaches based on sustainable agriculture. In 2003, CIIR followed up by publishing *Regaining the Land: Lessons from Farmers' Experience with Sustainable Agriculture in the Philippines*, edited by Julian A Oram.

The possibility of this looming onslaught was at odds with the protection of the territorial rights of indigenous communities supposedly enshrined in the new constitution and pending legislation to protect the collective land rights of black communities. It threatened their environment, culture and livelihoods and to exacerbate conflict and human rights problems in a region hitherto less affected by repression and political violence.

Based on field research and collaboration with partners supporting communities, CIIR launched publications to publicise their predicament and alternative development proposals



reflecting their rights and interests. They included *The Colombian Plan Pacífico: Sustaining the Unsustainable* published in 1993 as well as *Ethno-development: A Proposal to Save Colombia's Pacific Coast* and *Colombia's Pacific Coast: a Church Perspective* issued in 1996. The briefings, promoted during partner speaker visits to the UK, were widely used by NGO, academic and media outlets.

Working for lasting peace through civil society participation and tackling painful human rights legacies

As uneasy political transitions and post-conflict environments gradually emerged, CIIR, building on the multi-country and multi-regional lessons of its solidarity work, ran complementary follow-up initiatives with partners during the 1990s on the longer-term social justice and human rights challenges of their struggles for peace-building and democratisation. CIIR was aware that the absence of armed conflict alone was no guarantee of lasting peace if the underlying causes of repression and political violence, and the deep wounds inflicted on society, were not addressed.

Whose peace? Bridging the gap between high-level politics and grass-roots demands

One project, launched in the mid-1990s, looked specifically at the interaction between civil society movements and official peace processes and the role of international intervention. Alongside country Comments, the project involved the production of research reports on experiences in [Guatemala](#), Colombia, South Africa and East Timor. These shared practical policy insights on the crucial need for civil society to be fully recognised and involved in peace processes as well as effectively supported and equipped to take part.

The importance of the initiative was shown in Guatemala. The country's Civil Society Assembly (ASC) complained that the government, despite signing a December 1996 peace agreement with former guerrilla leaders of the National Guatemalan Revolutionary Unity (URNG), was not taking into account their views of how to make good its formal provisions on recognition of indigenous rights and access to land. CIIR worked closely with the ASC to promote the interests of those who had been most affected by the armed conflict. It coordinated an advocacy initiative to press a 1997 conference of international donors, in particular the EU, to support the meaningful participation of civil society.

As well as publishing national case studies such as Geraldine McDonald's *Peacebuilding from Below: Alternative Perspectives on Colombia's Peace Process*, the initiative involved comparative information-gathering and analysis, enriched by CIIR events that brought partners together. A 1997 CIIR event, for example, which examined the experiences of Angola and East Timor and the role of Northern NGOs in supporting country-based peace-building, led to publication and promotion of a discussion paper, *Making Solidarity Effective*.

Past reckoning, future justice? The role of truth and reconciliation commissions

Another thematically linked CIIR project addressed the ongoing challenges of human rights justice raised by high-level political transition and conflict resolution. It included a 1998 international conference with speakers from Colombia, Central America, East Timor, South Africa and Haiti, which considered the role of truth commissions in tackling the human rights legacy of conflicts and preventing impunity.

The conference highlighted the twin problem of perpetrators of violations being granted official amnesties while victims of their crimes faced the barrier of public amnesia. It noted that societies in a state of trauma or denial found it hard to acknowledge the events of the past and support human rights reckoning. It also considered the relationship between truth, reconciliation and justice, and whether truth commissions, in achieving political acknowledgement and mass public awareness, could provide an effective form of redress for victims and also create a climate in which abuses were less likely to be committed in the future.

The event, drawing on country research, facilitated exchange and learning among partners, as well as with participants from Burma, and led to dissemination of a report in English and Spanish, *Humanising Peace: The Impact of Peace Agreements on Human Rights*. As in the case of its civil society participation and peace-building initiative, CIIR worked to explore and compare the detailed challenges of different country cases. CIIR's Steve Kibble, for example, was joint author of a report on South Africa, *From Truth to Transformation: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa*, with Brandon Hamber of the Johannesburg-based Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSV). An earlier paper, *The People's Conscience?*, had contrasted South African civil society's experience of truth as a means of reconciliation with that of Guatemala.

This work had resonance in relation to ongoing political events. The murder of Bishop Juan Gerardi Conedera in Guatemala provided a bracing reminder of how sensitive the task of even unearthing the facts on human rights crimes could be, let alone taking political and legal action to tackle impunity and secure justice for victims (see Box).

Human rights truths and impunity in Guatemala: CIIR demands action on bishop's murder

In April 1998, Bishop Juan Gerardi Conedera, a human rights defender long active in supporting Guatemala's indigenous Mayan peoples (see Chapter 2), was beaten to death. His murder came just two days after he had presented the *Guatemala: Never Again* report. Produced by the human rights office of archdiocese of Guatemala's recovery of historical memory project (REMHI), it analysed 6,500 testimonies of torture, murder, disappearances and other violence during the 36-year civil war.

The REMHI report, an English language version of which was published by CIIR and LAB in 1999, concluded that political violence and repression had been mostly committed by the military. It played a key role in informing the work of Guatemala's official Commission for Historical Clarification, a body that had been set up as part of the UN-facilitated peace process.

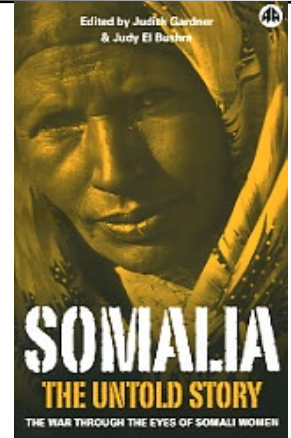
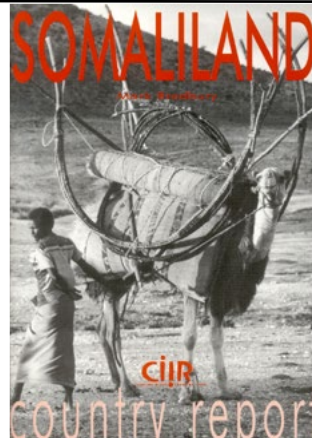
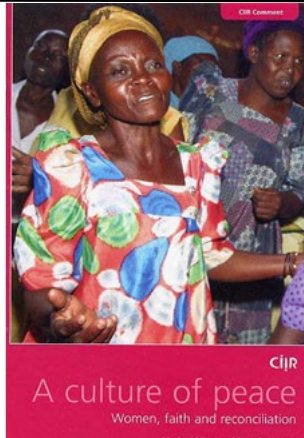
Pressure for a UK response

Following Gerardi Conedera's murder, Archbishop Patrick Kelly of Liverpool and CIIR members urged the UK government to call for a full investigation and use its international influence to act against impunity. In response, the UK government made a donation to support the official truth commission's report published in 1999, *Memory of Silence*, and gave a formal commitment to urge the Guatemalan government to implement its recommendations.

The high-profile nature of the murder and its wider political significance demonstrated that human rights impunity would remain a major challenge in Guatemala, despite the 1996 peace accords – a danger CIIR had anticipated in its 1993 Comment, *Transition from Terror?* Not without reason had CIIR supported the struggle of Guatemalan civil society and human rights groups during the decade to ensure the UN retained an independent expert to monitor Guatemala's human rights record.

Similarly, as Timor-Leste's independence neared fruition, activists from the emerging nation, backed by human rights colleagues in Indonesia, faced the reluctance of the international community to support UN action to compel Jakarta's cooperation with efforts to provide remedy for the victims of Indonesian military crimes committed during the 1999 referendum. To facilitate the sharing of experiences on the pursuit of truth and reconciliation and the struggle for justice, CIIR helped to organise a 2001 visit to East Timor by two members of Guatemala's REMHI project.

Just as the Cold War had shaped Western policies on East Timor in the past, now the 'war on terror', following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, proved a disincentive for supportive international action on human rights. The West was keen not to ruffle Jakarta's sensitivities and to keep Indonesia, as a predominantly Muslim nation, onside against Islamist extremism, not least in the wake of the 2002 Al-Qaeda bombing in Bali. CIIR called for a UN Security Council review of progress on human rights justice for East Timor and backed calls for an international criminal tribunal to handle the most serious cases of violations.



Conflict lives, conflict stories: amplifying the voices of women

Another important strand in CIIR's work on conflict, human rights and justice was its commitment to bringing to the fore, through publications, the impact on women and their post-conflict lives. This often included examining its faith dimensions, as exemplified by the 2005 Comment, *A Culture of Peace: Women, Faith and Reconciliation*. The authors, CIIR's Sr Pamela Hussey and Marigold Best, a Quaker, had explored the issues in the context of El Salvador as writers of *Life out of Death: the Feminine Spirit in El Salvador* published in 1996. An anthology of conversations with Salvadorean women, the book reflected on what their memories of war, torture, death squads and disappearances meant for El Salvador's post-conflict future. CIIR's 1991 publication of Irish writer Margaret Hooks' *Guatemalan Women Speak* had provided earlier insights from Central America.

In the case of Asia, a CIIR-commissioned 1993 book, *Let the Good Times Roll* by Sandra Pollock Sturdevant and Brenda Stoltzfus, mixed photos, personal stories and analysis on the links between the US military presence in the region, including its bases in the Philippines, and sex work.

Later, in 2004, CIIR co-published with Pluto Press *Somalia – the Untold Story: The War through the Eyes of Women*, edited by staff member Judith Gardner and the long experienced and widely respected gender and conflict specialist Judy El Bushra. It provided an insightful complement to the organisation's expanding DW work for conflict resolution and reconstruction on the ground in Somaliland (see later section below).

Partner for peace, partner in development? Engaging the EU on aid and trade

As civil society pressure boosted prospects for change in the South during the 1990s, CIIR increased its work with partners to promote supportive arrangements on international aid and trade. The aim of this work, targeting the EU, was to help countries establish stronger foundations for continued democratisation, post-conflict reconstruction and longer-term development. As noted by CIIR's 1996 Comment, *Continental Shift: Europe's Policies towards the South*, the EU had become an increasingly significant player in international affairs, trade, aid and development.

Brussels-Central America relations: pushing for civil society voice

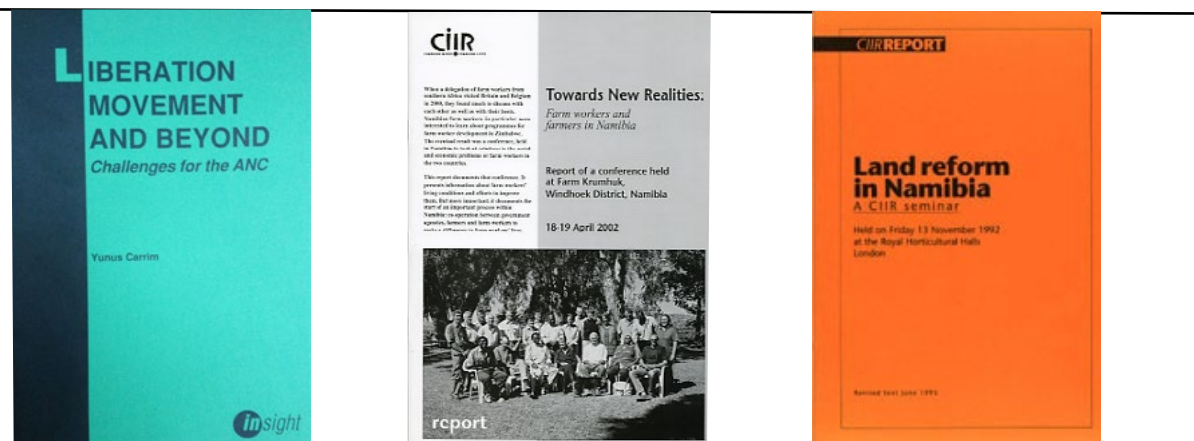
In 1991, for example, CIIR's desk officer in charge of previous work on Guatemala, Kathy Piper, helped to found the Copenhagen Initiative for Central America (CIFCA) network of European NGOs as a means of monitoring and influencing the San José dialogue between Central American governments and the EU. Initially focused on promoting peace, the dialogue had been widened to include cooperation on economic development.

CIIR hosted conferences in London and Brussels in 1995 to advocate the need for overall EU-Central America relations to be people-centred and involve civil society participation, a challenge it further highlighted in a 1996 CIIR briefing by José Sanahuja on renewal of the dialogue process. Meanwhile, in response to the pressing concerns on the future of democracy and human rights in Guatemala highlighted above, CIIR published a CIFCA-ASC assessment of EU engagement with the Guatemalan peace process over 1986-97.

One of the perceived opportunities of the EU was that it might provide a counterweight to traditional Western powers still shrugging off association with their damaging Cold War approach of the recent past. Another was that the regional grouping might make international development a focus of its overall policy approach, in line with the professed commitment of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty.

Trading blows in Southern Africa

Indeed, as part of its reconstruction of Southern Africa project, CIIR stressed the need for coherence between the EU's trade and development objectives as the regional body embarked on negotiations with SADC in the mid-1990s. It sponsored with CAFOD a range of papers produced by the European Research Office (ERO) to target a 1994 EU-SADC summit held in Berlin with background information and recommendations. A Brussels conference the following year, along with another set of ERO papers, looked specifically at the post-apartheid future of EU-South Africa relations.



The challenge was a difficult one. As CIIR pointed out in its own 1995 briefing paper, *Trading Blows: South Africa, Southern Africa and Europe in the post-Apartheid Era*, the EU appeared more intent on a divide-and-rule approach furthering its own commercial interests than aiding positive national economic development and pro-development regional integration. In offering to negotiate a bi-lateral free trade pact with South Africa, Brussels was keen to exclude sensitive farm produce that might compete with EU producers, while seeking to prise open greater access to the South African market for its industrial goods and services industries. With South Africa's economy outweighing that of its poorer neighbours, a skewed deal with the EU threatened the prospects of more equitable development in Southern Africa as a whole.

In the case of Namibia, CIIR had been involved in the early 1990s in tackling trade tensions with the EU through advocacy on illegal fishing in Namibia's waters by EU member country trawlers, which continued to plunder badly depleted fish stocks. It worked with other European NGOs, fish workers' organisations and environmental groups in the Coalition for Fair Fisheries Agreements, holding a 'Battle for Fish' conference on the unequal nature of EU-ACP fishing agreements and publishing a report with Christian Aid on EU-Namibia fisheries negotiations. This work tied in with CIIR's continued work on the Lomé Convention (see below).

High stakes in the 'war on drugs': targeting the EU for a new approach

One of CIIR's main EU initiatives on aid and trade over the 1990s was its advocacy of policy alternatives to the so-called 'war on drugs' as a revived priority policy objective of US – and, by extension, Western – relations with countries in the global South. Complementing its work on Colombia, CIIR focused mainly on the Andean countries. Peasants in the region, increasingly unable to make a living from 'conventional crops' because of their governments' unsupportive rural development policies, faced criminalisation by policy-makers and repression by security forces for their production of coca. Mainstream media often portrayed coca producers as a dangerous criminal force.

Coca, a harmless leaf traditionally chewed for its high-altitude restorative properties and revered in Andean culture, was under attack because of its use as a raw material for cocaine production. US policies in particular, rather than tackling Northern demand for drugs, Northern bank laundering of drug money or the role of Northern companies in supplying 'precursor chemicals' for cocaine production, transferred interdiction efforts to Andean governments. In return for aid, they were required to control coca production through 'forced eradication'.

As well as being ineffective in countering drugs supply, this approach fuelled conflict and human rights abuses as resistance of the repressive measures introduced to enforce them increased. Meanwhile, the violence of the drugs trade and its corrupting influence on state and non-state actors involved in existing armed conflicts, as in Colombia, posed daily dangers for CIIR partners. In supporting communities caught between these violent forces, partners urgently needed a different policy approach (see Box).

ANDY ATKINS

On the frontline with partners and communities facing drugs violence in Colombia



Andy Atkins was a CIIR Latin America desk officer from 1990 to 1997 and pioneered its new programme on the drugs trade. He went on to set up the advocacy department of the relief and development charity Tearfund (1997-2008) and became CEO of Friends of the Earth (2008-2015). He is now CEO of the Christian environmental charity A Rocha UK.

With the end of the Cold War, the United States was in search of a new *raison d'être* for its global military role. It found it in the illegal 'narcotics' trade, particularly from the Andean region, and promptly renewed calls dating from the Nixon years for a 'war on drugs'. The aim of CIIR's programme was to expose its implications for human rights, democracy and the environment, and to press the EU to take a more enlightened social and economic approach to the drugs trade.

A central and inspiring feature of the programme was working with CIIR's local partners. They included Fr Leonel Narváez Gómez of the diocese of Caquetá in southern Colombia, who was pioneering 'alternative development' – trying to re-establish economically viable, legal crops to allow peasants to withdraw from illegal coca and opium poppy production and its attendant violence. He and his brother priest survived as a result of carefully building respect by all sides.

Seeing the difficulties of 'alternative development'

On one 'field visit' Leonel picked me up from the small regional airport and we began the several hours' drive to his even remoter base. We soon hit a military checkpoint on the jungle road. Soldiers had stopped a bus and were frisking the passengers by the roadside. Leonel exchanged a few words with one of the passengers then also chatted to the Lieutenant. The officer waved 'el Padre' and me through. Leonel confided that the other man he had spoken to, unremarkable in jeans and T-shirt, was a major drug baron in the region travelling 'quietly'. The soldiers either didn't know or didn't care – or were in cahoots.

The next day we set off up the Río Caguán in a battered speedboat, stopping off in remote riverside settlements to visit the alternative development sites. We spoke to peasants on their plots proudly growing cacao or rubber and visited the new processing plant where farmers were converting the harvest to blocks of drinking chocolate or sheets of latex. They would make a very small profit from it.

We trekked into the steaming jungle to visit an illegal coca processing plant – a maceration pit in a rough-hewn lean-to, surrounded with barrels of chemicals. One worker allowed me to photograph him with a 'loaf' of crude cocaine he had made earlier. He would sell it on to the 'narcos' – the traffickers – for thousands of dollars. In another settlement we bumped into the de facto authorities of this particular location – the FARC guerrillas – who allowed the priests to remain as their projects helped the poor.

With the help of frontline partners like Leonel, CIIR was able to achieve much more exposure in Europe for the economic and social complexities surrounding the drugs trade. With others we set up the European NGO network on drugs and development. Together we were able to influence EU policy to take a more socio-economic rather than military approach.



Reframing the debate, spurring alternative EU action

An important CIIR achievement during the decade was to reframe the drugs debate as a development challenge, encompassing the need for economic policies focused on poverty reduction and people-centred aid and trade, rather than simply treating the trade as a crime and security problem. The work, besides opening space for the media and international development agencies to view an often controversial issue through a new lens, steadily achieved influence on policy-makers, who began to realise that existing policies were not working.

An early CIIR priority, following the creation of a Lisbon-based European Drugs Monitoring Centre in 1993 and EU moves to draft a European Action Plan to Combat Drugs, was to provide a platform for Southern voices to be heard in EU policy circles. It did so by promoting the findings of research and the recommendations of a series of discussion papers it had produced in consultation with Bolivian, Peruvian and Colombian partners. CIIR supported a Europe-wide Coca '95 NGO campaign which enabled Andean peasant representatives to highlight the distinction between coca and cocaine and promote international legalisation of legitimate coca products. CIIR's briefing, *Commercialising Coca: Possibilities and Proposals*, saw partner expert Hugo Cabieses set out how coca could be an important legal industry for the Andean region.

CIIR, working with the European NGO Council on Drugs and Development (ENCOD), which it chaired, also lobbied the European Parliament and organised Brussels visits for Colombian representatives to speak directly to EU politicians and European Commission officials. As part of a coordinated campaign with ENCOD, CIIR's briefings, translated into French, Spanish and Italian, helped the network to influence draft EU positions. They included pledges to address the economic causes of drugs-linked production; promote coherence between World Bank and International Monetary Fund-supported economic adjustment policies and better national drugs control policies; and recognise the role of civil society in developing alternative approaches.

Internationalising impact

CIIR, though focused on influencing the EU, sought to extend the impact of its work internationally. In 1996, CIIR supported a major conference on drugs and development in Lisbon. Its broad convening of NGOs, media, governments and international bodies from as many as 60 countries was unprecedented. CIIR also collaborated with US groups involved in advocacy on the drugs trade such as the Washington Office on Latin America. WOLA, like CIIR, in the absence of fairer national and international economic policies, questioned the effectiveness of EU and US trade preference schemes set up to provide export markets for products supposedly supporting 'alternative development'.

An achievement at the end of the 1990s was to help set up an international NGO platform on drug control issues spanning representatives from Latin America, Asia and Europe. In addition, CIIR forged links with church leaders at the forefront of community-based responses to drug wars damaging people's lives in post-apartheid South Africa. In 1998, it promoted the findings of a DfID-funded research trip by publishing the briefing *Drugs and Development in South Africa: How Europe Could Help*. In 1999, CIIR organised a UK tour for Rev Keith Benjamin, a Methodist minister at the forefront of community responses to drug use and drug-related violence in the Western Cape.

Meanwhile, CIIR's achievement of consultative status at the Economic and Social Council of the UN in 1997 enabled it to accredit two experts from Bolivia and Nigeria to attend the 1998 UN general assembly special session on drugs. They also took part in a preparatory London seminar on UNGASS with members of the European Commission and Parliament and the Colombian embassy in London. A report of the event was published as *Conflict and Consensus: European Responses to the International Drugs Trade*.

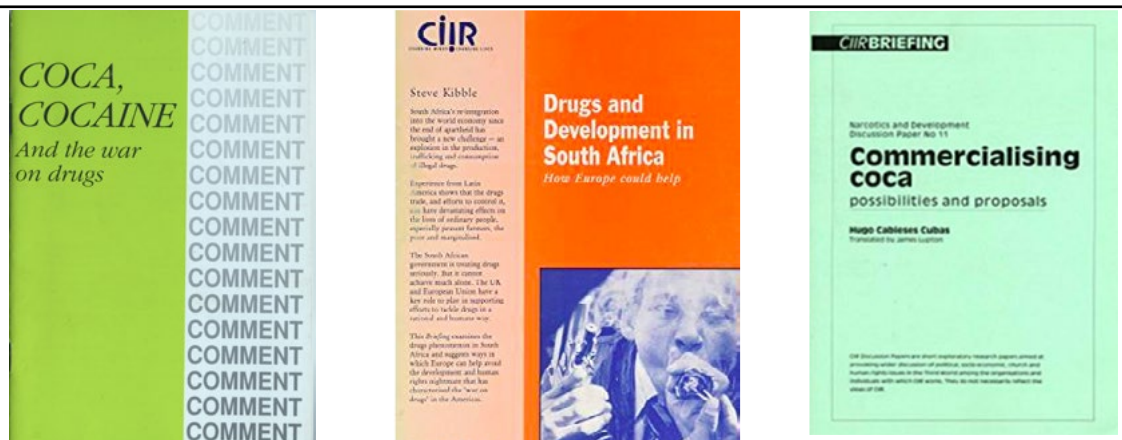
CIIR produced its own *New Words, Old Actions* briefing to target UNGASS and also issued a 1998 joint report with the Transnational Institute (TNI), *Caught in the Crossfire: Developing Countries, the UNDCP and the War on Drugs*. This critiqued the UN Drug Control Programme for its continued prescription of failed solutions in pursuit of a 'drug-free world'.

Breaking down stiff resistance

Today, greater pressure exists for more progressive approaches on drugs. In 2011, the Global Commission on Drug Policy was created and several former Latin American presidents and other prominent figures called for changed global policies in the run-up to the 2016 UNGASS on drugs.

Several years have elapsed since CIIR's work on drugs and development ended in the early 2000s. Yet CIIR played its own constructive part in helping to create a more propitious environment for challenging the failures and injustices of the military and crime-focused

approach of the 'war on drugs'. In contrast with the counter-productive concentration on criminalisation and prohibition, there are signs of greater pressure for more realistic and enlightened policy approaches centred on health, safety, development and human rights. Still, entrenched official resistance to their adoption persists and the 'war on drugs' continues to exert its nefast effects on politics and society.



INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Getting to grips with globalisation

CIIR's dovetailing of its conflict-focused work on democratisation and human rights with engagement on the implications of the EU's emerging aid and trade agenda for CIIR focus countries and regions was also relevant to the organisation's continued work on international trade policy over the 1990s. To tackle the wider globalisation agenda, and with the world's largest companies accounting for the bulk of global trade, in the mid-1990s CIIR also launched a complementary body of work on foreign investment, business accountability for human rights, rapid economic change and women's rights.

Food for thought: pressing the EU and the WTO for a pro-development approach to trade

CIIR's work on trade again made the predicament of the ACP countries a priority during this period. Its concern was that negotiation of a new framework to succeed the fourth Lomé Convention due to expire in 2000 would undermine its potential as a flagship of European cooperation on aid, trade and development.

A global EU and pressures on the ACP

With the looming advent of the EU's 2006 Global Europe strategy promoting EU competitiveness and business opportunities on the world stage, a sense existed that the EU considered ACP countries, particularly the poorest and least developed, to be of declining economic and political importance. Concerns abounded that they would not have their interests taken into account in the new EU-ACP aid-trade pact due to emerge as the Cotonou Agreement in 2000.

Indeed, the ACP countries' preferential trade arrangements with the EU, providing access to the EU market for specific agricultural products crucial to their economies and people's livelihoods on better terms than might prevail on the world market, faced greater risks of erosion as the 1990s progressed. Brussels was under even stronger pressure to overhaul its CAP in the light of a planned review of the 1994 GATT agreement on agriculture and follow-on negotiations in the WTO seeking more ambitious liberalisation of agricultural trade. The CAP, moreover, faced a squeeze as the EU's budget prepared for EU enlargement following accession of Central and Eastern Europe countries.

Vulnerable smaller-scale agricultural producers in ACP countries faced the threatening prospect of lower EU prices and fierce competition in the event of the EU both opening its markets to imports from large-scale exporting nations and failing to protect flexibility for preferential trade arrangements with the ACP under global trade rules within the WTO.

Going bananas on Lomé, sugar and the CAP

CIIR made bananas an early 1990s focus through joint work with [Banana Link](#). It drew attention to the labour rights and environmental problems of large-scale multinational banana production and sourcing and the threat posed by a rise in such exports to small-scale ACP producers traditionally serving EU markets. It also worked on sugar, a key source of employment and foreign exchange for many ACP countries. CIIR, in partnership with ACP sugar trade unions, including Guyana's Agricultural and Allied Workers' Union, publicised the risks of developmentally insensitive changes to Europe's sugar regime.

With the support of Oxfam and Christian Aid, CIIR lobbied the European Commission for an end to the damage that the heavily subsidised expansion of the European sugar industry had inflicted on world sugar prices and developing country access to world markets. The work led to a 1994 Comment, *Sugar: Europe's Bittersweet Policies*, and also included a detailed economic study on the EU's reform proposals on Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

A CIIR conference staged with the [SAFE alliance](#) and the UK Food Group in May 1995 brought development, consumer and environmental NGOs together with representatives of the FAO, the UK government, the National Farmers Union and the grain company Cargill to debate CIIR's critical assessment of the CAP.

Pressure for policy coherence

As noted in Chapter 2, CIIR had come to tackle Lomé, CAP, GATT and the WTO as an integrated portfolio raising policy coherence challenges for the EU. It sustained this approach with partners throughout the 1990s, stressing the food security issues at stake through a continuous programme of research, London and Brussels seminars, publications, lobbying and media work. It pressed for the interests of small-scale farmers – largely women – to be placed at the heart of negotiations in the various policy arenas. In the UK, CIIR presented evidence on CAP and Lomé to parliamentary committees on several occasions and, at a European level, represented UK agencies on EU NGO liaison committee groups monitoring and influencing EU policies affecting global food security.

To enhance its case, CIIR, as well as promoting its own briefings and reports such as *A Taste of Things to Come: Changes in European Agricultural Policy and their Impact on the Global South* and *Recipe for Disaster? Food Security after GATT* published in 1996, commissioned research from experts. Outputs included the 1998 discussion paper *Levelling the Field* by Chris Stephens, Jane Kennan and Jenny Yates, which examined the likely effects of CAP reform on developing countries.

Southern resonance and international action

CIIR's work with partners resonated in the global South and on the world stage. CIIR-supported research early in the decade by academics from the University of Zimbabwe and the University of York led to Zimbabwean government debate of the food security problems raised by the GATT agreement on agriculture. A partnership with the Filipino NGO Management and Organizational Development for Empowerment (MODE) similarly prompted public hearings on the issue in the Philippines parliament.

In the run-up to the November 1996 UN world food summit held by the FAO in Rome, CIIR's development desk officer Penny Fowler coordinated media work on food security for a national [UK Food Group](#) 'Menu for the Millennium' conference. The arrangement of media interviews for speakers from Ghana, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Brazil and India helped them get their message across to European audiences. CIIR's advocacy with partners, using the recommendations of a CIIR briefing, was a factor in the food summit's plan of action urging full implementation of the so-called Marrakesh Decision. The latter committed WTO member countries to provide food aid and long-term agriculture support to developing countries vulnerable to price fluctuations as net food importers. As part of an NGO forum shadowing the official summit, CIIR co-organised a workshop on food security bringing together NGOs and official delegates.

Later, in 1999, as the WTO prepared to hold its contested 'Battle of Seattle' ministerial conference, CIIR presented and discussed its updated assessment of GATT and food security with officials from the EU and the WTO, as well as developing country negotiators, NGOs and academics. At the summit itself, a CIIR partner representative from Zimbabwe, Munhamo Chisvo, used the emerging findings of a CIIR research project in the country to argue that agricultural trade negotiations should not further undermine small-scale farmer livelihoods already damaged in the global South by economic adjustment policies. The research, drawing on in-depth household surveys in Zimbabwe, led to 2000 publication of a *Reaping the Whirlwind* report, which was then launched in Harare and London, to keep up pressure in advance of the WTO's 2001 launch of its new Doha round of trade talks.

Agriculture was one of the main sticking points that caused the Seattle summit and the WTO's subsequent Doha negotiations to collapse or stall amid tensions over EU-US subsidy schemes and the opposition of developing countries to EU-US trade demands.

Leaving a record for future battles

Future NGO and civil society work on agricultural trade would concentrate on advocating, in partnership with officials from interested countries in the global South, robust food security provisions in any WTO deal. They included proposals for a so-called 'development box', which laid the basis for the WTO talks in the new millennium to include negotiations on protecting 'special products' of crucial importance for people in poorer developing countries. Many parties were involved in supporting this development, but CIIR's work on trade since the 1980s had played its own part in helping to create the conditions in which it came about.

A positive development for CIIR's work on the coherence of EU policies during this period, achieved through wider UK NGO advocacy of which CIIR was part, was the stated commitment of the new Labour government in the UK, in its 1997 White Paper on international development, to consider sustainable development in all its policies. In principle, this lent weight to the prospects of the UK using its influence to advocate EU-wide implementation of the policy coherence commitment of the Maastricht Treaty. The task remained difficult, however, given the remote, complex interplay of EU institutions and member states in developing and deciding EU trade policy. Member states and the European Commission could pass the buck to each other in response to calls for policy accountability.

With larger UK NGOs actively involved in wide-ranging work on trade justice, CIIR scaled back the level of its own direct involvement in targeting the EU and the WTO on trade and development in the new millennium. Its work over the years, however, had made an important contribution to galvanising the concern of the UK development NGO sector on the issue.

Indeed, in the wake of CIIR's pioneering work on Lomé, for instance, NGOs and civil society organisations North and South did battle with the EU in the 2000s over its approach to trade under the new Cotonou Agreement. In launching negotiations for Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with ACP countries, the EU advocated reciprocal trade concessions rather than better preferential arrangements for its Southern partners, and it pushed aggressively for favourable foreign investment concessions it had been unable to win multilateral consensus for in the WTO.

Building a world market: time for a new policy approach

Building on its long engagement on trade, CIIR worked in the 1990s to address wider shifts in governance of the world economy geared to removing barriers to global business and commerce under elite-driven approaches to globalisation.

Investment rules? CIIR joins criticism of the MAI

Just as poorer developing countries were at a disadvantage in terms of their bargaining power on international trade policy, they also faced a drive by rich countries to draw up new global rules on foreign investment without their proper involvement from the mid-1990s. With signs of opposition to the launch of negotiations on investment and other so-called 'Singapore issues' within the WTO where countries of the global South at least had a voice, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Paris-based club of leading economic powers, had been separately drawing up a multilateral agreement on investment (MAI).

The MAI, following analysis of a leaked draft, led to a growing international movement vigorously opposed to its proposals. It was led by NGOs such as the Malaysia-based Third World Network, Canada's Polaris Institute and the Council of Canadians, Public Citizen of

the United States and Friends of the Earth. In response, CIIR became involved in raising awareness and debate on the MAI with sister agencies in the UK.

Skewed rights and responsibilities

Like others, a major concern for CIIR was that the MAI appeared more centred on guaranteeing the 'rights' of investors than their responsibilities towards host countries and communities. It explored the problem with others as part of a seminar held in early 1997 on the developing country impact of growing efforts to remove barriers to foreign direct investment in the world economy.

CIIR argued that MAI plans to curb public interest regulation would undermine the need for companies investing in the global South to be held to account for the human rights and environmental impacts of their operations. As in the case of the US-Mexico-Canada NAFTA deal, the MAI draft considered such regulation tantamount to 'expropriation' because of its possible impact on profits.

Another concern for CIIR was that the liberalisation of investment, as proposed under the MAI, would constrain Southern states' use of public policy to develop their economies, for example by controlling foreign companies' excessive profit repatriation and requiring them to maximise use of local inputs and labour as well as technology transfer. Based on a critical review of research on the integration into the world economy of newly industrialised countries (NICs) such as South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, CIIR was aware that their achievement of 'tiger economy' status had involved strong government intervention, not just reliance on market forces.

All in all, CIIR's view was that, in the absence of 'policy space' for public interest regulation and economic intervention by governments, the MAI's policy assumptions of an automatically beneficial relationship between investment, economic growth and development was flawed.

CIIR's lobbying of the UK government with other NGOs in the wake of its seminar called for a rebalancing of responsibilities in the MAI text and for developing countries to have meaningful participation in any negotiations, based on access to information and technical support. In the end, plans for the MAI were dropped in late 1998 after OECD host country France withdrew its support in the face of the opposition generated by the wider international campaign and Paris' own concerns about the implications of new rules for national sovereignty.

From ASEM warning to raising debate on Asia's financial crisis

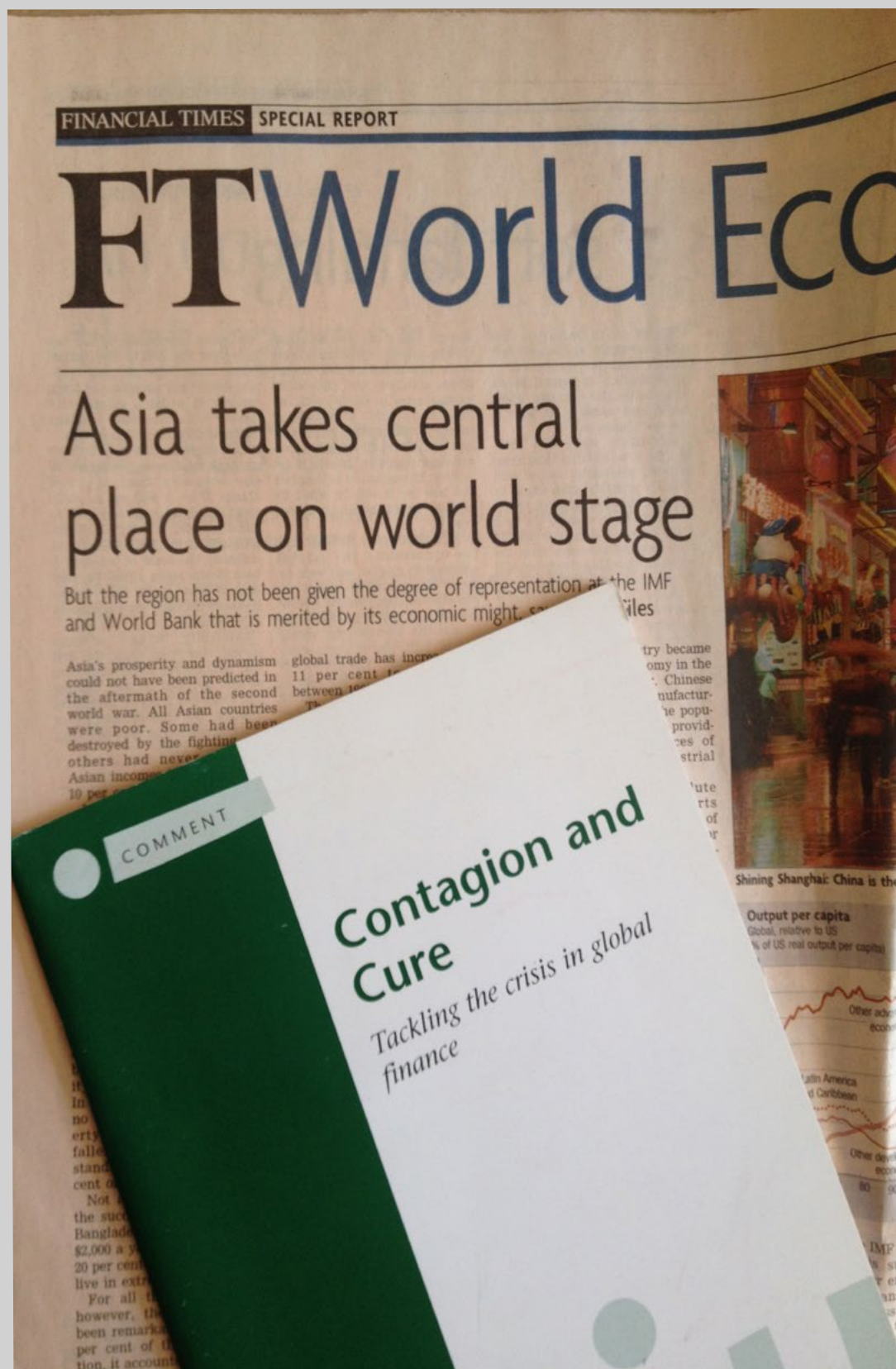
CIIR had already been active on Western moves to remove barriers to foreign investment through its advocacy on the drive by the EU to boost commercial opportunities in the Asian-Pacific region for its businesses and services industries. The EU, with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Korea, Japan and China, had launched the Asia-Europe (ASEM) summit process.

To counter the European Commission's bid to win Asian backing for new global rules on investment at ASEM's first-ever summit held in Bangkok in 1996, CIIR joined forces with [Focus on the Global South](#), [TNI](#), [One World Action](#) and others to organise an Asia-Europe NGO conference to shadow the official event. Drawing on a background paper on EU relations with ASEAN, it called for ASEM to have an integral social dimension as an emerging inter-regional forum, based on transparent and accountable discussions open to civil society participation.

CIIR's work to spotlight with civil society partners the risks of Western pressures for ASEAN countries to open up their economies to global trade, investment and finance without proper guidance and oversight proved prescient and topical in view of the financial crisis which hit the Asia region in 1997. Countries' hasty deregulation of capital flows and private sector borrowing had left them vulnerable to speculative risks and attacks, and the ensuing crisis plunged citizens into hardship as banks and business closed, currencies fell and prices soared. Western policy-makers blamed local 'crony capitalism' for the problems in an attempt to circumvent inspection of its wider causes.

Publicising the damaging fallout and promoting solutions

In response, CIIR and its partners organised a second Asia-Europe civil society conference in April 1998, 'People's Realities, People's Responses', on the eve of the second ASEM summit being held in London. With DfID funding, CIIR was able to invite a large number of Asian participants who gave first-hand accounts of the crisis' ongoing social damage. The event kept the fallout of the crisis and its underlying causes in the public eye. Journalists questioned officials at the summit and took a more critical stance on the continued calls of Western governments and IFIs for continued liberalisation of the world economy.



Future warning: Asia would recover from its 1997 turmoil but its crash at the time had shown that the lessons of the 1980s debt crisis in Latin America had not been learned. CIIR's Comment, Contagion and Cure, critiquing irresponsible bank lending and policy-maker complacency over the problems of the international financial system, anticipated the 'credit crunch' hitting rich country economies as well as poor nations in the new millennium.

Following engagement on the role of ASEM, CIIR staff also shared policy learning on financial crises with fellow policy officers in Northern agencies. They did so with the help of a 1999 CIIR briefing by David Woodward, *Time to Change the Prescription*, and a Comment, *Contagion and Cure: Tackling the Crisis in Global Finance*. The resources built on analysis of the crisis in Asia to propose reforms of the global financial system, including a 'Tobin tax' on financial transactions. The urgency of such reforms, already highlighted by Mexico's 1995 'tequila' collapse, was further reinforced by a financial crisis in Brazil in 1999.

This advocacy on macro-level policy developments in global economic governance, with its focus on Asia, was also able to draw on CIIR's work on the social implications of changing economic strategies and business practices involving multinational companies. By 1997, CIIR was completing a three-year research initiative on the impact of rapid economic change on women in Asia. This looked mainly at countries asserting NIC status through export manufacturing such as the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia. It also examined the women's rights issues raised by China's export-led growth (see Box).

Rapid economic change and women in Asia: no quick route to fairer development

CIIR's programme assessed the extent to which rising female labour in assembly-for-export manufacturing as an increasingly important source of economic growth in East and South East Asia had improved women's lives and position in society.

Paying a price for growth

A 1997 study of the garment and electronics industries in Thailand and the Philippines by Asia policy desk officer Jessica Sainsbury, *The New Inequality*, found that women, though earning income, faced frequent discrimination and abuses at work and remained marginalised in business and government decision-making. It concluded that their vital role in sustaining such growth sectors did not guarantee more equitable development involving progress in achieving women's rights and more equal gender relations.

CIIR's 1995 joint report with the Asian Regional Exchange for *New Alternatives, Shadows behind the Screen*, had similarly illustrated the negative effects of economic restructuring on women. Meanwhile, a follow-up CIIR briefing paper the following year, *Paying for Growth*, called on EU and Asian governments to support organisations working for women's labour and human rights and to adopt International Labour Organization conventions to protect such rights.

CIIR also went on to undertake research on the business models and practices of UK companies. A study on the sourcing of garments from Indonesian factories to supply the UK market indicated that profit margins were high enough for companies and factories to improve wages and working conditions without affecting employment levels or consumer prices.

Migration status: another source of women's vulnerability

CIIR's rapid economic change project also explored the feminisation of migration in Asia. Its 1997 *Labour Exchange* report noted that rising cross-border migration was not matched by effective support systems for female migrant workers on the part of source and destination countries. This was despite the surging importance of worker remittances for families' income and governments' balance of payments back home, and the fact that employers in receiver countries benefited from an additional source of labour.

The report considered the implications of immigration legislation and labour recruitment methods for migrant women's working conditions and rights and their ability to organise. A 1997 Comment on internal labour migration and special economic zones in southern China similarly drew attention to women's workers' vulnerability to exploitation and abuse being further exacerbated by their status as migrants.

From global supply chains to oil: down to business on the rights of workers and communities

CIIR's advocacy on foreign direct investment and women and economic change in Asia added further insights to its wider work to promote responsible business conduct on labour and human rights in international supply chains.

In carrying out its initiatives, CIIR sought to work as much as possible in coalition. This approach reflected an environment in which a wider ethical trade movement was taking shape. Developments in the UK at this time included the 1998 emergence of the multi-stakeholder [Ethical Trading Initiative](#), which had been created with the support of DfID secretary of state, Clare Short.

Assessing and promoting tools for better business conduct

CIIR, for instance, alongside and through its own work on garment production, supported [Labour behind the Label](#), then a new campaign group urging big clothing retailers to

ensure decent working conditions and protect human rights. It also contributed to [Women Working Worldwide](#) in advocating the need for international links between trade unions and between the labour movement, consumer groups and development organisations.

One important example of CIIR's work in coalition during the decade, led by policy desk officer Maggie Burns, involved an initiative to press toy industry business associations to adopt a code of conduct on working conditions for their member companies and suppliers. This achieved a measure of success in the mid-1990s but also revealed the risks of fragmented and inconsistent practices by companies and business bodies (see Box).

Child's play on labour protection

In 1996 a CIIR-supported coalition persuaded the British Toys and Hobbies Association to adopt a code of conduct applying to both transnational companies and sub-contractors. It required manufacturers to meet health and safety standards, prevent child or forced labour and limit working hours. The move followed negotiations backed by consumer action and high-profile media coverage in Asia and the UK, including *The Times* and the *Daily Mirror*.

The International Toy Industry Council, however, adopted a weaker version of the code, demonstrating the need for pressure and tools to ensure business commitment to a common set of high standards. The CIIR-supported coalition involved the World Development Movement (now known as [Global Justice Now](#)), Hong Kong's [Asia Monitor Resource Centre](#), the British Trades Union Congress (TUC) and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

At this time, amid mounting public concern about the conditions under which consumer goods were produced, CIIR explored the need for a more systematic approach. A level playing field was required whereby businesses adhered to common high standards and reported publicly on their commitment and action to uphold the rights of workers and communities in the global South. CIIR's research and work with partners highlighted that a major problem, in addition to those of pay, health and safety and female sexual harassment, was the frequent repression of workers' freedom of association and their right to engage in dialogue and negotiations with employers.

Building on its earlier *Social Clauses* briefing paper, in 1997 CIIR partnered with the [New Economics Foundation](#) (NEF) to produce on behalf of UK development agencies one of the first systematic assessments of business codes of conduct and possible avenues for greater corporate accountability. Published as *Open Trading: Options for Effective Monitoring of Corporate Codes of Conduct*, its aim was to inform dialogue with UK companies on introducing an agreed 'quality assurance framework' as the foundation for independent verification of their effective implementation of codes of conduct.

Looking to the state: the OECD guidelines

CIIR also cast its eye on whether state mechanisms for encouraging responsible business practice across borders were working. In 1998, OECD member countries were due to review the OECD's Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises originally introduced in 1976, and CIIR conducted an investigation on their use to promote the voluntary social responsibility of companies. The research found that only one of the UK companies CIIR consulted was aware of the MNE guidelines, despite the formal responsibility of the UK government to promote their adoption and implementation.

Still, with growing NGO pressure for international action on the human rights responsibilities of companies, the UK government made good its own compliance with an OECD agreement in 2000 for member countries to set up a National Contact Point under the MNE guidelines to handle human rights complaints. It set up an NCP in the UK which started to handle cases.

Beyond its focus on the role of multinationals in Asia and the problems of consumer goods supply chains, CIIR also worked on other business and human rights problems of major importance in other regions, notably those raised by the extractive industries.

Colombia and Angola: when oil brings deep troubles to the surface

As anticipated by CIIR in its work on Colombia (see earlier section), British Petroleum's

development of major new oilfields in the country's Casanare department was exacerbating human rights problems as the area was further militarised to protect installations.

Indeed, allegations of BP complicity with community surveillance and intimidation by the military and private security attracted widespread international concern and media coverage in 1996-98. The controversy followed the 1995 murder of an activist who had led community protests against the local damage and lack of local benefits arising from BP's investment. Ongoing concern about BP's role in police training and environmental infringements in 1998 saw CIIR coordinate an inter-agency group including Save the Children, Oxfam, Christian Aid and CAFOD to urge BP to assume its human rights responsibilities.

Though the group found no evidence of 'wilful misconduct' by BP, it was critical of BP's narrow focus on protecting its own installations rather than the security of the people living in the areas where it operated. It argued that the company had shown insufficient understanding of the causes of local tensions and human rights problems in the context of the complexities of Colombia's conflict. The group's dialogue with BP was a factor in causing the company to rethink its approach and produce a report outlining its commitments on human rights and social responsibility. CIIR took part in a similar inter-agency initiative on BP's role in Angola.

Contributing to an emerging business and human rights movement

Today, thanks to the efforts of many NGOs and civil society groups during the 1990s, a wide range of initiatives and organisations are active in the global South and North on workers' rights in supply chains and ethical trade, as well as the wider field of business and human rights and corporate accountability.

CIIR may not have been a sole prime mover, but it did play its own important part in nurturing the evolution of this broad sector, building further during this period on its early contributions in the context of foreign investment in Southern Africa and the Philippines described in Chapter 2. Again, this role included acting as a convenor. Indeed, in sustaining its work on the responsibility of corporations in the early 1990s, CIIR found that though many groups in Europe were active on the issue, little coordination or knowledge-sharing was taking place. In response, CIIR commissioned and disseminated a briefing paper, *Making it Our Business – NGO Campaigns for Corporate Responsibility* in the mid-1990s. Earlier in the decade, CIIR had re-engaged with a corporate responsibility issue of previous keen interest: breast milk substitutes (see Box).

Causing a stir on baby milk

CIIR's 1993 Comment, *Babymilk: Destruction of a World Resource*, caused a stir when Nestlé disputed the publication's coverage of breast milk substitute marketing. Nestlé promoted a pamphlet which led the Church of England General Synod in 1994 to suspend its 1991 decision to boycott Nestlé products. This was a blow, as the decision had boosted campaigns for breastfeeding and implementation of the WHO/UNICEF international code on marketing of breast milk substitutes.

Following representations by CIIR, UNICEF and the [International Baby Food Action Network \(IBFAN\)](#), challenging the content of Nestlé's pamphlet, the Church of England commissioned an expert inter-agency report, which concluded companies were breaking the code in a systematic manner. CIIR's *Comment*, reprinted twice, received wide media coverage and was welcomed by the WHO.

The SEACA initiative: strengthening local voice and national advocacy capacity in South East Asia

Building on its extensive engagement on economic issues in Asia, CIIR launched a new multi-year regional initiative in 1999, with considerable project funding from DfID, to strengthen the advocacy capacity of civil society organisations in the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia as well as East Timor, Vietnam and Cambodia. It thus brought together groups from aspiring 'tiger economies' and lesser-developed countries. Alongside these main focus countries, CIIR also engaged with civil society organisations in Burma (Myanmar).



Official rhetoric, poverty in practice: skilling up civil society to close the gap

CIIR's initiative involved supporting a South East Asian Committee for Advocacy (SEACA). The purpose of this partnership was to help organisations in each country run advocacy training programmes. Their aim was to strengthen the ability of community-based organisations to promote pro-poor government policies in the participant countries and across the region, as well as secure supportive policy approaches on the part of the global North. An overriding concern was the frequent gap between the official pro-poor rhetoric of governments and the reality of policies failing to take poor people's views into account and damaging their lives.

Following intensive training in participatory action research, partners used the expertise acquired to gather information in their own countries and develop ideas for advocacy initiatives. These then became the focus of follow-up training sessions, which provided advice and support on the best advocacy techniques to take them forward in practice. On discussion and agreement of plans with the Bangkok-based SEACA secretariat, regional staff then monitored and supported the activities' implementation.

The work enjoyed the support of longstanding CIIR partners such as the Institute for Popular Democracy of the Philippines, which hosted a three-week workshop on advocacy strategy in 2003, for example. The initiative also produced and shared support materials such as a handbook on advocacy in English and Bahasa Indonesia, as well as research on NGO good practices in Indonesia, Cambodia and the Philippines.

Tailored support on issues of specific national interest

Partners undertook a range of initiatives reflecting their specific needs and interests, as in the case of Thailand where partners campaigned against media controls and for the public right to information. Similarly, in Malaysia, partners worked to tackle repressive security laws affecting freedom of expression and assembly, while others worked with youth organisers to support indigenous peoples. In Indonesia the priority was to encourage local government policies to address child rights, and in Vietnam to support groups working with HIV-positive people or living with AIDS.

Meanwhile, in the Philippines, one SEACA partner, Agrarian Reform Now, launched a campaign against elite land grabs, while others advocated policies to address the housing needs of the urban poor. They persuaded government officials and business leaders to take part in a housing summit and developed a draft bill to create an official housing department. Malaysian partners worked on ethnic minority and affordable housing issues.

SEACA, chaired by partners rather than CIIR itself, also promoted regional initiatives and exchange. They included those undertaken by the **Asian Coalition for Housing Rights**, which was keen to promote joint learning and action on eviction issues.

Regional initiatives

SEACA also enabled CIIR, which had a research and advocacy officer based in Manila, to dovetail some of its existing regional work on economic justice, given the interest of partners in lobbying regional bodies such as the Asia Development Bank not to finance projects displacing people from their land.

In 2001, CIIR organised a forum in Manila on plans for an ASEAN free trade area. Well into the next decade, **SEACA would continue to push** for a people-centred approach to regional integration, with the support of other donors and civil society partners after CIIR's involvement in the project ended in 2002. **SEACA's continued regional activities** also included working with Timorese civil society organisations (and Progressio partners) to ensure Timor-Leste built a commitment to human rights into its protracted efforts to join ASEAN in order to consolidate regional recognition of its status and support needs as a new nation.

Complementing its SEACA work at the time, CIIR engaged partners in continued regional work in the early 2000s on conflict, human rights and peace-building, which took an increasingly important inter-faith perspective (see Box).

Challenging abuses in West Papua and supporting regional inter-faith dialogue on conflict

In the early 2000s, CIIR's extended its concern with the repressive record of Indonesia in East Timor to the internationally neglected situation of West Papua, the Netherlands' former colony of Dutch New Guinea, annexed by Jakarta in 1969 after a self-determination referendum held in a climate of violent coercion. Indonesia's armed forces had killed 30,000 Papuans in the preceding years and threatened people with further violence if they did not vote in favour of Indonesian integration.

Tackling another case of complicity and neglect

CIIR urged the UK to press Indonesia to implement a special autonomy law for Papua and curb human rights abuses. It also called for official UK action to ensure British investment, in particular a multi-billion-pound BP natural gas project with Indonesia's state-owned company, did not contribute to violations by security forces in the resource-rich occupied territory.

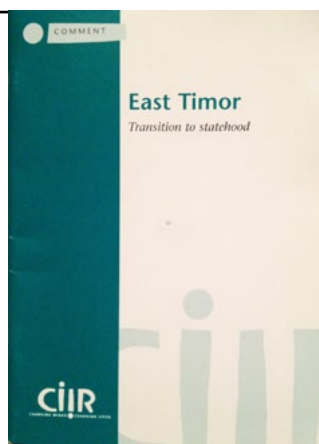
Inspired by progress in East Timor's struggle for national liberation, 100 Papuan leaders had visited Jakarta in 1999 to demand independence for what Indonesia called Irian Jaya until 2002. They were offered special autonomy instead, yet even this concession was blocked by the military. As well as publishing a *Comment*, CIIR organised a UK speaker tour for Papuan priest, Fr Neles Tebay, who also authored the 2005 report, *West Papua: The Struggle for Peace with Justice*. CIIR also supported women's organisations which were promoting peaceful change, despite their loss of loved ones in repression and suffering violence, including rape, by the security forces.

West Papua's struggle continues today. In 2017, 70 per cent of Papua's 1.8 million people presented a smuggled petition to the UN calling for a free vote on independence (see image of Guardian website article overleaf).

West Papua, East Timor and the Philippines: untangling politics and religion

One factor exacerbating tensions in Papua was a transmigration programme bringing settlers, the majority Muslims, from the island of Java in a deliberate attempt to alter Papua's demography, marginalising indigenous Papuans socially, culturally and economically. The different faith traditions of communities risked infusing the political roots of conflict with religious animosity and prejudice.

A similar problem existed in East Timor, while in the Philippines war had raged for decades between the government and Muslim Moro communities on the island of Mindanao, with religious tensions between Muslim, Christian and indigenous communities adding further layers of complexity to conflicts over land and natural resources. CIIR launched a project to foster greater understanding between faith communities in the different countries and territories, including exchange and exposure visits, and later highlighted the contributions of women of faith to peace-building in a report, *Faithful Peace, Peaceful Faith*. A 2003 roundtable bringing together peace advocates from Papua and Mindanao led the latter to create a 'peace-weavers' umbrella forum to unite the island's peace networks.



West Papua

This article is more than 1 year old

Banned West Papua independence petition handed to UN

Exclusive: Document outlawed by Indonesia was 'smuggled from one end of Papua to the other' and signed by 70% of the population

Ben Doherty and Kate Lamb in Jakarta

Wed 27 Sep 2017 06.00 BST



1,464



▲ Independence campaigners have been jailed and allegedly tortured in Papua for opposing the rule of Indonesia
Photograph: freewestpapua.org

A petition banned by the Indonesian government, but bearing the signatures of 1.8 million West Papuans – more than 70% of the contested province's population – has been presented to the United Nations, with a demand for a free vote on independence.

Exiled West Papuan independence campaigner Benny Wenda presented the bound petition to the [UN's decolonisation committee](#), the body that monitors the progress of former colonies – known as non-self-governing territories – towards independence.

The petition was banned in the provinces of Papua and [West Papua](#) by the Indonesian government, and blocked online across the country, so petition sheets had to be “smuggled from one end of Papua to the other”, Wenda told the Guardian from New York.

Independence campaigners have been jailed and allegedly tortured in Papua for opposing the rule of [Indonesia](#), which has controlled Papua (now Papua and West Papua) since 1963. Those signing the petition risked arrest and jail.

“The people have risked their lives, some have been beaten up, some are in prison. In 50 years, we have never done this before, and we had to organise this in secret,” Wenda said.

“People were willing to carry it between villages, to smuggle it from one end of Papua to the other, because this petition is very significant for us in our struggle for freedom.”



Melanesian leaders condemn UN for turning 'a deaf ear' to West Papua atrocities

→ [Read more](#)

Building for change – grassroots action

The work of CIIR's overseas DW programme as International Cooperation for Development (ICD)

Pursuing a more ambitious Southern-led agenda

CIIR's prodigious policy work was matched in the 1990s by the continued expansion and more ambitious scope of the organisation's overseas programme. As outlined in Chapter 2, the programme involved embedding professional development workers (DWs) within partner organisations to strengthen their work through the exchange of knowledge and expertise.

The increased organisational importance of CIIR's skill-share arm was reflected by the decision in 1991 to rebrand it as International Cooperation for Development (ICD). The aim of the change was to boost the programme's secular appeal for DW recruitment and avoid the misleading religious connotations of CIIR's name in focus countries of predominantly Muslim faith. By the mid-2000s, CIIR's ICD programme was undertaking work in 12 focus countries (see Box).

Working on the ground: CIIR's ICD country programmes, 2005

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

Nicaragua
Honduras
El Salvador
Dominican Republic
Haiti
Peru
Ecuador

SOUTHERN AFRICA AND HORN OF AFRICA/ MIDDLE EAST

Zimbabwe
Namibia
Somalia (Somaliland)
Yemen

ASIA

Timor-Leste (East Timor)

The growth of ICD's overall programme, in terms of the number of skilled professionals working at the grassroots with partner organisations, was especially strong in the 1990s. ICD's diversification of funding during the decade, including grants from the EU as an increasingly important development and human rights donor, saw the annual number of DWs in partner placements climb to around 130, a level that was sustained for the best part of the 1990s. Roughly 100 of the DWs worked in country programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean and the remainder in those in Southern Africa and the Middle East.

Changes in EC funding schemes in the early 2000s meant EU financing dropped, and this led to a fall in the number of DWs that CIIR's ICD programme could place. Nevertheless, ICD consolidated the size of its programme at an annual average of around 90 DWs during the first decade of the new millennium. Again, most DWs worked at this time in Latin America and the Caribbean and the rest in Africa and the Middle East and the newly emerging Timor-Leste programme.



Expanding and diversifying country programmes

CIIR's expansion of its ICD programming in several countries and regions in the 1990s and early 2000s was helped by political changes providing a safer and more propitious environment in which DWs could work with partners. At the same time, ICD faced difficult challenges in country settings affected by conflict, yet it managed to achieve important progress in its work.

From new country opportunities to taking on difficult challenges

New country offices set up by CIIR at the start of the 1990s in newly independent Namibia and post-peace accord El Salvador made major progress in developing and consolidating new ICD country programmes with partner organisations. The additions made for a stronger regional presence in Southern Africa and Central America respectively, complementing CIIR's existing ICD country programmes in Zimbabwe, Honduras and Nicaragua.

Meanwhile, in the Caribbean, following CIIR's opening of an office in Santo Domingo, the ICD programme in the Dominican Republic achieved dynamic momentum, with country representatives also supporting programme efforts from 1993 to increase the placement of DWs with partners in neighbouring Haiti. This included appointing a country representative in Haiti in the later 1990s to support ICD programming, though this direct presence was suspended in the new millennium as political conflict and uncertainty in the country took its toll.

In Peru, CIIR's DW programming was able to grow again through ICD, following the end of the Maoist Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) insurgency and the gradual emergence of a more open political climate during the 1990s, albeit prey to the restrictions and manipulations of the Fujimori government. Renewed programme impetus made for enhanced Andean collaboration with ICD's programme in neighbouring Ecuador.

Out of the ashes: starting a long commitment to Somaliland

In 1990, CIIR had been forced to withdraw from Somalia as the repressive Siad Barre regime entered its violent death throes. Still, despite the onset of civil war amid Somalia's collapse, CIIR maintained its commitment to supporting the country's people as best as it could. In 1992, for example, it placed an ICD-recruited social worker, Fouzia Musse, to help a Women Victims of Violence project supported by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which protected Somali women living in refugee camps in neighbouring Kenya. She helped to develop the project's provision of counselling to those who had suffered abuses. They fell after the project started to have an effect. ICD also recruited and supported qualified Somali refugees through its country programme in Yemen to provide health services to fleeing Somalis at a UNHCR-supported centre.

ICD's most significant move, however, was to start supporting reconstruction in the country's northwest. The region had seceded from Somalia in 1991 after the Somali National Movement and clan elders proclaimed Somaliland, formerly a British colonial protectorate, an independent republic. The territory managed to stabilise in the first half of the 1990s and avoid descent into the violent clan-based power struggles afflicting the rest of Somalia, notwithstanding outbreaks of renewed fighting and the lingering traumas of the Siad Barre regime. The latter's repressive onslaught and aerial bombardment of Hargeisa and other northern cities in the late 1980s had led to the death of at least 50,000 people and caused 500,000 to flee.

In 1995, CIIR opened an office in Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland, to build on ICD's incipient support for reconstruction initiatives already underway. This put ICD in a stronger position to take forward what became an impressive body of work over the next decade supporting peace, women's rights and capacity development of local institutions. The first DW to be recruited, Rhoda Ibrahim, played a vital role in helping to set up and develop ICD's programme.

Timor-Leste and expansion east: expertise for a new nation

In the new millennium, CIIR extended its DW skill-share programme to East Timor, following its 2002 independence and admission to the UN as a member state with its new official name of Timor-Leste, and appointed a country representative, Antonia Velasco, to manage the work. She was able to build on the foundations laid by CIIR's longstanding solidarity work as well as the links with the advocacy capacity-building now taking place within the country as part of the SEACA initiative described in the previous section.

Following the 1999 referendum, CIIR had recruited a Timorese, Milena Pires, to work with Timorese leaders on preparations for transition and reconstruction, including the continued threat of violence (she herself had lost a brother to assassination by a pro-Jakarta militia group). She played an important role in nurturing CIIR's advocacy and skill-share plans at

this time, including supporting the development of women's organisations and women's participation in policy-making. She later became a leading parliamentarian and in 2016 was appointed Timor-Leste's ambassador to the UN.

Taking on wide-ranging thematic scope

During the decade, ICD programmes, as this chapter outlines in fuller detail, extended their frequent yet far from exclusive focus on primary health care described in Chapter 2 to take on an extensive range of themes and issues (see Box).

The significant diversification of ICD's portfolio was a response to the changing needs and interests of partners as they sought to tackle the multiple challenges and opportunities presented by shifts in the overall political, social and economic environment surveyed at the start of this chapter. ICD, in adapting and taking forward its programme portfolio, worked to build synergies between its work areas involving different themes and issues, both within and across individual projects and country programmes as a whole.

ICD programme work areas: major themes and issues

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

- Organisational management and governance
- Strategic planning and project management
- Financial management and administrative systems
- Communications, information management and ICTs
- Research and advocacy skills
- Network development

LIVELIHOODS AND JUST ECONOMIES

- Income generation and small business development
- Sustainable agriculture, food security and rural development
- Social and economic research and policy development

SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

- Natural resource management
- Environmental education
- Environmental health and urban living conditions

GENDER, DIVERSITY AND DISCRIMINATION

- Strengthening of women's organisations and promotion of women's rights
- Masculinity
- Women's participation in politics and decision-making
- Indigenous people and minority rights
- Bilingual education
- Disability and development
- Children's rights, young people and development

PEACE, PARTICIPATION AND VOICE IN DECISION-MAKING

- Post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building
- Governance, local decision-making and participatory budgeting
- Media and communication for development
- Popular education
- Literacy

HEALTH

- Prevention of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections and rights-based awareness-raising to tackle stigma
- Primary health care and community participation in health systems and planning
- Maternal and child health



Investing in stronger programme approaches

ICD's drive to meet in-country partner demand was also accompanied by the keen ambition of country joint management teams to scale up the potential impact of their programmes. This was helped by planning focused less on discrete 'projects' and more on integrated work programmes enabled by successful fundraising. The aim was to achieve higher-level strategic impact without sacrificing the organisation's traditional strengths in tailoring its support to the needs of individual partners. Peer learning among partners and DWs was seen as an important means of meeting such needs.

Funding and making the most of common country themes

London-based ICD country desk officers and dedicated CIIR fundraisers worked closely with ICD's country representatives managing the contribution of DWs to partners on the ground to develop attractive thematic programme 'packages' for donors. These grouped interrelated 'project' initiatives and their associated DWs for presentation to donors. The strategic core funding ICD received from the UK's ODA (and, from 1997, DfID) greatly aided ICD's ability to allocate necessary matching funding in flexible ways.

Such programme packages not only had financial benefits in terms of allowing groups of DWs (rather than individual DWs in separate project placements) to be funded; they also had major programmatic advantages. In line with ICD's existing efforts and intentions, they enabled DWs working with partners on common issues to adopt a more cohesive thematic approach and step up exchange, networking, joint learning and lessons promotion within each country.

ICD's thematic diversification also encouraged the development of integrated country strategies. To this end, ICD country representatives used annual national meetings with DWs, partners, invited policy experts and specialist practitioners to discuss jointly how to maximise the impact of existing work and develop future programme plans and initiatives. The valuable sharing at such events complemented the ongoing support ICD country representatives provided to individual DWs and partners in project placements, creating a strong sense of country programmes adding up to far more than the sum of their individual parts. In some countries, 'national reference groups' were set up to bring in a wider pool of advice and facilitate outreach with wider sustainable development and human rights community.

Members of CIIR staff attending the 1996 Santo Domingo regional conference of ICD's country programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean.

DW country meeting in Peru 1993



Promoting learning, exchange and impact through regional strategies

Common thematic interests across countries, moreover, gave impetus to regional learning and planning, with regional strategies aided by periodic ICD regional conferences bringing together country staff with London staff and a representative range of partners and DWs. The conferences took stock of major country and regional trends and drew on the lessons of country strategy reviews and evaluations to enrich programme practice across the board. Such discussions created a strong basis for the organisation of region exchange visits and initiatives between DWs and partners in different countries.

Strategies varied according to the needs of country programmes in each region. In Latin America and the Caribbean with its relatively strong tradition of social movement activism, ICD placed DWs predominantly with NGOs and civil society partners. They ranged from community-based groups, grassroots membership organisations, intermediary NGOs, civil society networks, research and advocacy groups to academic institutions. In this regional setting, the challenge was how work with different types of partners operating at various levels could be translated into collective capacity for strategic influence and change empowering communities. This included working to strengthen partners' capacity to engage state bodies and public institutions in order to win their backing for supportive development action.

In Africa and the Middle East, on the other hand, DWs tended to work to a greater extent with official partners, given the newer processes of state-building and the comparatively incipient level of civil society development. That being said, civil society partnerships became an increasingly important priority in the region's country programmes over time, for example in Zimbabwe where deteriorating governance made the challenges of state partnership and the importance of independent civil society action more and more clear. Moreover, in the case of Somaliland, following the collapse of the state in Somalia, supporting the development of a strong civil society sector was a priority right from the start. It was fundamental for building peace and inclusive governance institutions.

Reaffirming project principles and attention to gender

Drawing on these developments in programming and the lessons of past work, ICD reasserted its concern with tackling the structural problems of poverty and injustice in articulating its approach to project identification and partnership development during the 1990s (see Box). This included strengthening ICD's approach to gender and redoubling efforts to make it an integral focus of project initiatives.

Project principles, building partnerships

In revisiting its project criteria in the 1990s, ICD stated that project partnerships should aim to:

- Benefit the poor
- Have a clear gender perspective
- Exchange skills and knowledge
- Promote partner self-reliance
- Challenge the causes of poverty

ICD also articulated publicly its approach to identifying and developing project partnerships. It involved a process in which:

- Local partner organisations set the agenda for development;
- ICD's country representative on the ground responds to their requests for support;
- ICD's country representative considers the partner request for support in relation to the political, social and economic context of the country and ICD's country and regional strategy;
- ICD's country representative conducts/organises an assessment of a project with the partner, based on an understanding of the operation of the 'whole organisation', in consultation with London colleagues;
- ICD and the partner decide whether ICD support is needed and the most effective form it should take;
- ICD, following joint agreement of the specific role to be played by the DW, recruits the best qualified person in terms of professional expertise, cultural understanding and commitment to sharing and learning in/through the partnership;
- ICD organises an orientation programme for the DW as s/he prepares for and takes up the assignment.

Source: Annual Reviews, various



Gender had long been a criterion in CIIR's overseas programme work – it was one of the first UK development agencies to draw up gender guidelines covering project planning, staff and DW recruitment and programme information and publicity – even though the issue, as noted in Chapter 2, had been pitched as 'addressing women's needs'. This earlier formulation, rather than reflecting a lack of awareness of the structures and forces shaping power relations between men and women, was based on recognition that promoting positive changes needed to grapple with the real-world problems facing women in their daily lives.

Nonetheless, ICD's move to stress more explicitly its commitment to women's rights and the broader concept of gender was both necessary and significant. Boosted in no small part by ICD country representatives championing such an approach on the ground, it led to an major expansion of gender-focused work, as outlined later below. As can be seen from this chapter's earlier documentation of CIIR's international advocacy work at this time, this shift was underway throughout the institute.

Pioneering Southern programme leadership and South-South cooperation

One of the most important developments from the start of the 1990s was the steady replacement of expatriate country representatives by CRs who were national citizens or enjoyed citizenship of ICD programme countries. In Zimbabwe and Yemen, for example, Clare Nyanyiwa and Abdullah Al Syari respectively replaced Chris McIvor and Wendy Lee, and by the middle of the decade all CRs in Latin America and the Caribbean were nationals. This process of nationalisation, as well as reflecting deliberate continued commitment to furthering Southern leadership and empowerment, had major advantages for ICD and CIIR overall. National CRs brought local knowledge and contacts, were better able to foster partner ownership of joint plans, and also sustain the continuity of work.

Another pioneering move, likewise novel in the UK development 'sending agency' sector at the time, was ICD's internationalisation of DW recruitment rather than mainly hiring UK professionals, which boosted multi-cultural diversity and peer exchange. By 2005, DWs working in CIIR's overall ICD programme came from 30 different countries. Particularly noteworthy was the shift to recruiting DWs from developing countries to share their expertise and knowledge with partners elsewhere in the global South. Both national country representation and South-South recruitment generated valuable benefits all-round (see Box).

DINNY HAWES

Making the most of Southern dedication and skills



Dinny Hawes was CIIR's international programmes director from 1990 to 2003.

CIIR was in the vanguard of change as one of the first UK agencies to appoint nationals as heads of country programmes. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, skill-share agencies had recruited country managers from volunteer sending countries. This meant that the form of development being proposed could always be seen as an outside imposition. Moreover, placements usually had a time limit. This threatened programme continuity as changes in personnel often meant externally driven changes in country approach.

CIIR's shift to national Country Representatives (CRs) had major benefits. It empowered local people to define and manage their own paths to development; local culture, language and knowledge were more effectively used; options for work with positive government policies and local organisations were easier to identify, explore and develop; advocacy work was supported and strengthened as CRs facilitated local links with international policy influencing; and country management placements were longer-term, providing far greater stability than previously possible.

Setting an example for success

The high quality, dedication and skills of CIIR's and Progressio's national CRs were crucial to the success of the organisation's development programmes from the early 1990s onwards. Many UK development and sending agencies now work in this way, with well-resourced, locally-staffed country programmes, but perhaps few appreciate how instrumental the CIIR-Progressio example has been in encouraging that positive change.

CIIR pioneered a further innovation in skill-share development work by introducing a policy of South-South placements, whereby DWs were recruited regionally from neighbouring countries with similar problems and experiences. Skilled Peruvians were placed in projects in Ecuador, Salvadoreans in Nicaragua, and Somalis in Yemen. This exchange benefited both the sending country and the receiving country, with the value of the new experience returned with interest as DWs returned to their own countries.



International Cooperation for Development

Already by the start of the new millennium, two thirds of ICD's development workers came from countries of the global South in a clear sign of CIIR's commitment to 'international cooperation for development' based on South-South as well as North-South exchange. This shift towards South-South DW recruitment was logical. After all, the premise of CIIR's overseas programming had always been that people and organisations in the developing world should not be seen as passive recipients of official Northern blueprints for catch-up development 'modernisation'. Rather they had their own rich qualities and strengths to offer in supporting locally driven development alternatives to change the world for the better.

In Latin America, regional South-South recruitment had considerable practical benefits in that DWs shared Spanish as a common language. This cut the need for language training and the time needed for cultural adaptation, meaning that DWs could begin work with partners immediately.

Harnessing professional commitment and expertise to local needs

Though 'capacity-building' had by now become an established term, ICD's approach strived to avoid paternalistic practice or intent. The aim of a DW was to facilitate the flowering of partners' existing potential rather than install it from outside. As noted in Chapters 2, CIIR considered solidarity to be a core feature of its overseas work, and this ethos remained as it continued DW programming as ICD.

At the same time, with the growing sophistication of international development work during the 1990s and the need to dispel lingering stereotypes of amateur 'volunteering' or perceptions of DWs being highly paid foreign technical consultants, CIIR was keen to stress the professional experience and longer-term commitment that its DWs offered to partners (see Box). Given the complex development challenges they worked on, DWs often renewed their contracts for periods longer than the minimum two years and, in some cases, would take up positions in other ICD focus countries to resume their international sharing in new settings requiring their specialist input.

What is a development worker?

"ICD recruits the best person for the challenging job of fitting in to someone else's development project. Development workers must be confident of their own skills yet capable of learning new ones from local people."

DWs are:

- Experienced and professionally qualified specialists in their field
- Recruited and placed at the request of partner organisations
- Employed by CIIR as part of its overseas ICD programme but managed by the partner organisation
- Generally in post for at least two years. Not volunteers or consultants: they are committed professionals paid a locally equivalent salary

Source: Annual Reviews, 1996/97, 1999/2000



A perceived strength of supporting partners through DWs was that, in contrast with traditional agency approaches based on project funding, the relationship revolved around professional collaboration and human exchange rather than allocation and use of money. This reduced the risks of resources distorting views of partners' support needs and priorities and also kindling power and control sensitivities. All the same, a process of effective project assessment and ICD-partner dialogue was always needed to avoid the danger of DWs being provided to occupy salaried positions that might otherwise be filled by nationals and covered locally. Just as ICD worked with partners to set milestones for the successful exchange of expertise as part of so-called 'exit strategies', it similarly strived to avoid 'gap-filling' that did not add capacity value.

Sometimes ICD's approach also involved 'flexible responses' whereby a skilled professional, at the request of the partner organisation, would be put in place for a shorter period of time to deliver specifically targeted support in relation to particular work areas or aspects of organisational performance.

Working with partners for people-centred development in a changing policy environment

This section looks at the vast array of thematic work involved in ICD's diverse programme portfolio, highlighting illustrative examples while conveying its overall thrust. Its dizzying scope emanated not so much from a lack of institutional focus but a committed attempt to grapple with the multi-dimensional nature of the sustainable development problems partner organisations dealt with. In many ways, the composition of CIIR's overseas grassroots work could not be anything but highly diverse in view of CIIR's appreciation of development complexity and its partner-led approach.

Strengthening institutions: a priority in its own right

One significant development in ICD's programming from the early 1990s was its emphasis on supporting the organisational development and institutional strengthening of partner organisations. Strengthening partners' ways of working to enhance their external performance and impact, of course, had always been the aim of CIIR's skill-share efforts. But working on their internal structures and systems now became an increasingly important area of work in itself. This was due to the challenges and opportunities posed by changes in national policy environments and also the shifting views of international development donors on the respective roles of the state and civil society.

From Southern Africa to the Horn: building the new, needing the solid

ICD's support for institutional strengthening in its country programmes in Zimbabwe and Namibia in Southern Africa and Somaliland and Yemen in the Horn of Africa/Middle East reflected the fact that both official institutions and civil society organisations were both still at relatively early stages of development or being put in place.

Newly independent Namibia: supporting ministries and NGOs

In newly independent Namibia, for example, ICD's programme, led in its initial years by Pippa Hoyland, placed professionals with the Ministry of Health and Social Services and the Ministry of Fisheries, as well as the Ministry of Education and Culture's department of adult skills (DAS). Their support included advice on strengthening the ministries' financial systems.

Meanwhile, on the civil society front, ICD also nurtured the development of Namibia's NGO Forum (NANGOF), which had been set up in 1990 to coordinate members' activities and provide services to support their sharing of skills, information and resources. In this case, an ICD development worker, John Barker, supported the development of systems to support NANGOF's institutional publishing and communications. His work involved not just supporting the development of editorial skills – he helped the community development organisation Bricks, a forum member, to produce a newspaper and worked with NANGOF to aid its production of a *Namibia Development Briefing* for national and international circulation – but also extended to providing training in marketing and subscription management. Better external communication was not possible without these internal gains.



Meanwhile, in Somaliland, the gaping holes in state service provision and resources following Somalia's collapse meant that development hopes in the putative nation rested largely on fledgling NGOs being nurtured to cope with the vast needs of reconstruction. As part of ICD's regional strategy, NANGOF, having strengthened its own expertise, was supported by ICD to share learning and advice in Somaliland.

Somaliland: nurturing fledgling civil society networks

ICD played an important role in supporting the emergence of a civil society steering committee, which held a ground-breaking [conference on partnerships for participatory development in 1995](#). It brought NGOs together to liaise with local international agencies and ministries, access international aid and support the return of Somaliland's population, most of which had been internally displaced or was living in refugee camps in neighbouring Ethiopia. Then, with the support of Comic Relief, an ICD professional facilitated the creation of the Somali umbrella group, COSONGO, with members of Namibia's NANGOF providing additional support and advice through regional exchange visits. By 1998, COSONGO, forerunner of the Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum ([SONSAF](#)), had been consolidated as a consortium in Somaliland grouping locally rooted civil society organisations better able to achieve recognised credibility and legitimacy.

Support for a socially responsive and accountable non-governmental sector was crucial. The situation was one in which international donor aid risked fuelling civil society fragmentation and resource competition as well as the incoherent proliferation of charitable welfare initiatives unconnected with the wider challenge of civil society's role in promoting socially oriented state-building.

By the early 2000s, ICD had gone on to help other network bodies emerge in Somaliland, prioritising vulnerable and marginalised groups. Progress included supporting the setting up of a disability forum and, in a partnership with UNICEF, a leadership and organisational development programme for Somaliland youth born during the civil war or raised in refugee camps.

In 2003, to help newly emerging NGOs and networks such as the Activists Network for Disabled Persons (ANDP) better organise, a Kenyan IT specialist recruited by ICD, Kenneth Njuguna, provided training on computer use and maintenance. CIIR used its ICD experience of strengthening the institutional structures of civil society organisations in Somaliland to inform the production of a manual covering the diverse features involved in the overall field of capacity-building (see Box below).

The importance of civil society coordination and support structures, besides the very existence of their role in the aftermath of war, lay in their participatory approach and their potential to promote a more inclusive political settlement in Somaliland. Such features were of manifest significance for ICD's Somali country representative, Dr Adan Abokor, who, during the 1980s, had been the target of repression by the Siad Barre regime because of his community-based work (see Quote below). Before joining ICD as a staff member in the late 1990s, he had founded the Somali Relief and Rehabilitation Organisation (SORRA) with other displaced professionals to promote participatory approaches to reconstruction. SORRA was one of the first initiatives ICD supported in responding to Somalia's collapse.

A source of good practice: drawing on the lessons of capacity strengthening in Somaliland

CIIR's 2005 publication *Capacity-building for Local NGOs: A Guidance Manual for Good Practice* drew on materials and advice originally developed by [Lainie Thomas](#), a DW from the United States. As part of her contribution to the ICD programme in Somaliland, she had supported the institutional development of the Hargeisa Voluntary Youth Committee ([HAVOYOCO](#)), a group set up to address the problems of youth after the war. A key part of this work had been to help it develop effective governance structures and gender-sensitive operational policies as prerequisites for inclusive organisational growth and financial security.

“In Somalia’s dictatorship era, I was one of a group of young professionals who tried to improve the situation of the hospital in my home town, Hargeisa, by mobilising the communities. The regime, always suspicious about community-based or self-help activities, accused us of subversion. After a brief show trial, the 20 of us were sentenced to terms in prison of 20 years to life. After eight years, following pressure from international human rights organisations, we were released from solitary confinement to a world devastated by civil war.”

Dr Adan Yousuf Abokor, ICD country representative in Somaliland, 2004

Civil society in Latin America: facing new challenges and taking on new roles

Post-conflict reconstruction was also the setting for ICD’s institutional strengthening initiatives in Central America where repression and insecurity had hindered the development of the structures and expertise now needed to deal with the demands of formal peace.

In El Salvador, ICD placed DWs to advise cooperatives run by ex-combatants on their financial management and marketing plans, for example for shrimp farming and the production of grains, salt and coffee. In Nicaragua, ICD workers helped the Nicaraguan Communal Movement (MCN) to strengthen the governance and leadership structures it needed to manage its wide portfolio of community development work. Its several hundred projects spanned the promotion of citizen’s rights, community health, housing, infrastructure and economic production.

Across Latin America as a whole, however, it was economic policy changes that posed major organisational and institutional challenges for partners. Structural adjustment programmes, particularly their earlier versions weighted heavily in favour of economic austerity, reduced state spending on essential public services and production-related support such as credit and technical assistance.

Bigger civil society – smaller, more responsive state?

The reduction of state support presented both risks and opportunities for NGOs and other civil society organisations expected to take up the slack. On the one hand, taking greater responsibility for involvement in social provision risked implicitly endorsing the roll-back of the historically higher level of state support in this region in comparison with elsewhere in the developing world, in line with free-market reform expectations of an expanded role for non-state actors. On the other hand, international donor moves to increase funding for civil society initiatives, in the light of rising concern over the social costs of adjustment, offered groups an opportunity. They could influence the nature of social support so that it better met community needs, including through advocacy pressing for stronger official financing and policy backing to deliver at greater scale.

Either way, the situation placed strains on civil society organisations and presented new challenges. For example, increased donor funding, often limited to covering activities rather than running costs, came with application, reporting and accounting requirements that many had not faced before. Such conditions risked ruling out smaller civil society groups. In turn, it heightened the responsibilities of larger NGOs as intermediary support bodies, who juggled donor obligations with the need to safeguard their prime accountability to the communities they aimed to serve.

Donor funding also risked stimulating a rapid growth of civil society programmes that was not matched by the commensurate development of the organisational structures and systems needed to manage and make the most of resources. With partners interested in making stronger institutional arrangements to deal with the changing circumstances, the 1990s saw ICD increase its support in areas such as management, project planning, fundraising, finance and administration. For instance, Clare Creo, Sarah Smith Pearce and [Judith Turbyne](#), DWs supporting partners in Honduras, examined experiences of fundraising in Central America with their 1999 report, *It All Adds Up*.



Livelihoods: from just survival to supporting productive alternatives

Support for institutional strengthening was especially relevant to income generation and sustainable livelihoods initiatives. Projects of this kind became increasingly important during this period because of the impact of economic changes on traditional sources of income and employment.

Southern Africa: support for cooperatives and small businesses

The impact of structural adjustment in Zimbabwe in the early 1990s, for example, saw revived interest in cooperatives as a means of coping with economic hardship. ICD provided financial, technical and training support to the Organisation of Collective Cooperatives of Zimbabwe (OCCZIM), and later in the decade placed a horticulture and marketing adviser, Fatima Jawara, with the Manicaland Development Association. Providing advice for small businesses also became an important area of work at this time. A DW, Josephine Mogire, helped Zivagwe district council develop a business support unit, for instance.

Similarly, with the SWAPO government in a now independent Namibia keen to improve livelihoods for the majority of the population excluded from economic opportunities under apartheid rule, ICD's partnership with the ministry of education and culture's DAS included supporting the development of small businesses. In the early 1990s, ICD development worker Claudy Vouhé helped DAS develop local and national strategies for supporting small enterprises such as bakeries, sewing cooperatives and tin-smithing. She also trained regional government workers on business management and marketing.

In both Zimbabwe and Namibia, the difficult legacy of minority white rule made its presence felt in political and social tensions surrounding rural livelihoods, notably over access to land and the rights of poor farmers and agricultural workers. CIIR's international policy and ICD departments joined forces to work with partners to highlight and address the problems (see Box).

Private property, public neglect: tackling farm workers' rights in Southern Africa

As well as working to support small-scale producers, including on land rights, ICD took on projects to address problems facing agricultural workers. From the late 1990s, for example, an ICD DW, Lynn Walker, helped to develop the regional structures and capacity of the Farm Community Trust of Zimbabwe (FCTZ), which was working to tackle exploitation and discrimination on commercial farms and change owner attitudes to labour conditions.

Political violence and intimidation in the run-up to 2000 elections brought rural tensions to international attention, though not necessarily their underlying complexity. In contrast with the publicised predicament of white owners facing government-sponsored occupations, the plight of black workers, largely excluded from land resettlement programmes, received little attention. To redress the balance, CIIR published a briefing, *Land, Power and Poverty*, to take a more inclusive look at the contentious land and commercial farm issues fuelling economic and political turmoil in Zimbabwe.

In 2001, CIIR also organised a UK tour of farm workers from Zimbabwe and Namibia and later published a CIIR Comment on *Land reform in Southern Africa*.

Urban income generation in Latin America

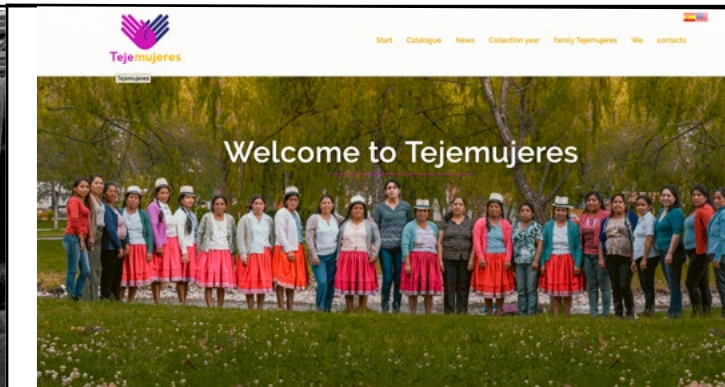
It was in Latin America and the Caribbean, however, that ICD undertook the widest range of support for income generation and livelihoods projects. Some of the initiatives were urban-based. In Peru, for example, ICD's programme, now led by a Peruvian national, Dina Guerra, placed a German technical trainer, Helmut Viereck, with the [Guamán Poma de Aya-la Centre](#) in the mid-1990s to improve the living conditions of the urban poor in highland tourist city Cusco through carpentry. As well as improving technical skills, the initiative strengthened the business acumen of the centre's students to help them set up their own micro-enterprises. In support, the partner provided a low-interest credit programme and the Ministry of Education introduced a recognised student diploma scheme. The partner won contracts to carry out work on a new bank and hotel.

Meanwhile, in rapidly urbanising El Salvador, where women represented a majority of those working in the burgeoning informal sector, ICD placed an enterprise development



and credit adviser with the Salvadorean Foundation for Reconstruction and Development (REDES) in the mid-1990s. Alongside boosting money management, marketing and business skills, an aim of the project was to help REDES lobby for better policy support for women. As entrepreneurs, women faced exclusion from the formal banking sector, and with many of them single mothers and heads of households deprived of formal education, efforts to boost their living standards through stronger economic participation could not be separated from attention to vital issues such as childcare and literacy. In Honduras, a Croatian economist placed by ICD, Vesna Truputec, similarly supported female street and market vendors in Tegucigalpa, the capital.

Left: German ICD development worker Helmut Vierek advising Peruvian counterparts involved in carpentry schemes run by the Guamán Poma de Ayala centre. ©Annie Bungeroth
Right: Tejemujeres' sweater marketing was just one partnership that CIIR, through ICD development workers, became involved in with the Ecuadorean NGO SENDAS



Supporting women's economic empowerment

As can be seen, advancing the position of women was often a defining feature of ICD's livelihoods projects, including those supporting sustainable agriculture and rural development, which made up most of the income generation and livelihoods portfolio. Some of these initiatives dealt with the challenges of rural-urban migration and the need for new approaches to sustaining the rural economy to benefit local communities.

In Ecuador, for example, a Nicaraguan DW, Alna Ulloa Young, supported the income generation work of the Popular Union of Women in Loja (UPML), whose ICD-supported projects in the early 1990s included jam production and marketing. ICD also placed a specialist in handicraft marketing, Robin Young, with the Cuenca-based Services for the Alternative Development of the South foundation (SENDAS), an NGO specialising in gender and sustainable development. His aim was to help SENDAS strengthen the competitiveness and market position of a women's cooperative in Gualaceo district which produced woollen sweaters and other garments.

The Gualaceo women, hitherto exploited as individual entrepreneurs by middlemen paying low prices, had grouped together in *Tejemujeres* (Weaving Women) to increase production volumes and improve garment design, quality and originality. As a result, they were able to access international markets and sell at higher prices. Higher income improved not just their economic situation and that of their families – men often having migrated to the coastal plains or even abroad to find work – but also their self-esteem, sense of independence and social status.

Promoting leadership and recognition

In other projects, the prime aim was to help strengthen women's leadership and representation in partner organisations involved in agricultural production and rural development. This was the case with ICD's support for Nicaragua's *National Union of Agricultural Workers and Ranchers* where DWs combined training in management, bookkeeping and gender to help UNAG's women's section drive growth in union female membership and women's occupation of leadership positions. Similar efforts were made to boost women's participation in a regional organisation coordinating peasant union federations in the province of Sánchez Ramírez in the Dominican Republic.

Other livelihoods initiatives supported partner efforts to promote female capacity and recognition in occupations and expertise areas not traditionally associated with women. In Nicaragua, an ICD carpentry trainer, Helen Shears, supported a women's construction project in the second half of the 1990s run by the Women Builders' Association of Condega (AMCC). Along with another DW specialising in construction, Isis Rowan, she helped the women to triple their income by the early 2000s. In the Dominican Republic ICD's support for the country's NGO Network on Women's Issues included vocational training in fields such as electronics and industrial machinery.

Following the 1992 peace accords, in El Salvador, ICD had supported the CONTA book-keeping and accountancy initiative to support women's role in post-war economic reconstruction projects, including returning women refugees. In building skills, one of its main aims was to overcome the prejudices of male decision-makers that women were ill-suited to running businesses and handling money. Bookkeeping skills, ostensibly technical, were seen as key to changing gender relations and creating the basis for greater transparency and democratic accountability within organisations.

A gender-focused approach was also part of ICD's support for the Alternative Association for the Integral Development of Women ([ADIM](#)) in Nicaragua. Two DWs from Costa Rica specialising in business management, Sandra Monge and Elizabeth Mora, were helping the organisation support some 1,200 female entrepreneurs in three districts near Managua, the capital, in 2004.

Scaling up production and markets

ICD sought to maximise the value of its contribution by tackling several issues within a single project as part of the integrated community development approach described in Chapter 2. In Honduras, for example, ICD combined support for women, community health and improved nutrition as part of its support for agricultural development projects. As in the Dominican Republic, where ICD workers supported the women's organisation [CE-MUJER](#), this included supporting women's involvement in community-based horticulture producing an increasing range of nutritious foods for domestic and local consumption and sale in neighbouring communities.

As the 1990s progressed, such ICD-supported livelihoods projects placed greater emphasis on scaling up impact through the creation of producer networks. In central Honduras, ICD placed several DW marketing specialists with member organisations of the Alternative Community Marketing Network ([COMAL](#)). The network enabled women's groups, peasant farmers, handicraft artisans and street vendors to strengthen their local voice and market position. They also secured wider national and Central American outlets for their products.

In the country's north, ICD helped the Colón Regional Agro-Forestry Cooperative Atlántida (COATLAHL) increase its sales of high-quality furniture made from traditional hardwoods by its peasant producer members. They added value by processing natural resources rather than extracting and selling raw materials. The cooperative won environmental certification awards, enabling it to access foreign markets. Both COMAL and COATLAHL benefited from ICD expertise sourced regionally, with two of the DWs, marketing specialists Bertha Martínez and Danilo Dávila, recruited in Nicaragua.

Working to tackle policy barriers

Another increasingly important feature of ICD programme initiatives during this period, in line with its project criteria stressing the need to tackle the structural causes of poverty, was their attempt to engage with the policy environment affecting projects.

In both Nicaragua and Honduras, for example, ICD development workers worked with universities and non-governmental think tanks to strengthen local policy expertise on issues such as agricultural modernisation and regional economic integration. With the mid-2000s advent of a Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) with the United States, regional integration was attracting renewed attention. However, smaller local producers, in the absence of a fairer playing field and effective official support to enhance their competitiveness, would struggle to cope in an era of so-called 'free' trade in which subsidised large-scale US agricultural producers had enjoyed a long head start. It was this imbalance that ICD's support for policy partners sought to address.

ICD similarly responded to demand in Ecuador for DWs with policy knowledge as well as technical expertise on the rural economy. Mounting small producer concerns over official moves to further open rural markets to competition and investment by larger-scale and politically powerful businesses, including risks to water access and land rights, had led to a powerful series of indigenous uprisings from 1990 onwards and even contributed to changes of government. The impact of free-market reform and international trade policy, as in Central America, was a mounting concern in Ecuador and elsewhere across the region (see Box below).

In helping partners in their efforts to improve living conditions, ICD's work was about more than helping people to get by. It was aimed at working with them to promote an economy based on greater cooperation and solidarity, fairer access and control of productive resources, and the protection of people's rights.

Facilitating partner exchange in Ecuador on regional trade justice

In 2002, as Quito hosted a hemispheric summit of the hitherto closed-door inter-governmental negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, ICD, with the support of its DWs, helped partners analyse, share and promote their concerns over the FTAA's potential harms on economic development and social justice in Ecuador and the wider Latin America and Caribbean region.

ICD created further opportunities for partners' discussion and advocacy of people-centred policies in 2004 when it helped to organise workshops, with the support of Angelique Orr, a British consultant, around the Americas Social Forum held in Quito. In 2005, the FTAA negotiations were abandoned following the concerns of Brazil and Argentina over their existing direction and their outright rejection by Venezuela then led by Hugo Chávez.

As part of its work on globalisation and efforts to create stronger synergies between CIIR's IPD and ICD programmes (see final section of this chapter), CIIR drew attention to the dangers of CAFTA and the FTAA through articles in its newsletter for members, CIIR News, and its successor, Interact magazine. The Central American trade negotiations were also relevant to ICD's work in the Dominican Republic, as the country later joined the talks and ratified the eventual CAFTA-DR agreement with Washington.

Protecting the environment for the benefit of people

ICD's concern with power and control in its livelihoods work was shown over this period with an increasingly strong focus on the protection and sustainable management of natural resources.

Seeds of change for small-scale farmers

From the start of the 1990s, ICD's work with partners to support small farmers and people-centred rural development initiatives focused on agricultural approaches such as agro-ecology – farming based on local control of productive resources and environmentally sustainable production methods. This work was particularly strong and took place at this time mainly in its Latin America and Caribbean country programmes.

Andean action on food security and productive resources

ICD's work with partners in Ecuador involved in agricultural development, for example, included placing an agronomist with the Andean Centre for Rural Technology (CATER) in the mid-1990s. Kate Gold, a British DW, worked with the partner to protect farmers' access to and control over genetic resources, develop and improve traditional varieties of native crops and avoid their substitution by imports. In addition to increasing income and improving nutrition, the aim was to ensure long-term food security based on protection of natural resources, avoiding unnecessary farmer dependence on expensive inputs and technologies that also posed risks to the environment.

With Ecuador the home of world-important crops and endowed with a bio-diverse environment enabling agricultural diversification, this work was strategically relevant to the country's future. ICD also drew on its strengths to share lessons with partners in neighbouring Peru where sustainable agriculture in turn became a strong programme focus. ICD, for instance, recruited DWs to support the Ecumenical Centre for Promotion and Social Action ([CEDEPAS](#)) in Cajamarca and the Guamán Poma de Ayala Centre in Cusco promoting Andean production and conservation methods.

ICD won the support of the UK's Big Lottery Fund to run an Andean natural resource management project in the two countries, 'Our Land, Water and Future', in the first half of the 2000s. It promoted agro-ecology, better local water and land management, stronger marketing strategies for organic produce and the integration of a gender focus in partners' work supporting peasant farmers.

Dominican diversification and farmer-to-farmer regional exchanges

In the Dominican Republic, ICD worked from the second half of the 1990s with several local organisations to promote agro-ecological techniques, including training on soil conservation, use of natural fertilisers and management of plant diseases. The partners included the Centre for Sustainable Agriculture and Appropriate Technology (CASTA), supported by extension trainer Hamish Osborn, and the Peasant Federation of Salcedo (CAFESA) in the central valley of Villa Altigracia where ICD placed a veterinary trainer, Sean Granville-Ross.

In the Dominican Republic's mountainous north, two ICD professionals from Germany and Honduras also helped the Agro-ecological Production and Multiple Services Cooperative of Solimán (COOPASOL) over 1996-2002 not just to bring coffee, its main crop, to a larger market through links with companies, but also to diversify production. The wider range of



crops promoted, including citrus fruits, avocados, bananas, herbs and vegetables, protected soil and gave vital shade for coffee. The cooperative, grouping women and men, won official organic certification in 2002 and its training centre stepped up promotion of organic production in local communities and across the country.

This initiative with COOPSAL also benefited from, and contributed to, the sharing of regional expertise, both through ICD's placement of another Honduran DW with COOPSAL, Pedro Bacca, and the organisation of regional exchange visits with farmers from Haiti and Ecuador. One approach successfully promoted through this sharing was the farmer-to-farmer method where each person trained in sustainable agriculture demonstrated good production and conservation practices to others in order to encourage their continued replication. ICD's Dominican Republic programme also took part in exchanges of learning with ICD's country programme in Nicaragua where partner [UNAG](#) was a leading practitioner and advocate of the farmer-to-farmer approach.

With many Nicaraguan farmers hard hit by soil erosion and climate change, sustainable practices were vital for UNAG, which promoted the production of speciality organic coffee able to command higher prices in markets that otherwise failed to reward producers fairly.

From environmental disaster to promoting sustainable practices

ICD's approach with partners stood in contrast with the environmental and human costs of natural resource exploitation pursued by elites with the support of governments keen to boost economic growth. No starker illustration of the latter's dangers could have been provided than the storms hitting Central America and the Caribbean in 1998. Hurricane Mitch left tens of thousands dead and millions homeless in Honduras and Nicaragua, while Hurricane George destroyed the bulk of crops in the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

Hurricane Mitch: the underlying story

Largely reported by the media as a 'natural' disaster, the underlying story of Mitch, as underscored by CIIR's 2001 publication [Storm Warnings](#), was one of over-exploitation of natural resources. Uncontrolled logging, slash-and-burn agriculture, land clearance for cattle and intensive cash crop production had exacerbated the vulnerability of Honduras and Nicaragua to the hurricane's damage. Deforestation and soil erosion meant saturated land was quickly turned into devastating mud tides.

Alongside immediate support for partners tackling the emergency in the two countries (see Box below), ICD worked to support a longer-term response. ICD's work with the COAT-LAHL sustainable forestry cooperative in Honduras – offering an alternative to the large-scale timber extraction afflicting the country – was one immediate example. Another was ICD's 2002 launch of a UK Community Fund-supported environmental vulnerability project, which worked with nine organisations in Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador.

A Central America campaign of practical support and awareness

Complementing partners' growing expertise in sustainable agriculture as a key livelihood strategy, ICD's three-year initiative in Central America ran environmental education campaigns, set up community monitoring committees and provided training in land planning and water use. It also engaged local agencies working on natural resource management and promoted longer-term support for sustainability by working with teachers and school children to raise public awareness of environmental issues.

In Honduras for example, an ICD development worker from Spain, Ruth Escribano, worked with the [PROLANSATE](#) foundation, which managed several national parks in the Tela area. She helped it to develop and run an environmental education programme with local communities and promote responsible eco-tourism on the country's north coast. The initiative included producing with the municipal education and tourism units of Tela a popular manual in Spanish and the Garifuna language for use by teachers and schoolchildren.

In the three countries the project achieved land reforestation, crop diversification and the greater involvement of women in training and productive activities. It also fostered better conditions for stronger interaction between the target groups, narrowing the typical gap between official planners, environmental 'specialists' and communities supposedly lacking awareness and knowledge of the issues at stake. Work with partners put local people in a stronger position to provide their own input into discussions of better practice and encourage agencies to consider how poverty and inequality affected their situation. This inclusive multi-stakeholder approach drew on the lessons of a similar initiative ending in Peru (see second box below).



Helping Honduran and Nicaraguan partners to weather the storm and sharing emergency expertise with El Salvador

Though not a disaster and emergency relief organisation, CIIR, through its ICD programme, played an important part in supporting partner efforts to overcome the Mitch crisis afflicting Honduras and Nicaragua. ICD redeployed DWs to communities where they could offer skills in construction, communication and post-trauma counselling; used its strong contacts with local partners to support the coordination and channelling of disaster relief funds from CIIR members and large UK agencies to the most affected; and recruited short-term DWs from the Dominican Republic specialising in sanitation and epidemic control to support the emergency response. ICD worked closely with partners such as Nicaragua's [MCN](#), which mobilised 140,000 people to fight disease, ran shelters, distributed clothes and sent a team to help in Honduras. CIIR members raised an exceptional £42,000 in response to an institutional appeal.

Supporting longer-term emergency capacity: communication and gender

ICD also responded in ways that were in keeping with its long-term development purpose. Following Mitch, Nicaraguan organisations set up an NGO civil coordination body for emergency relief and reconstruction (CCER) and ICD placed two DWs, Brian Linneker and Elizabeth Light, to help it to develop its information management and communication work.

Meanwhile another partner, [Puntos de Encuentro](#) (Meeting Points), where ICD had a gender specialist, [Sarah Bradshaw](#), developed recommendations for addressing the impact of emergencies on women. Women's organisations had led many of the organised responses to Mitch and the disaster had raised many gender issues, as analysed by Bradshaw in CIIR's 2001 publication, *Dangerous Liaisons*.

In 2001, ICD's Nicaraguan partner, the AMCC, visited El Salvador to exchange good practices on involving women in house-building with United Communities of Usulután (COMUS), another ICD partner, involved in reconstruction after earthquakes early that year. DWs Jo Quinn and Petrona López shared their Nicaraguan experience of dealing with the mental health impacts of disaster with Salvadorean partners such as the Anaya Montes Women's Movement known as [Las Mélicas](#).

Unearthing the damage of mining

In promoting alternative approaches on the environment and natural resources, however, ICD's partners often faced opposition from policy-makers and powerful groups persisting with damaging practices to protect their interests. In Honduras, for example, logging companies pushed for greater power over forestry management. Members of the NGO coordination body [ASONOG](#), an ICD partner, faced death threats and intimidation for their protests over water pollution by mining companies.

As part of growing ICD support for media and communications initiatives to raise awareness of structural problems affecting partners' work on the ground (see later section), in Peru a Canadian DW, journalist [Stephanie Boyd](#), worked with ICD partner [Guarango Cine y Video](#) to produce a film, *Choropampa: The Price of Gold*. It highlighted nationally and internationally the environmental impacts of mining, which was rapidly becoming one of the main sources of social conflict in the country.

The film countered claims by the Yanacocha gold mine, linked to the US corporate giant Newmont, that the problems caused by a 2000 mercury spill in the highland village of Choropampa had been resolved. Over the next years, the film was shown to World Bank officials and US Congress members as part of a Washington-based 'No Dirty Gold' campaign, won film awards in Spain and continued to be well received by audiences. It was the first of a trilogy of influential films that Boyd and Guarango produced over the 2000s on the damage of mining and attacks on environmental and human rights defenders in Peru. Scrutiny of this kind, along with rising community protests, meant that the damage and risks of mining became a much stronger focus of debate than in the past, both by the mainstream media and at Peruvian and foreign government levels.

Peru: a lesson in environmental education

From the later 1990s to 2001 ICD worked with diverse partner types in Lima and Cusco to promote inclusive environmental action in the face of rapid urbanisation and changing urban-rural links. The partners included community-focused education NGOs, which undertook curriculum development, teacher training and outreach to schools, children and parents to promote environmental awareness; a specialist NGO supporting and advocating local environmental health, clean water and sanitation; and a Latin American academic forum providing training for environmental professionals and technical advice and support for officials and planners.

Linking communities and professionals

The aim of the environmental education initiative was to combine immediate grassroots gains with longer-run change as future professionals recognised the need for stronger sustainable environmental approaches informed by communities. One example of progress by the partners was that of the Office of Environmental Advice and Consulting (OACA), which ICD had helped to nurture since its foundation in 1992 as the only environmental NGO working with disadvantaged social groups. OACA set up a successful waste treatment system in San Mateo and began work with local government, community groups and schools to clean up the Rímac river basin. This promised benefits both for 47,000 people in surrounding communities and for Lima as recipient of most of its water from this source.

CIIR analysed the achievements and lessons of ICD's initiative, with partner case studies, in *Education for the Future: Environment and Sustainable Development in Peru*, edited by ICD development worker Lucien O Chauvin. The report, also available in Spanish, assessed ICD's initiative in relation to Agenda 21, the UN's voluntary plan for promoting sustainable development which had been agreed at the 1992 Rio summit.



HIV and AIDS: positive work in testing times

Economic reforms in the global South under adjustment programmes supported by the IFIs were problematic for ICD's country programmes working on other issues in addition to livelihoods. In Zimbabwe, cuts in spending on public services imposed difficult social costs. Together with the deteriorating political situation, they meant the country was in a weaker position to deal with the devastation of HIV and AIDS. By the start of the new millennium, one in every three of Zimbabwe's adults was living with HIV or AIDS, and average life expectancy had dropped to 34 years from 65 in 1990. Yet health spending had been cut and user fees introduced.

The scale of the HIV and AIDS crisis across Southern Africa meant that hopes for development progress rested on tackling the epidemic, and ICD made this a central programme priority in Zimbabwe and Namibia. It also stepped up efforts to extend its response to Yemen and Somaliland, both countries with lower prevalence rates but where partners were worried by the threat and keen to take preventive action, and also began to address the issue in Latin America and the Caribbean.

By the early 2000s, global pressure had intensified for developing countries to have effective access to affordable anti-retroviral drugs to deal with the crisis, as reflected by UN declarations and mounting criticism of pharmaceutical industry opposition to the ability of governments to override WTO trade rules on intellectual property in order to protect public health. ICD, however, while welcoming the value of such global advocacy, dealt with the challenge of HIV and AIDS through complementary grassroots work. This involved promoting official and NGO support for wider community-based solutions, due to the crucial role of human relationships and cultural attitudes in driving infection rates and shaping responses to the crisis.

Promoting wider strategies: prevention, counselling, care and support

One strand of ICD's strategy involved supporting partner initiatives promoting voluntary testing as an essential foundation for effective programmes on HIV and AIDS. For ICD and its partners, testing for HIV had benefits for individuals, their sexual partners and communities if handled in a sensitive, supportive and non-coercive way. Joint work thus involved a comprehensive approach combining prevention, counselling, care and support.

Strengthening services in Zimbabwe and Namibia

With this aim, ICD placed a HIV and AIDS community health specialist, Sarah God-free, with the Zimbabwe AIDS Prevention and Support Organisation (ZAPSO) in 2000 to strengthen voluntary counselling and confidential testing (VCCT) in the country. The DW, building on ZAPSO's successful establishment of a VCCT service in Harare townships, supported the partner's efforts to replicate the model outside the capital and open VCCT centres in other towns and districts, providing training to make the service as accessible and welcoming as possible. In the late 1990s, ICD doctors David Friend and Simon Rothwell had supported district rural hospitals to help vital rural clinics act as referral centres.

In Namibia, meanwhile, ICD emphasised targeting young people and worked closely with the state, with several DWs enabling strategies to tackle HIV and AIDS to be officially mainstreamed. One DW, Elaine Pevsner, worked with the Ministry of Youth and Sport from 1994 to draw up a national youth health education programme, using the data that another DW, Eileen O'Meara, had earlier helped the ministry to gather. By the start of the next decade another ICD professional, Diane Moody, had helped the ministry to develop a network of clinics which provided confidential, reliable medical advice about sex, HIV and AIDS and reproductive health in youth centres.

By this time, DW Paul Pope, who went on to become Progressio's HIV and AIDS advocacy coordinator, had also worked with Namibia's Ministry of Social Services to train social workers on sex education and youth health issues. The aim in turn was to build the inclusion of such issues in recognised training programmes, with a view to sustaining longer-term impact. ICD also provided support to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Health's national AIDS coordination unit. ICD, in line with its strategy of combining appropriate state partnerships with support for nurturing civil society in the country, helped the Namibia Network of AIDS Services Organisations ([NANASO](#)) to strengthen its coordination.

Towards national strategies in Somaliland and Yemen

In promoting appropriate service provision, awareness-raising targeting senior government and health administration policy-makers, security forces, NGOs and media was a key approach, including through the promotion of research findings. In 1999, for



Through its ICD programme, CIIR's work with partners to promote rights-based approaches to HIV prevention took stronger and stronger shape in Yemen and Somaliland from 2000. A key Yemeni partner was the Abu Musa Al-Ashary association, which encouraged faith leaders and communities to play a positive role in tackling the challenge.

Top: a follow-up HIV training event held in Aden in 2007 (© David Tanner)

example, two DWs, Sue Lucas and Gillian Duffy, enabled the first comprehensive HIV and AIDS survey in Somaliland to be carried out, with findings subsequently shared with local organisations, health workers and religious organisations.

As part of ICD's promotion of regional exchange, this research experience in Somaliland also informed the holding of a major multi-stakeholder conference in neighbouring Yemen in 2000. Following this event, ICD was asked and went on to help Yemeni partners to develop a national programme on HIV and AIDS, with a VCCT training programme as a central component. In 2004, a DW, Aidan Strain, delivered Yemen's first ever training on HIV and AIDS counselling. In the interim, ICD had built HIV and AIDS understanding into its longstanding and continued training of Yemeni health workers. It similarly launched a pilot programme for health professionals in Somaliland, with training provided by ICD's DW, Dr Abdirashid Hashi Abdi.

Let's talk about sex: starting a conversation with faith leaders and communities on HIV and AIDS

One innovative development in ICD's support for awareness-raising and tackling stigma was its recognition of the crucial need to engage faith leaders in view of their moral authority and role in shaping public attitudes – for good or for bad – on HIV and AIDS. This was the case in Somaliland and Yemen where ICD began to organise workshops specifically to engage and sensitise faith leaders in predominantly Muslim societies.

Working with and through faith structures

ICD was aware that the failure of many faith leaders to speak openly, publicly and positively about HIV and AIDS, and in particular to address issues of stigma, shame, denial and discrimination, had hindered effective HIV policies, prevention and care. Moreover, where religious leaders and their followers took a moralistic judgmental stance, blaming those living with HIV or AIDS for their condition, they exacerbated the scale and impact of the problems. By contrast, where religious leaders and faith communities could be positively engaged, they had a vital role to play in galvanising support for effective interventions.

In 2002, ICD successfully brought together 30 religious leaders at a workshop in Somaliland to identify how they could prevent and control HIV and AIDS. This pioneering event, supported by DW Sa'ada Abdi Ahmed, sparked wide local media coverage and significant interest among participants in follow-up. It followed the earlier organisation of a joint delegation of government, religious and women's leaders to Uganda where they learnt about efforts within the country's Muslim community, such as those of the Islamic Medical Association of Uganda ([IMAU](#)), to tackle HIV and AIDS through Islamic structures.

Building on the piloting of such action in Somaliland and then Yemen, targeting religious leaders of all faiths and religions would later become a core feature of CIIR's and then Pro-gressio's work on HIV and AIDS, including discussion of attitudes to sex and safe sex, as Chapter 4 describes. In the immediate term, the sharing of country experience at an ICD regional conference in Uganda in 2003 led to the launch of work with faith-based organisations in Zimbabwe on HIV and AIDS awareness.

Engaging the Catholic Church

At an overall institutional level, CIIR, working with overseas Church partners, used its UK base to widen debates specifically on the global position of the Catholic Church and the attitudes and responsibilities of Catholics on HIV and AIDS. It did so with the vital backing of Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor as the organisation's president, who was supportive of CIIR using its independence to speak out, despite the eventualities of attracting criticism.

With its official opposition to condom use detracting from discussion of the Church's contribution to tackling the pandemic, CIIR made the development challenges and sensitive moral issues involved in tackling HIV and AIDS the topical focus of its 2002 AGM and a follow-up event (see Box below). AGM speakers engaged CIIR members in discussing their interventions, which advocated moving beyond moralistic encouragement of responsible behaviour to recognise that condom use, while 'preventing conception', could crucially be seen as a means of 'preventing the transmission of death'.

To promote inter-church dialogue, CIIR also published in its Comment series two reflections on Christian responses to HIV/AIDS by the [Ecumenical Foundation of Southern Africa](#), one based on a feminist perspective, the other on the importance of mobilising churches to take greater responsibility for addressing HIV and AIDS and linking the effort to the fight against poverty.

Preventing HIV through support for sexual and reproductive health and rights

Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and tackling gender inequality was a fundamental aim in ICD's capacity support for partners' awareness-raising on HIV and AIDS.

Power in relationships: targeting women and youth

With women at a much higher risk of HIV infection and contracting the AIDS virus, ICD, for example, worked with Zimbabwe's Women and AIDS Support Network ([WASN](#)) in the second half of the 1990s to tackle women's lack of power in relationships, including over decisions on when to have sex and partner use of condoms. An associated objective of WASN, supported by DW Felicity Snowsill, was to provide a forum for women living with HIV or AIDS to discuss their problems and overcome isolation. Improved mental health was vital to the confidence they needed to influence community attitudes to their situation. HIV, in the words of WASN, needed to mean 'hope is vital'.

Targeting youth was often a key aim in this work. This was the case in ICD's work in Namibia where DW Eileen O'Meara helped the Ministry of Youth to compile data on young people's health problems and attitudes to sex, gender and relationships and produce a youth

HELENA MOLYNEUX

Challenging issues for Catholics: a reflection

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This was a testing time for changing attitudes to HIV and AIDS, not least those within the Catholic Church. After much research, theological reflection and discussion, CIIR developed a [position statement](#) on HIV and AIDS which was then regarded as radical, covering issues of stigma, prevention and care.

Bravery and deep emotions

Kevin Dowling, Bishop of Rustenburg in South Africa and head of the HIV/AIDS office of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, was our guest speaker at the 2002 AGM and at the following day's workshop, along with Brigitt Syamalevwe, a Catholic community worker and teacher from Zambia. She had bravely decided to speak out in her country on living with HIV, having caught the virus from her husband, and was part of a community of households caring for several hundred children, many orphaned. Brigitte sadly died of AIDS herself some time later. The workshop's aim was to share and develop CIIR's thinking about HIV and AIDS and our future work. The issues we were discussing were not academic. I will not forget the deep emotions the two speakers felt and had to deal with during the workshop.

health profile for the country. The research laid the basis for the work of the youth centres in preventing HIV infection described earlier, including drop-in advice for young women and men. The highest rate of HIV infection was among girls and young women aged 14-30.

Changing public perceptions and attitudes

Meanwhile, in Nicaragua, ICD took forward further partnerships with the gender and development organisation [Puntos de Encuentro](#) (Meeting Points) whose institutional structures ICD had helped to develop with the support of a Scottish DW, Veronica Campanile, between 1997 and 2003. The work involved supporting the organisation's popular education and media and communication initiatives to tackle HIV and AIDS as a taboo subject, engage youth on sexual health and gender discrimination issues affecting HIV prevention, and also change wider public attitudes on sex and gender roles.

Charlotte Weinberg, a British DW, provided editorial advice, support and training for radio programmes and popular television soap operas produced by Puntos de Encuentro. They included [Sexto Sentido](#) (Sixth Sense) which challenged gender norms, for example attitudes to the purchase and use of condoms, and raised public debate on discrimination and stigmatisation affecting those living with HIV or AIDS. The work laid a basis for inter-generational dialogue on the issues at stake.

Similar initiatives were taking place elsewhere in country programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean as CIIR, through ICD, made them part of a strong foray into the communication for development field (see later section below). In Ecuador, for example, DW Bárbara Ortiz worked to boost the media and communication work of civil society partners tackling gender stereotypes and gender inequality, including as a central issue in the battle against HIV and AIDS.



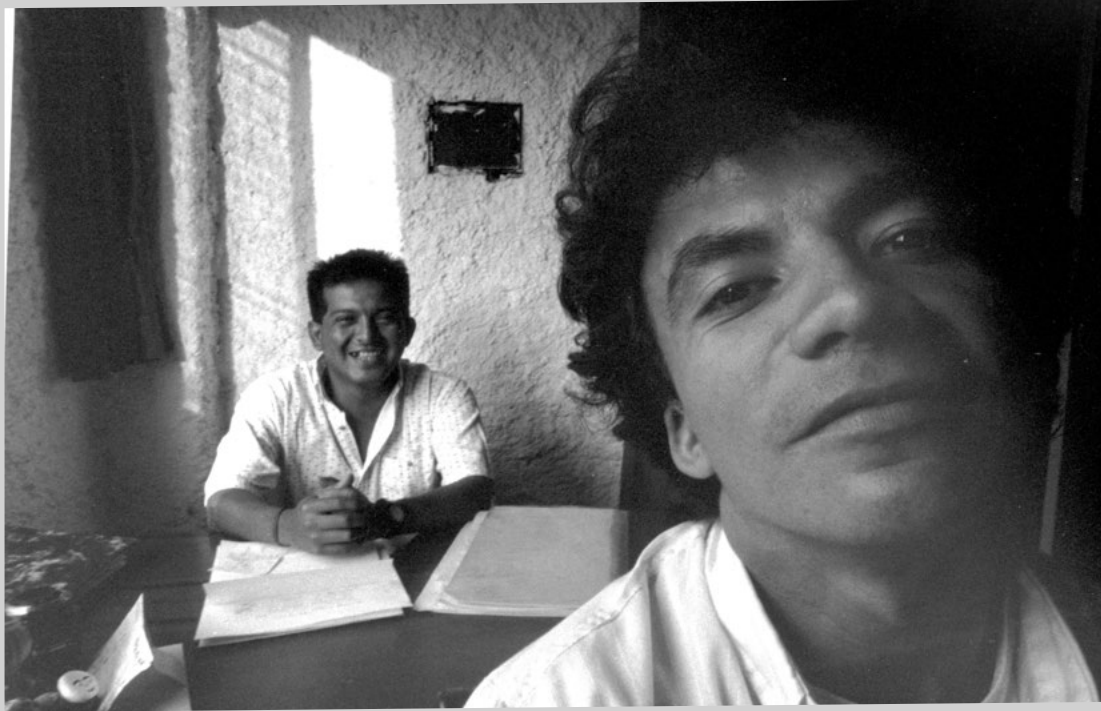
In the early days of the AIDS pandemic in Peru, PROSA was established by a group of young men living with HIV/AIDS as a support group.

They quickly gained professional experience and went from being dismissed by state and other HIV/AIDS institutions as a mere peer support group to being respected as a very professional and invaluable organisation advancing the rights and status of people living with HIV/AIDS in Peru.

ICD supported PROSA with two DWs.

In 1995 ICD supported Annie Bungeroth for three months at the end of her contract with TAFOS to allow her to concentrate on her project about HIV/AIDS in Lima, *'Peru: In the Shadow of AIDS'*

Top: Julio César Cruz, one of the founders of PROSA with Pablo Ana María



Middle: César Rossell, president and founder of PROSA in one of his first meetings at the Ministry of Health in a professional capacity.



Bottom: Celebration Mass on World AIDS Day - the first time that the church had held such a celebration in Peru.

© Annie Bungeroth

Rising to the growing HIV and AIDS challenge in Latin America

ICD support for such efforts in Nicaragua and Ecuador was part of a concerted effort by CIIR to launch a wider programme of work on HIV and AIDS in Latin America and the Caribbean in the late 1990s and into the new millennium. Though the challenges had not reached the pervasive scale of focus countries in Southern Africa, the region was experiencing rising HIV infection rates.

Sometimes ICD's work involved working with partner organisations specifically dedicated to tackling HIV and AIDS, with DWs bringing solid professional advice and experience to strengthen their practices and promotion of HIV prevention and care. This was the case of the ASONAPVISIDAH national association in Honduras, supported by an ICD-recruited doctor, Adolfo Vidal, for instance, as well as **PROSA** in Peru, supported by DWs Susana Araujo and Ana Teresa Rodríguez, who worked to bolster its progress as a leading organisation set up by and for people living with HIV or AIDS (PLWHA). PROSA supported successful lobbying for national legislation for access to treatment in 2004 and was playing a vital role in combating the stigma and discrimination faced by PLWHA.

On other occasions, CIIR's ICD approach involved working with partners to integrate work on HIV and AIDS as a further development in their programming. This was an automatic progression in the case of organisations working on health. In Peru, for example, Ana Teresa Rodríguez, before supporting PROSA, had worked with Casas de la Salud (Health Care Homes) association, an NGO led by a Catholic priest in the coastal town of Ica, south of Lima. It had launched work on HIV and AIDS amid mounting signs of PLWHA support needs in the parishes in which it worked.

Similarly, ICD development worker support on HIV and AIDS was made an intrinsic part of support for partners promoting women's rights and tackling gender and other forms of discrimination. A DW, Sara García Terrero, worked with ENMUNEH, the Honduras Black Women's Network, to tackle HIV and AIDS among the country's marginalised Garifuna people, for instance. Meanwhile, in the Dominican Republic, DW Susie Daniel helped Oné Respe (Honour and Respect), a CSO working for the rights of Dominicans of Haitian origin, to develop its strategy on HIV and AIDS.

Driving progress and innovation in work on gender

As can be gathered from the previous sections, ICD made important strides in making a focus on gender an integral part of its sectoral and thematic work, in line with its project criteria described earlier in this chapter. At the same time, during this period, ICD took forward programming on promoting women's rights and tackling gender discrimination and inequality as a significant area of work in its own right. There was often considerable overlap between the two approaches.

Southern Africa and the Horn: promoting the organisation and recognition of women

Building on the gender issues raised by its work on HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe and Namibia, ICD intensified work during this period to address the problems caused by gender discrimination and inequality.

Linking community action with legislative change

In Namibia, for example, Anne Rimmer, a former Amnesty International worker recruited by ICD, helped the organisation Women's Solidarity build its communications, stakeholder outreach and training on violence against women and children. This targeted professionals, police, judiciary, churches, schools and communities. Her four years' work in the early 2000s enabled the partner to strengthen community organisation against domestic violence and raise the profile of gender-related problems in the media. The importance of such efforts was reflected by a 2003 study stating that over a third of Namibian women had reported suffering physical or sexual abuse by a partner.

Anne Rimmer went on to develop the research and advocacy capacity of the Windhoek-based Legal Assistance Centre (LAC). Her focus was on strengthening its provision of training and popular communication materials to enable disadvantaged women to advocate for their rights. A major objective was to help LAC capitalise on its successful lobbying for Namibia's 2003 Combating of Domestic Violence Act by promoting its enforcement. LAC's earlier advocacy had led to the passing of the 1996 Married Persons Equality Act.



In 1999, a Namibian working with LAC on children's rights, Doris Roos, had replaced Sadiki Nepela as ICD's national country representative.

Supporting networks and building on sensitive approaches

Meanwhile, in Somaliland, ICD nurtured the development of **NAGAAD**, the national network of women's organisations, and **SONYO**, the youth umbrella organisation formed in 2003. ICD was keen to support their incipient work on gender discrimination and increasing the participation of women and young people in public life. The partnerships, buoyed by a climate in which women were pushing to have their voices heard – a Women's Political Forum had been created in 2002 – would bear fruit in future years (see Chapters 4 and 5). NAGAAD was already becoming a platform for action on issues of common concern for women such as conflict resolution, peace promotion and human rights.

ICD's support for partner progress on gender in Somaliland, as in Yemen, often required sensitive approaches. Strong religious, cultural and social norms defined women's role in society, and gender could be seen as a foreign concept. The advantages of careful pursuit of change, however, often became self-apparent.

ICD's success in strengthening women's crucial role in promoting maternal and child health in Yemen, and supporting their growing training and leadership roles in service provision, was a case in point. The work boosted women's self-confidence and enabled them to win greater public recognition. By the end of the 1990s, ICD was able to hand over management of the community health centre that DWs had nurtured in the port of Hodeidah to their Yemeni counterparts. The progress owed much to the contribution of DWs such as Habeeba Othman and Meriam Bakhour in training midwives and enabling female PHC workers to become health care trainers themselves.

Advances on gender in Yemen were an essential part of **progress on health** and reflected important changes that CIIR's overseas programme had helped to achieve over time and sustained as ICD (see Quotes below). With education so crucial to women's advancement, ICD supported literacy training and pre-school education at the Hodeidah branch of the national Yemen Women Union (YWU).

“Attitudes are changing. Ten years ago, our main problem was finding parents willing to allow their daughters to train as health workers. Today we have more candidates than training places.”

Abdullah Al Syari, ICD country representative in Yemen, 1999

“Habeeba Othman, a CIIR/ICD development worker from Somalia, prompted me to become a trainer. My first training session was the most exciting and challenging thing I had done. I am now head of the training department in the Hodeidah health office. My family is very proud of my work and they continue to support me. Now I feel I have everybody's respect and recognition. This is a milestone in my life as a Yemeni female.”

*Bahja Abdulla Essa, a former PHC worker-turned trainer and health service planner and manager, **Interact**, autumn 2003*

ICD moved to replicate such positive health and gender gains in Somaliland, embarking on partnerships with the Ministry of Health to conduct needs assessments and train midwives and female health workers. As well as facing gender barriers, many women had not been able to practise their skills during long periods of exile but began to win recognition on return as ICD workers helped them to make progress in their professional development. In the late 1990s, ICD-recruited health advisers such as Halimo Elmi Weheyile and Yusuf Abdilahi were working in Hargeisa to support the training of traditional birth attendants, raise awareness of the dangers of female genital mutilation, and set up and advise health centres in the capital.



Latin America: a concerted push on women's rights and gender inequality

In Latin America, stronger civil society organisation and the existence of emerging women's movements provided a propitious environment for ICD to support a wide range of work on gender with partners. Even so, the work involved challenging the deeply ingrained structures of patriarchy and machismo causing gender discrimination.

El Salvador: putting women at the heart of programming

In El Salvador, for instance, ICD's new country programme took shape as women's organisations hitherto involved in the struggle for democracy and human rights during the civil war now mobilised to have their voices recognised. A new political environment existed following the 1992 peace accords and the women's movement promoted a manifesto to target political parties in the run-up to the 1994 elections.

Under the leadership of country representative Carmen Medina, a committed feminist, ICD made strengthening women's organisations and networks the centrepiece of its country programme in El Salvador over the decade and into the 2000s. Among the partners were the Women's Coordinating Committee (COM) and the Women's Network (La RED) grouping 20 organisations. As in other ICD countries in the region, this push entailed the deliberate recruitment of DWs with solid expertise in promoting gender equity. Such professionals both provided effective support to partners and built the knowledge, expertise and commitment of other DWs on gender, thus benefiting ICD's overall country programme practice. The steady accumulation of experience in El Salvador saw DWs work in the new millennium on a manual promoting gender-focused social research, which served as a guide in continuing support for partners.

An increasingly important focus of work from the later 1990s was to strengthen the capacity of partners to promote the integration of gender into local development planning. This matched the highly significant efforts underway in the Dominican Republic (see section later below). Partners involved in this area of work included La RED, supported by DWs Maureen Hume and Susana García, and the Salvadorean Association of Integrated Development (ASDI) where ICD placed Ismael Ortiz García, a planning expert from Mexico.

Boosting gender advocacy through support for communication

ICD also made the strengthening of partners' communication strategies an important priority in its capacity support for women's organisations wanting to increase the impact of their local and national advocacy. ICD, for example, placed several DWs to help the Association of Women for Dignity and Life ([Las Dignas](#)) to strengthen its evidence-based research on violence against women and child abuse and target the media with informative briefings.

This approach was complemented by project partnerships specifically with gender-focused and alternative media organisations seeking to change public attitudes on gender, challenge the prevailing culture of machismo and counter frequent stereotyping in the mainstream media.

ICD, in line with its strategy of regional recruitment and exchange, for instance, recruited Lula Arce, an expert with longstanding experience of community radio in her native Peru. During her work in 1997-99, she helped to develop the programming and build the overall technical support capacity of the Radio Training Centre for Salvadorean Women (CORAMS). ICD similarly recruited another DW professional, [José Luis Gavira](#), to train radio technicians at the El Salvador Association of Participatory Radio ([ARPAS](#)), which was committed to broadcasting stories on women's rights and social justice issues. His work with ARPAS and CORAMS from 1996, among other achievements, helped to set up new stations such as the Tecoluca-based Radio Tehuacán in 2001.

The Dominican Republic: supporting a movement

Similarly, in the Dominican Republic, ICD's country programme, managed since the mid-1990s by Sonia Vásquez, a Dominican national, gave a concerted push to work on women's rights and gender. The moves extended the range of partners in the country programme and also promoted the stronger integration of gender into partners' work on issues such as primary health care.

In the early 2000s a DW, Sarah Masters, helped to set up an electronic network for 35 Dominican women's organisations to strengthen their communications and advocacy impact, and by 2000 some six DWs were helping to strengthen the expertise of leaders of women's organisations. As well as advocacy on sexual and reproductive health and rights, partner organisations provided active input into a constitutional reform commission. ICD partner [COMUS](#) was the driving force behind the formation of a network of women's organisations

pushing for the rights and legal protection of women. It launched a campaign in 2003 to gather 1 million signatures for a petition to end violence against women. Meanwhile, work with other partners such as the Solidarity Centre for Women's Development ([CE-MUJER](#)) saw ICD support a wide range of gender-focused community action.

In Ecuador, ICD responded to growing partner requests for gender specialists in health, community development, income generation and sustainable agriculture projects.

Becoming real men: rethinking masculinity in Nicaragua

Though gender inequality arises from the socially constructed roles and identities of women and men and the power relations entailed, 'gender and development' initiatives can often focus on 'empowering' women to tackle the situation in isolation. Men can be cast as the immutable cause of problems rather than a group to be targeted as potential contributors to solutions if they can change.

One of ICD's most bold and innovative contributions on gender arose from work in Nicaragua where partners were leading ground-breaking work to address the problems of gender inequality and discrimination by challenging deeply rooted masculine attitudes and behaviour. According to a 1998 study, 60 per cent of Nicaraguan women said they had suffered physical, psychological or sexual violence.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, ICD's efforts to promote women's rights and a gender focus in partnerships had often recognised the importance of engaging men to pre-empt sensitivity over women's increased participation. For example, ICD's support for the Women's Education Project (PEM) in Honduras in the first half of the 1990s, combining the training of women's groups with horticulture, nutrition, health promotion and literacy, involved awareness-raising with men on family planning and the implications of changes within households and families. In a significant shift, however, the new work of partners in Nicaragua supported by ICD involved a concerted attempt to tackle dominant models of masculinity specifically and directly. The work in Nicaragua complemented ICD partnerships to strengthen CSOs working to organise women such as the feminist [Grupo Venancia](#) in the northern city of Matagalpa.

From national lessons to regional replication

Work to tackle damaging forms and expressions of masculinity was developed by the Managua-based Centre for Popular Education and Communications ([CANTERA](#)), an NGO that CIIR, through ICD, had supported since 1994. Four times each year, CANTERA had staged a four-day workshop to help men examine and change their learned attitudes, values and behaviour. By 1999 a study revealed that the incidence and frequency of domestic violence on the part of workshop participants had fallen, while indicating that reappraisal and follow-up was required to sustain progress in dealing with the deep-seated nature of the problems. Drawing on lessons, CANTERA, with ICD and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) support, produced a training manual which was piloted and enriched through work in communities and used to train facilitators. Its use and dissemination was intended to enhance the effectiveness of support and reach higher numbers of men.

CANTERA joined forces with ICD partner Puntos de Encuentro to promote the methodology and in 2000 a new organisation, the Association of Men against Violence (AHCV), was born. The AHCV then started to run its own sessions which, alongside their main focus on relations between men and women, discussed men-men and men-children relations.

Signs of positive momentum and benefits in Nicaragua sparked ICD efforts to replicate work on masculinity elsewhere in Latin America and the Caribbean, first through training workshops and then through the placement of dedicated DWs. In El Salvador, for instance, a Colombian DW, [John Bayron Ochoa](#), promoted such work from 2004, initially with the [Bartolomé de las Casas centre](#) (CBC). Meanwhile, CIIR organised events in the global North to raise international debate on the issues raised in ICD's work with partners (see Box).

A man thing: on the road, on the agenda

CIIR helped to document and promote CANTERA's pioneering work supported by ICD by publishing in English and Spanish *Men Aren't from Mars: Unlearning Machismo in Nicaragua* in 2001, written by ICD's development worker with the partner, [Patrick Welsh](#), who had also helped to found the AHCV. That year, the DW also worked with ICD's country programmes to promote the methodology in Latin America and the Caribbean. Some 15 training workshops were organised in El Salvador, Honduras, Ecuador and the Dominican Republic, with public events also held to raise debate among policy-makers, professionals, journalists, NGOs and community leaders. An event in Haiti also discussed the issues. The work generated wide media coverage in the countries.

Prompting difficult debates

This work on masculinity also led to heated discussion at times. Its approach was relatively new and some within the region's women's movement were sceptical about the benefits of involving men. They were also concerned that such work might detract from the crucial need to prioritise support for the voice and organisation of women as key agents for tackling gender oppression. Others, however, felt that neglecting to engage men was to leave their harmful social practices largely unquestioned. They argued that challenging men to take responsibility for changing themselves as the main perpetrators of gender-based violence could help shift thinking and practice, which tended to focus on protecting women as victims rather than rights-holders.

Taking regional action to Europe

CIIR also brought the discussion to Europe. As well as launching *Men Aren't from Mars* with the author and holding a Latin America and Caribbean conference with this title in London in autumn 2001, it facilitated a tour in England, Scotland, Ireland, Spain and Belgium of four men from Nicaragua's AHCV and the Dominican Republic's Movement for Life without Violence ([MOVIDA](#)). The road show reached 1,800 members of the public and policy-makers, and CIIR published a follow-up report, *Men Changing: Power, Masculinities and Non-Violence from Latin America to Europe*.

Mainstreaming action on gender in post-independence Timor-Leste

In Timor-Leste, promoting women's participation and influence was also a key aim for CIIR as it began to place ICD development workers in the country from 2003. Indeed, the first DW to be recruited, Emily Roynestad, a US professional with previous experience of working with a network representing women workers in the Dominican Republic's free trade zones, supported the development of the Women's Network of East Timor ([REDE FETO](#)) as an effective umbrella organisation. She helped REDE FETO, whose original emergence CIIR had already helped to nurture in the run-up to the 2001 elections, to strengthen its support for women's groups as they set up post-independence development projects and sought to represent the interests of women. Such efforts helped REDE FETO to be adopted by UN Women (then UNIFEM) as its partner in Timor-Leste.

While many women had been active in the struggle against Indonesian occupation, on independence they found that, economically, they had been generally overlooked in income generation programmes (see Box). CIIR's DWs organised training workshops for women in several districts, covering leadership, negotiation and community mobilisation as well as practical skills on managing loans, record keeping and project funding applications. An Irish DW specialising in marketing, Deirdre Nagle, helped women's groups to organise collectively and lobby ministries for support.

This capacity-building dovetailed well with the continued work of CIIR's Timorese women's advocacy officer in the country, Ivete de Oliveira, who was now also working as a consultant on civil society and women's issues to the Prime Minister's adviser on gender. She ran gender mainstreaming workshops organised by the Office for the Promotion of Equality. The goal was to achieve a gender focus in official policies, all government departments and across Timor-Leste's 13 districts. She also ran leadership training for women candidates in local elections.

Paths of resistance: tracing Timorese women's struggle for recognition and rights

Tracing the growing influence of the women's movement and the post-independence challenges facing it, CIIR published *Independent Women: The Story of Women's Activism in East Timor* in 2005. Edited by staff member Catherine Scott and journalist Irena Cristalis, the [book](#) drew on personal research, organisational experience and interviews with Timorese women to examine their role in national liberation. It challenged notions that those working for women's advancement were following a foreign agenda.

In 2007, CIIR – now operating as Progressio (see Chapter 4) – joined forces with the Indonesia women's organisation [Kalyanamitra](#) to produce an Indonesian-language edition, with launches in Dili and Jakarta involving exchanges between East Timorese and Indonesian women's movements. Hitherto, Indonesian women had little information on the struggles of their Timorese sisters. The issues raised were relevant to women in Indonesia, particularly their situation in conflict areas.



Valuing diversity and combating discrimination

Though gender was a key priority, ICD worked with partners across its country programmes to tackle other diversity and discrimination issues affecting vulnerable, marginalised or under-represented social groups. This involved making discrimination issues relevant to the local and national context a priority in country programming, while ICD's strong approach on gender also created opportunities for so-called 'inter-sectional' linkages.

ICD's support for partners to boost the organisation, role and recognition of women in the highlands of rural Ecuador, for instance, was organised in the context of its work on the central question of indigenous rights in the country. In Honduras, ICD's support for women's rural organisation included placing a DW, Frances Burton, with the Lenca Indigenous Independence Health Project (PISIL). In the Dominican Republic, ICD placed DWs with the Movement of Dominican Haitian Women ([MUDHA](#)) – the organisation founded by pioneering Dominican-Haitian women's leader [Sonia Pierre](#) – to support its work to tackle discrimination affecting women of Haitian descent.

Race and ethnicity: supporting recognition, inclusion and equal rights

Support for partners fighting discrimination on grounds of ethnicity and race had been a feature of CIIR's work from the early years of its overseas programming, particularly in Latin America. Its range and depth were further strengthened by ICD during this period.

In the Andes, for example, ICD sustained its work to support indigenous organisations. Debate surrounding the 500th anniversary in 1992 of Columbus' supposed 'discovery' of the Americas and the harms of the Spanish Conquest provided temporary profile for such work. Its relevance and impetus, however, were driven in the 1990s by the growing organisation and influence of organisations representing or supporting indigenous people, which requested capacity support in particular areas.

Supporting the rising influence of Ecuador's indigenous movement

Of particular note was ICD's continuation of longstanding CIIR support for the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador ([CONAIE](#)), the umbrella body of organisations representing indigenous peoples in the country's highland, coastal and Amazonian regions. CONAIE came to play an increasingly influential role in national affairs as the 1990s progressed, defending indigenous peoples against threats to their land and water rights. Its mass mobilisation against official development plans and policies even contributed to changes of government, events analysed by leading Uruguayan-Ecuadorean journalist Kintto Lucas in CIIR's 2000 publication *We Will Not Dance on Our Grandparents' Tombs*.

Engaging CONAIE's member organisations and informing the general public on their work was crucial to CONAIE's effectiveness, and ICD made sustained support for its communication capacity a priority. In the early 2000s, it had a video trainer, Rainer Stockelmann, and a journalist, Jairo Rolong, working respectively with CONAIE and one of its member bodies, [ECUARUNARI](#), which represents Kichwa peoples in the central highlands. CONAIE won the Rigoberta Menchú film and video prize, named after the Nobel-awarded Guatemalan indigenous rights activist, for its video 'The Dignity of the People'. CONAIE had become one of Latin America's most powerful social movements.

ICD also made specific contributions to CONAIE's longer-term efforts to advance indigenous people's rights. Higher education is crucial to the development of countries, yet CONAIE had found that indigenous peoples, despite making up 43 per cent of the population, comprised less than 1 per cent of students at Ecuador's universities. Education curricula and methods were similarly unrepresentative. The 1996 creation of the Intercultural University of Nationalities and Indigenous Peoples, teaching in indigenous languages, as well as the official Spanish, thus represented a major step forward. As [UINPI](#) gained university status in 2004, an ICD agronomist, Peruvian Julio Olivera, helped it develop a curriculum on agro-ecology, drawing on best practice and ICD's own programme experience with Ecuadorean partners.

From Peru to Nicaragua: boosting multilingual education

Support for multilingual education was a feature of ICD work in other countries. In Peru, ICD provided institutional development support in the 1990s for the Inter-ethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Amazon ([AIDESEP](#)), which won support to launch the Programme for the Training of Bilingual Teachers in the Peruvian Amazon ([FORMABIAP](#)). Promoting alternative teaching methods reflecting Peru's cultural and linguistic diversity, FORMABIAP was a pioneering initiative. It aimed not only to boost



indigenous access to education, but also recover indigenous knowledge and build recognition of it into education systems.

British development worker Simon Ford (second from left) was attached to the University of Iquitos. His work sat alongside numerous partnerships with organisations promoting bi-lingual education and indigenous rights in the Peruvian Amazon.



In the early 2000s, an ICD professional, Irene Ortiz, helped FORMABIAP develop an environmental education programme for teacher training and the primary school curriculum. Her support and supervision of teachers strengthened their environmental understanding, in turn raising the awareness of children and communities in Peru's Amazon region. Cusco-based [Pukllasunchis](#), a partner involved in ICD's environmental education initiatives in the country, was also promoting bilingual education (in Quechua and Spanish), with the support of DW Susanne Pérez.

Multilingual education was also part of ICD's work on Nicaragua's Atlantic coast, populated largely by indigenous peoples and ethnic groups who had successfully fought for their regions to have autonomous status because of their distinct cultures and demographic composition. In the early 1990s, a vital aim of work was to help partners resettle communities who had fled the Atlantic coastal regions because of the violence fuelled by US backing of armed counter-revolutionaries.

The work, however, soon evolved into support for partnerships that, building on multilingual education as a pillar, sought to take forward a wider development strategy for the region encompassing health promotion, job creation, income generation and responsible use of natural resources. During the 1990s, ICD supported, among other partners, the Foundation for the Autonomy and Development of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast ([FADCANIC](#)). Its leader, Ray Hooker, one the authors of the 1987 autonomy law, had enthralled CIIR members at the organisation's 1993 AGM with his quasi-poetic analysis of the coast's challenges and historical British connections.

By the new millennium, ICD was involved in a second phase of support for partners in the southern autonomous region. They included the Association for Development and Human Promotion (ADEPHCA), which worked with black English-speaking communities, where an ICD professional helped to strengthen a micro-enterprise credit programme. Another partner was the Bluefields-based regional university, [URACAAN](#), where a DW taught business skills on fishing and agro-forestry. This work followed another DW's long contribution on multilingual education (see Box below).

Dominican Republic: challenging the hostile environment affecting people of Haitian descent

In the Caribbean a problem of pervasive racism existed in the Dominican Republic. Haitian migrants and people of Haitian descent living or born in the country faced severe discrimination and denial of their rights, often regardless of whether they had official work permits or residency documentation.

Abuses and problems included mistreatment at work, arbitrary individual repatriation, mass deportations, family separation and the high cost and bureaucratic obstacles of securing official documentation, even when other family members born in the country had proof of their residency rights. Residents and migrants with a Haitian background faced constant uncertainty and vulnerability over their status and frequent racist public attitudes.

ICD, with its work in both countries sharing the island of Hispaniola, recruited several DWs in the early 2000s to support partners addressing Dominican-Haitian citizenship issues.

A DW specialising in human rights advocacy, Melanie Teff, helped to strengthen the expertise of the Jacques Viau civil society network, providing training on developing policy and advocacy strategies, lobbying and negotiation, alliance-building and human rights monitoring of government performance. Drawing on her professional expertise as a lawyer, she enabled the network to force changes in planned legislation on migration, and a petition on abuse of Haitian migrant workers was used by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights to call the Dominican government to account. A ruling in 2005 had found that the government had been wrong to deny nationality to two girls of Haitian descent.

The situation of Haitian immigrants and their descendants had long been a concern for CIIR and it commissioned two experts residing in the country, **Bridget Wooding** and Richard Moseley-Williams, to examine the challenges in historical context. Their 2004 briefing, drawing on ICD experience and that of its civil society partners, was published as ***Needed but Unwanted***. Translated into **Spanish** and **French**, it became a standard text on migration in both countries and was re-issued by the State University of Haiti at the end of the decade.

JANE FREELAND

Regional autonomy in Nicaragua: speaking a new language on development



Jane Freeland is an honorary research fellow at Southampton University's Centre for Transnational Studies and a former senior lecturer in socio-linguistics at the University of Portsmouth's Latin America Studies section. Her academic writing has used her Nicaraguan fieldwork to question orthodox thinking about language revitalisation and propose approaches based on the linguistic beliefs of speakers themselves. She wrote A Special Place in History: The Atlantic Coast in the Nicaraguan Revolution (1988) for NSC and War on Want and co-edited Language Rights and Language Survival: A Sociolinguistic and Sociocultural Approach (St Jerome Press, Manchester, 2004).

My relationship with Progressio (then CIIR) began with providing orientation briefings to DWs departing to work in Nicaragua's Caribbean Coast region, as part of its ICD programme. Then, in 1994, I was recruited as a DW myself to support a project to realise the coast's long-frustrated ambition to found a University of the Autonomous Regions of the Nicaraguan Caribbean Coast (URACCAN) aimed at serving its specific needs and stemming the brain-drain of young people to universities in the Pacific region.

Following Nicaragua's 1980-81 Literacy Campaign, in which I helped to design teaching materials for English-Creole speakers, I became fascinated by the linguistic complexity of the Caribbean Coast region with its six indigenous and ethnic minorities and the intertwined histories of their languages' repression and decay. I researched the socio-linguistics of developing bi-/multilingual education programmes to recognise their linguistic rights.

This led not only to academic articles but also pieces for the UK's Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign (NSC) about this multi-ethnic region, its conflictive relations with the Sandinista Revolution, and their resolution through the region-wide consultation and eventual passing of a Law of Autonomy in 1987. This ground-breaking law consolidated the coast peoples' linguistic and cultural rights; it embedded them in territorial and political rights hitherto unimagined in Latin America.

Vital work with a local counterpart

My role in the URACCAN project was to help shape the university's language provision in this context. Indispensable to this work was my Nicaraguan counterpart, a university teacher widely trusted on the coast, through whom I too became accepted. As we travelled the region's muddy roads and flooding rivers to observe classes in tiny village schools and hear the perspectives of teachers, parents and students on how multilingualism affected students' access to university, we developed a mutual learning process typical of the partnership between an ICD development worker and his or her local counterpart.

Our recommendations became the foundation of an Institute for Linguistic and Cultural Research (IPILC), which would co-ordinate the research, development and running of bilingual-intercultural teacher training programmes. URACCAN opened in 1995 and as IPILC grew in scope and stature, I went back to teach socio-linguistics units on its training courses for all indigenous and ethnic groups, and to produce a course book.

Our last URACCAN project (2011-12), a community diploma for Mayangna leaders, was based on research with IPILC on approaches to language revival that honoured traditional Mayangna language practices. Some of this work, imbued with the understanding made possible through my ICD work, appears to have seeped into official thinking and policy on coast education.

Namibia: supporting the rights of San people

ICD's work on race, ethnicity and citizenship as a key concern was extended beyond its programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean during this period. ICD, for instance, placed a British DW, Yvonne Pickering, with the Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa (WIMSA) to help it promote the rights of the marginalised San bush people of Namibia's Kalahari Desert. Before her untimely death in a road accident in Namibia in 2005, she helped to set up a mentoring and support system for San children in schools.

Meanwhile, another DW working in the Kalahari at this time, **Ian Agnew**, strengthened the work of the Omaheke San Trust (OST), a community-based organisation working in the eponymous region bordering Botswana. His support from 2002 to 2005 enabled the organisation to grow in size and also strengthen its capacity to run programmes on livelihoods, education, arts and crafts and HIV and AIDS. His experience of working with the OST **informed his life and work** on return to the UK.

An important aspect of the partners' work was their intersought to engage and bring together youth and elders in the struggle of the San to have their traditional authorities recognised. WIMSA, later supported by another DW, Solomon Jillo, drew on the advice of ICD partner [LAC](#) on legal rights.

Disability rights: yes we can

Building on CIIR's record on post-war rehabilitation in Zimbabwe referenced in Chapter 2, support for partners tackling disability and promoting disability rights was a strong aspect of its work in Southern Africa.

Namibia: from tackling service gaps to influencing legislation

In post-independence Namibia, efforts were soon launched to shift the focus of medical services towards greater promotion of primary health care targeting rural areas. In response, an ICD professional, Kim Ainsworth, supported the inclusion of disability issues in helping the government conduct a needs assessment for rehabilitation services in the Caprivi region in the north east.

In the late 1990s, another DW, Nerys Roberts, helped the Eoluwa Special Needs School, the only one in the country's north to support children with visual and hearing impairment, to develop speech and language programmes and train teachers. Meanwhile, another partnership at this time saw DW Maureen Doyle work with the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation and disability groups on strategies to meet the needs of the disabled and promote their rights.

In the 2000s, a Zimbabwean DW, Forward Mlotswa, himself disabled, helped to develop the advocacy expertise of Namibia's National Federation of People with Disabilities ([NFPDN](#)). It secured a landmark victory in 2004 with the passage of a disability bill aimed at improving access to services, including in isolated rural and poor urban areas. The DW had worked with the government to facilitate the federation's input, having helped the NFPDN increase the public profile of disability issues and create stronger conditions for official receptiveness. The NFPDN, as well lobbying successfully for the creation of a special adviser in the office of the prime minister, had persuaded President Sam Nujoma to be a patron of a mass awareness-raising campaign on disability. Lobbying led too to national television news bulletins using sign language.

Work in Namibia also involved supporting the ability of partners to develop early intervention programmes and provide training and guidance for parents.

Zimbabwe: mutual support groups and local advocacy committees

Supporting parents was also a focus of work in Zimbabwe. Since the early 1990s, ICD had helped to nurture the steady development of the Zimbabwe Parents of Children with Disabilities Association (ZPCDA). This was a self-help network of parents, many single mothers on low incomes.

ZPCDA, formed in the late 1980s, initially struggled for direction but by the mid-1990s it had formed 12 mutual support groups in Harare and began plans to set up branches outside the capital. In 2003, as part of ICD's continued accompaniment, Irene Banda, a specialist recruited in Malawi, supported ZPCDA members in Bulawayo to strengthen their advocacy on the discrimination and stigma affecting their children's development and their own parenting. The work helped to promote school attendance and inclusion, increase children's confidence and raised awareness of problems such as landlord discrimination. Following ZPCDA lobbying of councillors, a Bulawayo bylaw was introduced stating that housing had to be provided for the disabled.

In 2007, CIIR – now bearing the name Progressio – warned against policy-makers neglecting people with disabilities in Zimbabwe in their concentration on the HIV and AIDS crisis. Drawing on a decade of work and recent research on the state of disability rights with ZPCDA, as well as with the youth rights organisation Batsirai (Helping Hand) and the [Jairos Jiri Association](#), Progressio published and disseminated a report, [The Forgotten Tribe](#), with the support of Comic Relief. A DW, Gibson Chiguri, had helped the Jairos Jiri Association earlier in the decade to set up and train local advocacy committees supporting people with disabilities.

Nicaragua: promoting social respect and integration

Though its engagement was more extensive in Southern Africa, important work on disability took place in some ICD focus countries in Latin America. In Nicaragua, a series of DWs helped to develop and consolidate the work of the Condega-based [Los Pipitos centre](#), founded and run by parents to provide support for their disabled children. The DWs provided support for the centre's community-based rehabilitation strategy, work



ing with the Ministry of Education to train educators working in special needs and ordinary teachers. The aim was to integrate children with their school companions. “We want them to be another classmate – not the odd one out, the different child, but a child who is respected,” explained Néstor Pardo, a Colombian DW working with the centre in 2004.

In Peru, ICD had recruited a physiotherapist in the mid-1990s to provide advice and support to the Centre for Rehabilitation and Integral Services ([CERSI](#)), then the only group providing support for children with disabilities and adults in the coastal town Chimbote.

Advancing the rights of children and younger people

With children and younger people comprising a large section of the population in many focus countries, work to promote their rights and to have a stronger voice in decision-making became another strand in ICD’s work on discrimination issues. It was children and younger people that often bore the brunt of problems such as the damaging impact of economic adjustment programmes on social spending, domestic violence and HIV and AIDS.

In contrast with practice seeing children as the focus of paternalistic charitable action, ICD’s support took place in a context in which growing emphasis was being placed on rights-based work involving children and younger people themselves. Such approaches had led to, and been given momentum by, international agreement of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989.

Child-to-child methodology in Nicaragua

One important example of ICD’s involvement in child rights was its partnership with the Centre for Information and Advisory Services in Health ([CISAS](#)) in Nicaragua. Poor children were the main victims of crime-related violence and domestic abuse and also deprived of education as a result of having to work to support the survival of their families.

A distinctive feature of CISAS’ work was the child-to-child methodology it had been promoting in Nicaragua and Central America since the early 1980s. This approach, supported by DWs such as Martín Reyes from Mexico, enabled children themselves to identify and understand their health and wellbeing problems through tools such as song, plays and art. As a result of their raised confidence, they were able to advocate solutions through discussions with their peers, families and communities as well as take part in radio programmes and community forums and cultural events.

ICD’s support for CISAS also emphasised engaging adults, particularly men, in child-focused dialogue. In 2000, for example, ICD had a health educator, Peter Sternberg, and a community development trainer, Víctor Valdivieso, working together with CISAS to encourage men to take greater responsibility for their children and families and to change their sexual behaviour.

Honduras and Somaliland: from supporting street children to engaging youth

Work with street children was the focus of other initiatives during the 1990s. In Honduras, ICD recruited a psychologist to boost the capacity of the NGO Project Alternatives to provide counselling as part of its multidisciplinary range of services for street children working in the informal economy in the capital Tegucigalpa or fleeing family violence. The services ranged from psychosocial support to medical assistance and health promotion, HIV and AIDS prevention, nutrition, education and literacy and recreation.

Another ICD partner working with street children was Somaliland’s [HAVOYOCO](#). One of the Youth Committee’s successes in the late 1990s was its creation of Circus Hargeisa, which staged shows in public places to raise awareness and debate of peace, human rights and health issues affecting children and younger people. In 1998 alone it performed to more than 10,000 people. With youth largely excluded from decision-making and facing high unemployment and few formal job opportunities, despite representing a majority of the population, ICD made support for HAVOYOCO’s institutional development one of its programme priorities. Advancing the rights of youth and creating greater opportunities for their political, social and economic inclusion was vital for the consolidation of Somaliland’s relative stability and longer-term prospects for peace and development. Such work would make significant progress in future years (see Chapter 4).

Inter-generational dialogue

ICD’s support for partners promoting the rights of children and younger people was premised on the importance of fostering inter-generational dialogue and community ownership of the need for change. This meant taking into crucial account the challenges facing older social groups, for example in work on HIV and AIDS in Southern Africa where the loss of a middle generation left not only siblings but also older people as carers of children.

In some instances, ICD supported partners making ageing issues a specific focus of their work. In the Dominican Republic, ICD recruited a DW, Jacque Cheetham, in the late 1990s to strengthen the community education work of the Aquelarre Support Centre. This was aimed at tackling prejudice against older people and promoting recognition of their rights in a patriarchal society whose culture was increasingly youth-dominated. The work included a participatory assessment of the needs and views of older poor women, who were typically seen as mere care providers and domestic workers. Its findings were used by Aquelarre to produce a research report with a popular version to boost the wider dissemination and advocacy of its messages.

Having a say, shaping the agenda: promoting people's access to decision-making

As can be gathered from the thematic sections above, a cross-cutting aim of ICD's support was to strengthen the capacity partners to advance the rights of poor people by enabling them to exercise influence over decisions affecting their lives.

Striving for access

In the earlier years of CIIR's overseas programme described in Chapter 2, the emphasis had been on boosting participation within and through grassroots development initiatives, for example in the areas of health, literacy, nutrition and agriculture, with popular education methods used to facilitate people's self-confidence in organising for change. From the 1990s, ICD sustained the value of such an approach but now made the recognition and influence of poor people in official decision-making a much stronger and more explicit focus of its work with partners. This was in line with ICD's moves described earlier to sharpen its project partnership criteria and country and regional strategies. It also reflected rising policy interest globally in civil society participation and governance.

ICD made 'Striving for real access' its lead theme in CIIR's 1993/94 annual review. The choice set the tone for its work throughout the decade and into the new millennium. It reflected the programme's view that people's access to essential services, natural resources, fairer markets and better living standards required stepping up support for partners to tackle the policy barriers to lasting change.

Different political environments: opportunities and challenges

Work on participation and governance was particularly strong in Latin America and the Caribbean with its tradition of vibrant social movements. ICD launched new work with partners to influence local governments, for instance, and its value was especially illustrated in the case of the Dominican Republic described below.

In newly independent Timor-Leste, ICD's focus in its work on participation and governance, as reviewed earlier, was on strengthening women's organisations to promote the integration of gender in official policies and structures. This set the scene for the promotion of civil society interaction with the state at national and local levels to become an increasingly strong body of work, as outlined in Chapters 4 and 5.

ICD's work with partners to promote stronger conditions for poor and under-represented people to have a greater say in official decision-making was now becoming a stronger feature of ICD's Africa and Middle East programmes, albeit tailored to the specific nature of the state-society relationship in focus countries. Amid transitions and incipient state-building or state collapse and crisis, the political environment affecting state-civil society relations was generally more challenging in these country settings.

In Somaliland, as presented more fully below, ICD launched an impressive programme of work to support participatory civil society and state-building following Somalia's collapse. Meanwhile, in Yemen, ICD supported partner efforts to develop local consultative processes to determine local health spending policies and priorities, building on existing ICD progress with partners in promoting PHC. Participation was needed to avoid cost-recovery programme with service users being shaped in a top-down fashion by central ministries and international donors.

Promoting citizen participation through state engagement, however, was not always possible or straightforward for ICD, not least in Zimbabwe as the country's political crisis unfolded during the 1990s and intensified in the new millennium. Mounting repression by the state made such work on the ground difficult because of the potential dangers for DWs' safety. CIIR's approach, therefore, involved working on the country's structural governance and conflict problems more indirectly and remotely through its often behind-the-scenes international advocacy, drawing on ICD's local knowledge and contacts to do so. In 2004, for example, CIIR organised a meeting hosted by the Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit

and ACTSA, attended by British and Zimbabwean partners. It called on the ANC government in South Africa and the chairs of the African Union (AU) and SADC to challenge the Mugabe government's restrictions on NGOs and the media.

Dominican Republic: promoting citizen voice to break the local government mould

In Latin America and the Caribbean, a pioneering manifestation of ICD commitment to building grassroots capacity for policy influence was its launch of an influential pilot initiative with partners in the Dominican Republic to promote public participation in budget-setting by local governments.

A pilot takes influential shape

Following earlier discussions with the Villa González municipality in the northern Santiago province, ICD and its NGO partner, [Fundación Solidaridad](#) (Solidarity Foundation), capitalised on the election of a progressive new mayor in 1998 to take forward a joint initiative that broke new ground on citizen participation in the country. Indeed, dialogue with the mayor's team led the municipality, in a mid-1999 town hall resolution, to commit itself to involving citizens in local development decision-making. The municipality, following a series of ICD-supported training events organised by Fundación Solidaridad to enable local CSOs to promote community involvement, then made the foundation an official technical adviser to help the joint initiative take full shape.

By mid-2002, regulations for social participation – including in budget development and monitoring – were agreed and, in early 2005, Villa González launched its first ever municipal development plan drawing on active citizen input to identify, discuss and decide public spending priorities. A French DW specialising in local development and public management, Alice Auradou, had helped Fundación Solidaridad to organise civil society's contributions. She also provided technical advice and support for a civil society strategy to monitor the plan's budget, including from a gender perspective.

Creating opportunities for wider success

The success of this pilot experience paved the way not only for the continuation of participatory municipal budgeting in Villa González. It also generated momentum for Fundación Solidaridad and other partners, with the continued support of ICD development workers, to promote its replication in other municipalities and provinces in the Dominican Republic over the next two decades.

The pilot complemented the work on local democracy also being launched by other ICD partners at this time. The Juan Montalvo Centre ([CJM](#)), for example, was organising municipal participation forums bringing together hundreds of neighbourhood organisations in Santo Domingo, the capital. The aim of the CJM was to support communities to identify the needs of the poorest and less represented groups and help them push for effective official support to address their problems. The work involved lobbying, advocacy and community mobilisation, backed by media coverage to bolster their negotiating position.

As Chapter 4 explores in fuller detail, the impact of such initiatives led to a new national law being passed in 2007 which made participatory municipal budgets a statutory requirement across the country. Viewed in wider political terms, the development laid incipient foundations for a potential break with the Dominican Republic's traditional clientelist politics. Leaders and parties had provided services as paternalist favours in return for political support and votes rather than in response to citizens' needs and rights.

For CIIR institutionally, the Villa González experience confirmed the value of ICD having nationals in charge of leading its DW country programmes. The initiative had arisen from the intimate grasp of local politics on the part of Sonia Vásquez, the new country representative in place since 1995, and her ability to spot productive development opportunities.

Sharing lessons to strengthen regional impact

Similar work to boost citizenship and democratic participation was now taking shape across country programmes in Latin America. For example, in Peru, ICD supported youth and women's organisations in Lima's marginalised neighbourhood of San Juan de Lurigancho to create a network to determine and promote their local development priorities. It also helped Cusco's Research, Development and Education Centres Coordination body [COIN-CIDE](#) run leadership courses for community representatives in support of its networking and influencing on citizens' participation.

Local government in Latin America: space for change in state-civil society relations?

The experiences in the Dominican Republic were of significance for ICD's programme practice and learning in Latin America. They raised the question of whether and how ICD's traditional prioritisation of civil society strengthening could be combined with a more deliberate attempt to engage the state as a possible partner.

The state had in the past often been seen within ICD and among its civil society partners as elite-dominated in many countries, if not corrupt and repressive. The idea of working in more direct and formal partnerships with official actors posed concerns that people's demands for change could be co-opted and diluted. Yet it was now felt that where political opportunities existed, state engagement offered the potential for creating a new dynamic in state-civil society relations. This would involve civil society interacting with the state as part of a more structured process of negotiation of grassroots proposals rather than just channelling demand for policy changes in favour of poor groups.

Decentralisation and state reform

Decentralisation policies were taking shape in Latin America at this time with the encouragement of financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IDB. They formed part of the continuation of state reforms linked to market-oriented economic adjustment programmes which, over time, faced growing pressure to have a stronger social dimension, including through so-called 'good governance'. Decentralisation, aimed at achieving a leaner and more efficient state nationally, was seen as a way of making decision-making more responsive to local circumstances, though debates persisted as to how adequately local governments would be resourced to provide services and support wider local development.

In El Salvador, ICD, which was working with partners such as the Agency for Local Economic Development (ADEL) supporting cooperatives in Chalatenango, hosted a Latin America conference in late 2002 on civil society experiences of working with local governments and the opportunities and challenges for future partnerships. A report of the event, which drew on contributions from partners involved in local government initiatives from ICD country programmes in Central America and the Andes as well as the Dominican Republic, was published and disseminated in Spanish and [English](#) by CIIR.

ICD, linking with the lessons of its environmental education work, launched a new phase of work in Peru and Ecuador to involve local government and communities in strengthening environmental protection and management of natural resources.

ICD drew on its Dominican lessons to contribute to regional discussions on working with partners to boost its impact (see Box above).

ICD needed to employ careful political judgment and creative strategies in order to combine practical grassroots work with support for partners seeking to influence local and national policy-makers. The challenges and dilemmas of how best to scale up the value of capacity development and achieve wider impact were seen in Nicaragua, for example (see box).

PATRICIO CRANSHAW

Scaling up local capacity for wider impact and policy influence: reflections from Nicaragua

Deciding with partners how to make project ideals realistic and applicable and how to combine efficiency and effectiveness wasn't always easy in view of the expectations of the different parties involved. Donors had their own considerations in supporting the work while local communities, though keen not to have their basic needs overlooked, could not be assumed to be automatically in favour of the 'interests' of the government of the day being challenged.

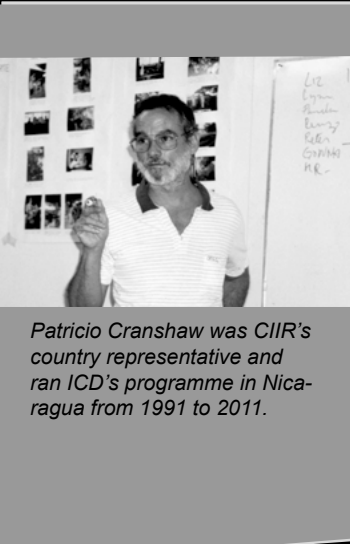
Dilemmas

ICD's approach to resolving such dilemmas, though undergoing changes over the years, had several basic elements. It was important to take on board the philosophy and aims of the partner organisation and the motivations of its funders. This meant assessing how the real multiple needs of communities could be best supported from a human rights perspective both in the context of these project arrangements and in the midst of widespread poverty and the urgent need for economic survival.

One also had to consider each partner's capacity needs, and the potential value of ICD's organisational accompaniment, in relation to the role of other local NGOs in addressing the issues the partner worked on and thus the opportunities for thematic alliances and achieving wider territorial effectiveness and impact. Linking with wider efforts enabled efficient use of limited financial resources and created the potential for strengthening fundraising. The work itself involved nurturing citizen rights and active citizenship to monitor progress, as well as disseminating publications and information to promote its value.

Striking a good match and working at different levels

This approach helped us to achieve a good match between our desire to be involved in representative work supporting the most vulnerable and our ability to forge partnerships with organisations with the right levels of expertise and potential. It was also complemented by efforts to support the development of local structures in the country that transcended their individual limits. This meant creating or developing local lobbying structures and promoting the collective advocacy support of international NGOs.



Patricio Cranshaw was CIIR's country representative and ran ICD's programme in Nicaragua from 1991 to 2011.

For ten years we played an active part on the board of the INGO coordinating body in the country bringing together Oxfam UK and other agencies from Europe and elsewhere to raise with the respective government of the day the issues and challenges we faced at a local level. We also developed friendly and supportive relations with the British embassy when it had a presence here, and the EU played a major role in supporting the work, not just through funding but also in terms of exchange and promotion of local knowledge and project learning.

Taking on neglected issues

We took on issues that were often neglected or controversial at the time. They included the rights of women, children and youth, the situation of children with special needs and different capacities, family violence, race and ethnicity, and the rights of people with different sexual orientation and identity. We invested major strategic thought into how best to support communities' own abilities to deal with disasters.

How successfully we placed such issues on local and international agendas is inevitably a matter of debate, but one of our main strengths was working in alliances and networks, and we made the most of media and communication partnerships to achieve mass reach for positions on the issues at stake.

Somaliland: helping to consolidate peace and promote inclusive politics

As with its work in Zimbabwe, ICD faced the implications of political crisis in Somalia. In this case, however, the centralised institutions of the Siad Barre regime in Somalia had imploded. Paradoxically, this created new political space in the north of the country as it gradually stabilised and took shape as the de facto independent but internationally unrecognised state of Somaliland from 1991.

From aiding post-conflict reconstruction to supporting elections

ICD used such space creatively from the mid-1990s to support partners promoting grass-roots participation in rebuilding governance structures. At this time, Somaliland's emerging political structures were starting to move uneasily from clan-based power-sharing and nomination of parliamentary members to a multi-party system with elected representatives.

This work gradually became a joint enterprise involving both of CIIR's programmes. It dovetailed ICD's contribution through civil society capacity-building and institutional strengthening on the programme side with the strengths of CIIR's policy work on human rights and democratisation. The latter, as demonstrated in earlier sections, had included not just analysis but longstanding practical experience of accompanying political transitions and observing elections.

By 2002, CIIR, thanks to the progress made by its ICD programme since 1995 in supporting peace-building and fostering the development of civil society and public institutions, was in a position of sufficient standing and trust to be invited by Somaliland's National Electoral Commission ([NEC](#)) to help it prepare for local elections in December of that year. The district polls – the first to be held in 30 years – followed 2001 approval of a constitution superseding the transition-to-civilian-rule and peace charters that had emerged from the 1993 Borama national reconciliation conference. In April 2003, the fledgling nation also went on to hold its first presidential elections.

CIIR's support was officially welcomed by the NEC (see Quote below) and marked the onset of a commitment over the next 15 years to strengthening Somaliland's electoral process. As outlined in Chapters 4 and 5, this involved boosting the political participation and representation of women and youth, through groups such as the women's network NAGAAD and the youth umbrella body SONYO. This work for inclusive governance made initial progress during the period covered by this chapter. Still, as underscored by CIIR's [report](#) of its 76-member international mission to observe the first multi-party parliamentary elections held in 2005, women's right to vote did not translate into high numbers of women standing as candidates or being elected. High age thresholds also stood in the way of young people being able to stand as candidates and vote.

“Your support to us reflects your organisation’s values and your commitment to nurturing the emergence of a strong civil society and democratic governance in a troubled part of the world.”

Somaliland National Electoral Commission statement on ICD’s support for the 2002 local elections

Helping civil society lay foundations for development progress

The creation of propitious civil society conditions and a supportive institutional environment for a relatively peaceful process of democratisation to start taking shape in Somaliland was an achievement that ICD had played its own part in nurturing. It owed much to the civil society capacity-building of DWs such as Rhoda Ibrahim and [Lainie Thomas](#) from the mid-1990s described earlier, as well as the contribution made in the new millennium by Yvette Lopez, a Filipino DW.

Indeed, ICD had supported efforts in Somaliland to bring communities divided by civil war together, provide opportunities for dialogue on the causes of the conflict, and nurture the expertise of NGOs and community members in peace-building methodologies and participatory development approaches. ICD, in facilitating partner access to international learning and resources on conflict resolution, did so with the explicit aim of enriching the bottom-up role of traditional peace-building techniques available locally. It was use of such mechanisms, rather than external blueprints, which had enabled Somaliland to overcome setbacks and achieve relative peace during the 1990s.

Indeed, the failure of colonial and post-colonial strategies for state-building, as embodied in Siad Barre’s ‘scientific socialism’, had led to Somalia’s collapse. Moreover, as Mark Bradbury’s 1997 [country report on Somaliland](#) for CIIR analysed, international efforts to end clan conflict in the rest of Somalia (including the 1993 US military intervention) and recover stability and peace had foundered on their lack of local ownership and grass-roots legitimacy. In addition, they had not done enough to recognise the role of women in peace-building, despite women’s efforts during the crisis (see Quote below). ICD provided a platform for Somali women’s voices to be heard at a 1998 workshop.

“I remember how in the years of the civil war in the 1980s, the women worked together to develop and promote peace. As women we’d meet together and draw up lists of points to discuss with our husbands, our brothers and our sons. Sometimes we assigned a few women to travel around the region to talk with the men with the guns. We had to find ways to influence men and convince them to establish peace and rebuild the country.”

Recollection of Amran Ali Mahmoud, former director of Somaliland’s ministry of family welfare and development, quoted in [Interact \(winter 2003/04\)](#)

Localising rights-based approaches

As part of its 1990s support, ICD similarly worked to localise commitment to human rights. It arranged the translation of international human rights conventions into Somali and promoted their dissemination for local discussion and use. A 1998 workshop, brought civil society activists, journalists, government representatives and lawyers together for the first time to define the main human rights challenges and opportunities in the country, as recorded in [Human Rights in Somaliland: Awareness and Action](#).

This event, building on the partner-led [1995 civil society support conference](#) described earlier and a follow-up 1997 workshop symbolically held in Borama on partnerships for peace and development, was aimed at galvanising stakeholder commitment to inclusive governance. For ICD and its partners, rights-based participation was the basis for achieving social progress and consolidating Somaliland’s emerging political settlement.



Debating democracy and the 'war on terror'

ICD's rising involvement in programming on participation and governance during the 1990s was in keeping with CIIR's longstanding record described earlier of advocacy support for Southern partners struggling for political change aimed at social justice. It also took shape at a time when support for democracy-building and civil society participation was becoming a stronger feature of Western foreign affairs diplomacy and international aid programmes.

Trick or treat?

At one level, this was a welcome development as countries in the South sought external help to consolidate the formal institutions of democracy or make political transitions to multi-party rule and hold regular elections. It also appeared to hint at a possible break with Western governments' past frequent backing of repressive authoritarian regimes in the South.

'Democracy promotion', however, was subject to different interpretations and approaches and not short of controversy in practice. The concern remained, particularly in the case of the United States, that it often involved Western governments' intervention in favour of political forces and arrangements biased towards their own narrowly defined state aims on commercial and geopolitical matters rather than empowerment of local actors seeking changes to advance the interests and rights of the poor and marginalised. For CIIR, the institutions of 'democracy' required solid policy foundations, with citizen participation and social and economic inclusion prerequisites for sustainable peace and human rights.

Exploring the issues at stake

CIIR, drawing on its advocacy work and ICD programme experience in different regions, made 'Roadmaps to Democracy' the theme of its 2003 AGM, and speakers from Southern partners spoke at a follow-workshop on the topic. The events underlined the need for women's key role in building democratic institutions and peaceful societies to be recognised.

A 2002 public meeting, 'Building Peace in the New World Disorder', addressed by Professor James O'Connell of Bradford University's peace studies department, ICD's Somaliland CR, Dr Adan Yousuf Abokor, and journalist Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, discussed growing anxiety that the 'war on terror' launched by the United States in the wake of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks was creating an adverse international climate for conflict resolution and addressing development challenges. In 2004, a CIIR event held at the School of Oriental and African Studies saw Professor O'Connell assess the aftermath of the controversial second Gulf War in Iraq, led by the US and the UK, which toppled Saddam Hussein.

ICD followed up in 2002 by organising a human rights defenders event in partnership with Somali NGO SamoTallis, Amnesty International and NOVIB of the Netherlands. It engaged 34 activists from Somaliland, Puntland and south Somalia in dialogue on how they could best adapt recognised methods and approaches in human rights advocacy to their extremely difficult local circumstances.

Along with experiences from other countries and regions, CIIR's work in and on Somaliland provided valuable insights for its awareness-raising in the UK on the challenges of citizen participation and democracy promotion in difficult political environments. They took on further significance in the light of the post-2001 'war on terror', which was too often the prism through which Western powers viewed ongoing conflict in Somalia (see Box above).

Right to know, capacity to act: powering change through information and communication

A growing strand of programming to strengthen citizens' participation was ICD's support during this period for partners involved in information, communication and media work.

Some initiatives helped partners to strengthen their support for poor people through the use and exchange of vital information and knowledge. Others sought to reshape public discourse and the policy agenda by using media and communication to promote wider awareness, debate and action among target audiences on the sustainable development and human rights issues affecting poor people's lives.

Access to vital information and the existence of effective communication channels was considered a crucial condition for people facing poverty, injustice and discrimination to be better able to participate in decision-making and have their voices heard by public audiences and power-holders.

Indeed, ICD's partnerships took place in a climate where organisations specialising in media and communication for development (C4D) were seeking greater recognition and support within the overall development community for this significant but often neglected sphere of work. They included some NGOs and C4D groups that were even advocating the concept of 'communication rights'. Their aim was to challenge the alleged structural bias of mainstream media and communication systems, content and practice towards established political, business and social audiences and elite views. Too often elites exercised control and influence over media and communication.



Namibia and Somaliland: supporting national identity and development through oral history and library services

The strategic importance of ICD's support for information and communication initiatives was demonstrated in Namibia where the oppressive distortions of South African propaganda had deprived the majority of the population of their right to receive, share and discuss information relevant to their lives.

Building recognition and inclusion

An early initiative, following Namibia's independence, saw ICD support the Bricks Community Project, a nation-wide NGO initiative using oral history to reconstruct people's sense of identity and community in the wake of apartheid's damaging classification of people as 'superior' and 'inferior' according to race and ethnicity. Creating a sense of belonging, recognition and self-confidence through channels for people to express themselves and have their voices heard was crucial for post-independence development and democratisation. ICD recruited a Kenyan DW with experience in oral testimony collection and dissemination to provide training and support on project methodologies.

This grassroots work was built into ICD's follow-up efforts in Namibia to strengthen communication capacity on social justice issues at an intermediary NGO level through its support for the NANGOF network, as well as with media partners. The overall aim was to help partners nurture a buoyant communication environment in which those traditionally overlooked in public life could have greater representation. To this end, plans were made to broadcast the testimonies gathered through the Bricks initiative on the Windhoek-based Katutura community radio station (KCR), reaching and engaging wider audiences. ICD, in order to sustain efforts of this kind, later recruited and placed a radio production trainer with Katutura in a partnership with the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA). KCR had been launched in 1995 with the financial support of UNESCO and other agencies.

A catalogue of progress

In turn, ICD backed the drive to raise levels of public knowledge in Namibia through more conventional educational channels that had not been accessible or available under apartheid rule. Building on the work of DWs Phil Aspden and Jill Stringer to help strengthen community and school libraries from 1997, in the new millennium ICD recruited a further two librarians, Charles Mlambo and Wilson Yule, to help the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture develop rural libraries in the north of the country.

Among the achievements of Aspden and Stringer, both librarians, was the setting up of services in the rural Oshana region targeting 650,000 people. Another DW, Vincent Oola, had worked in the late 1990s with the ministry to provide financial advice and training for its national literacy programme. The value of such ICD support could not be overstated, given the past concentration of library services on white communities. In 1994, an estimated 95 per cent of first-time university students in northern Namibia had never set foot in a library.

In Somaliland, DW [Mary Enright](#), in the context of the territory's aspirations to build and become a new state, helped to develop the library services of the community-based [Amoud University](#) in the north. A landmark for the emerging institution, originally set up in 1998, was the holding of its first graduation ceremony in 2003, attended by the country's vice-president and hundreds of local leaders and community representatives.

Boosting knowledge management and the potential of ICTs

ICD programmes similarly worked with partners to strengthen their systems for the management of information and knowledge, including in service provision.

Healthy gains

In Somaliland, where efforts were well underway by the early 2000s to replicate the advances in supporting maternal and child health in neighbouring Yemen, ICD recruited a DW from Nepal, Ram Sedhain, to work with the Ministry of Health and Labour to review its information management systems. He used the results of the review to make the systems easier to use and manage and also provide the right information for analysis and policy-making.

This complemented the efforts of other DWs to support Somaliland partners working for a sustainable health strategy. Boniface Muia, for example, a health expert from Kenya, worked with the ministry to develop a system for sharing the costs of health care between users of services – such as those provided by the health centre in Sheikh Nur, one of the poorest new settlements near Hargeisa – and the government. The aim, as well as

making efficient use of scarce public resources, was to reduce reliance on external donor aid. A 2001 evaluation found that attendance of the Sheik Nur centre by women and children had increased over the three years of ICD support, and that project learning had contributed to policy debate on the decentralisation of health services.

Knowledge management systems today rely on use of information and communication technologies, and the potential of ICTs to enhance sustainable development initiatives, though not necessarily a magic wand, has been increasingly recognised since the new millennium. In the early 1990s, however, access to ICT infrastructure and the expertise needed to exploit fully the value of such technologies were still in their relative infancy in the global South. ICD, aware of the emerging opportunities and in response to partner requests for technical support, made the recruitment of ICT specialists an important strand of its programming at this time.

Productive results

ICD, for instance, was an early supporter of the Peruvian Scientific Network ([RCP](#)). Created in 1991, the initial aim of the network was to promote networked communication systems based on greater use of email and email list-serves as well as greater public access to the worldwide web through the establishment of low-cost internet cabins.

In Peru, as elsewhere, ICD went on to support a wider range of partners wishing to apply the advantages of such ICT uptake to their specific thematic work in particular sectors. In the early 2000s, for example, Jaime Torres, a DW working with the Peruvian Centre for Social Studies ([CEPES](#)), helped the organisation to develop a network of low-cost internet cabins for use by 6,000 small farmers in the coastal Huaral region. This helped the farmers to improve their individual and collective decisions on crop production and marketing through better and quicker access to information and knowledge on weather conditions and prices.

Latin America and the Caribbean: working for a communication eco-system promoting the interests of the poor

In Latin America and the Caribbean, ICD's capacity support for ICT-focused initiatives was a complementary strand of a wider strategic effort in the region to create a vibrant information and communication eco-system with partners. As in the case of ICD's work to support women's organisations in the Dominican Republic and El Salvador and indigenous organisations in Ecuador, many interventions saw DWs nurture the communications expertise of NGOs and civil society networks in order to strengthen their advocacy. At the same time, a distinctive feature of ICD's approach was its increasing involvement in diverse partnerships with media organisations themselves in each country and across the region.

ANNIE BUNGEROTH

Lasting images: photography for social change



Annie Bungeroth, a multimedia journalist, shared expertise with TAFOS as an ICD development worker in Peru in the first half of the 1990s.

It was my light bulb moment: a film-maker friend put a bunch of photos in my hand and talked about TAFOS. This was a Peruvian social photography organisation made up not of professional photographers, but of representatives of grassroots organisations with a sharp eye for capturing the ways of life, traditions, living conditions and challenges of their communities. Creativity had always been my driving force but in looking at those images, I grasped both the power of photography as a universally understood language and its potential, in the right hands, to become a tool of social change. So much of my working life has been informed by that moment.

TAFOS emerged at a key moment of Peru's history. Over the decade from the mid-1980s the labour movement gave a voice to the working class and TAFOS provided another set of tools to reflect and project it: cameras and training for miners to document, denounce and promote awareness and improvement of their working conditions, for example, and for farmers, students and grassroots organisations to expose the atrocities of the state and terrorism. TAFOS also steadily increased the participation of women in the initiative, both in terms of its organisational leadership and as photographers, overcoming gender barriers to female involvement.

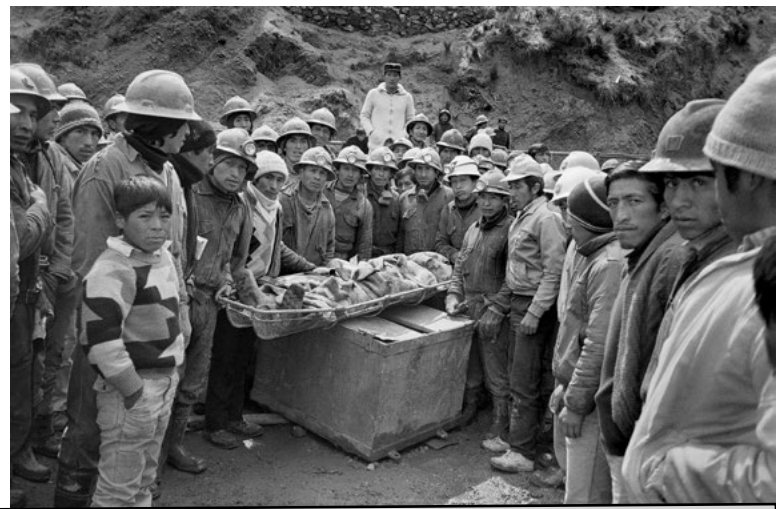
Unique record, pioneering role

CIIR had the vision to see the value of TAFOS and, as a DW recruited through its ICD programme, I had the opportunity to support its work. In 1990, we began to develop an archival system to protect the more than 10,000 negatives from the horrendous humidity of Lima and the potential threat of the ever-increasing internal conflict devastating parts of Peru. I spent four years sharing my archival and photographic skills and left in place a team that has restored, over the last two decades, some of the most important photographic archives in Peru. The archive, now housed and promoted by the Catholic University of Peru (PUCP) in Lima, is a unique record of a crucial period in the country's history and in constant use for research, exhibitions and publications.

TAFOS closed its doors once the socio-political climate changed and the strength of the workers' organisations, which had provided its original source of energy and social partnership, faded. This did not mean, however, that TAFOS' impact and legacy were lost. On the contrary, other organisations have since been formed using a similar methodology and continuing the participatory photography practices for which TAFOS was the forerunner. TAFOS is acknowledged as a key player in the history of Peruvian, if not Latin American, photography.



The power of a photograph: from a small local newspaper board to a large-scale international exhibition, the images of the TAFOS social photography workshops were used to illustrate, share, denounce and celebrate. Left: newspaper board in Alto Collano, Puno, 1989. ©Jacinto Chilo/ Archivo TAFOS-PUCP
Right: ¡Viva el Peru Carajo! exhibition at the prestigious Photographers Gallery, London, 1991. © Annie Bungeroth/TAFOS



Land invasion by a peasant community near the border town of Macara, Puno 1989. ©Melchor Lima/Archivo TAFOS-PUCP

Juan Crispin, killed in an accident in the Manuelita mine, Morococha, 1989. ©Honorato Huamani/Teodosio Barreto 1989/Archivo TAFOS-PUCP

Some partnerships, such as ICD's support for a pioneering social photography initiative in Peru (see Box above) and use of participatory video with urban communities in the Dominican Republic, were aimed at reflecting directly the lives and aspirations of poor people.

Frequently, however, the emphasis was on work with media organisations seeking to provide an alternative to mainstream media news and current affairs. The latter's output was not considered to be covering sufficiently, accurately or fairly civil society stories of community-based struggles for social justice.

Strengthening alternative media

In Peru and Ecuador, in particular, ICD steadily developed an integrated portfolio of support for alternative media partners. The work sought to engage not just local and national audiences but also, given the importance of international solidarity with Latin American struggles for democracy and human rights and the impact of the so-called 'Washington consensus' policies for development in the region, achieve wider regional and international projection.

An important partner from 1994 onwards was the Lima-based **Noticias Aliadas** (NA, Allied News), a media outlet originally founded with the support of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers. During the decade, Lucien O Chauvin, a Spanish-speaking professional journalist from Canada recruited by ICD, shared writing, editing and translation skills with the NA team. He also strengthened the overall editorial content of its weekly newsletter sourced from a network of correspondents well-versed in local issues. This included NA's English-language edition, **Latinamerica Press** (LAP).

In the early 2000s, ICD followed up by placing further DWs to help NA/LAP to support other key aspects of the organisation's operation and development. They included Lucy Hurn, who worked to strengthen marketing and promotion through story sales and promotion with the wider media, and David Shanks who helped the organisation to develop and launch a website. This was stocked with current news and feature stories, statistics and an archive of past special reports.

Linking inclusive media coverage with civil society advocacy

As well as filling gaps in coverage by the mainstream media, which often neglected important stories affecting ordinary people or reported them from narrower social and political angles, NA/LAP's aim increasingly was to provide an information service that audiences could use as a reliable resource for their own education, awareness-raising and advocacy on public policy issues. It also developed a role in training civil society organisations to strengthen their use of communication tools and media relations work. An ICD-supported initiative involving NA/LAP saw the formation of an ALTERMEDIOS consortium bringing together NGOs and grassroots CSOs to pursue these aims.

Another important development in NA/LAP's work was the turning of its print bulletins into an award-winning radio programme, *A Viva Voz* (Aloud). This was a joint initiative with the CNR, the body coordinating Peru's community and citizen radio stations, and the Quito-based Latin American Association of Radio Education (**ALER**) in Ecuador grouping scores of such broadcasters across the region. Broadcasting of the programme by the partners, whose capacity ICD had long supported by recruiting and placing experienced radio professionals, provided a wider platform for participatory debate of the issues covered in NA/LAP newsletters. It also boosted audience reach, given the scores of stations involved and the greater public accessibility of radio. Radio had the power not just to engage audiences but sometimes be part of major political change (see Box).

Taking to the mikes: radio and political change in Ecuador

The potential of media to act as a catalyst for social change was demonstrated in 2005 in Ecuador. The government, mired in corruption scandals, attempted to shut down ALER services as part of its growing curbs on freedom of expression and association to deal with its deepening political crisis. Radio Luna, ALER's station in capital Quito, however, found ways to continue broadcasting, and thousands of people aired live their views and concerns about the situation in Ecuador and their ideas for the future. This expression of public opinion, dismissed by then President Lucio Gutiérrez as part of a citizens' 'bandit movement', added to a climate of mounting social pressure that soon led to his downfall.

Source: 'Constructing a new meaning', article by DW Luis Tavera, a Peruvian radio trainer with ALER, **Interact (2005)**

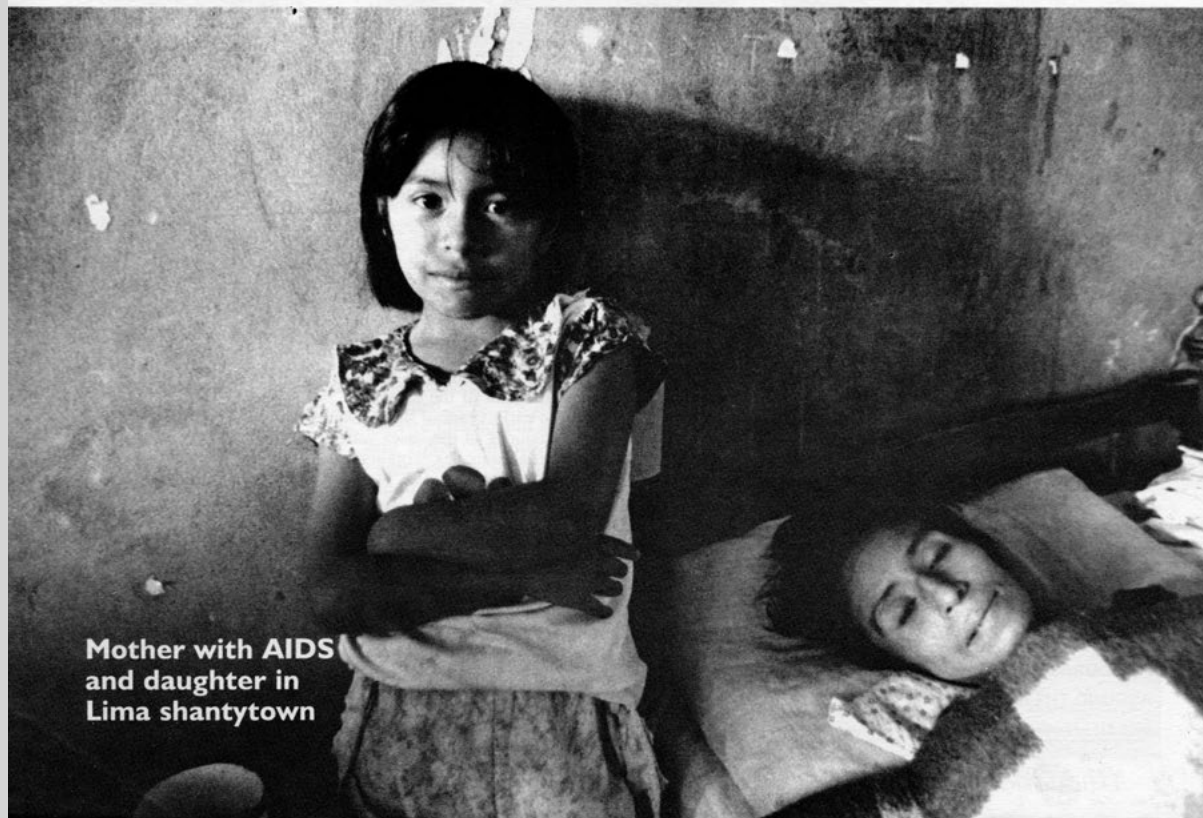




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The Pauperization of AIDS



Mother with AIDS
and daughter in
Lima shantytown

©Annie Bungeroth

Helping partners to optimise use of media and ICTs to promote development and social justice also formed part of ICD's commitment in Latin America to supporting indigenous peoples, whose organisations were increasingly aware of their potential in fighting for recognition and equal rights. In 2003, a Peruvian ICD professional, Lourdes Barrezueta Barzola, was helping **ALER** strengthen the coordination of the Kichwas Satellite Network. The network's 30 broadcasters brought news and cultural magazine programmes to the Quechua people of Peru and Bolivia and the Kichwa people of Ecuador.

In Haiti, ICD had also harnessed media partnerships to tackle race and ethnicity as well as gender issues in promoting citizen participation. It placed DWs with the Creole newspaper *Libète* (Freedom), which had survived military repression in the first half of the 1990s to become a mass circulation weekly, as well as the monthly magazine *Ayiti Fanm* (Haiti Woman). Such vehicles providing information in Haiti's dominant language were read out loud in communities to overcome illiteracy barriers, which ICD also sought to overcome through its work with **SAKS**. This was a C4D group supporting community-based radio broadcasting in Creole and French to urban and rural communities.

Collaborative action and joint programming

Strengthening links between CIIR's international advocacy work and the ICD programme in the new millennium

Finding synergies in a new age

In 2002, CIIR embarked on a deliberate effort to bring together its Northern policy and advocacy work and burgeoning capacity-building in the South in a much more systematic way. The two mainstays of CIIR's work had been hitherto conducted relatively independently of each other by its Education (now IPD) and ICD departments, due to their largely different set of focus countries. This was despite the two programmes' shared development values, as well as productive collaboration in those instances where they had a shared interest in a particular country.

Towards common focus countries and investment in national advocacy capacity

On the one hand, pursuit of this more integrated approach involved harnessing CIIR's policy and advocacy work far more directly to the focus countries of the ICD programme and the thematic issues and challenges raised by ICD's partnerships on the ground. On the other, it made practical capacity support for ICD partners' advocacy expertise and initiatives at a national level, and their potential links with CIIR's international advocacy, a stronger focus in ICD's country strategies and interventions. CIIR also continued to make stronger use of publications and events to promote awareness of the issues arising from partners' work with communities in ICD country programmes.

CIIR's adoption of a one-programme approach would take full shape following the organisation's 2006 conversion into Progressio, as described in following Chapter 4. Efforts to boost greater synergies between its two programmes of work, however, had already been underway since the second half of the 1990s.

CIIR, for example, as part of its international advocacy on the 'war on drugs' in the Andes, commissioned Lucien O Chauvin, the DW in Peru supporting ICD media partner NA/LAP, to write a 1997 report on how free-market policies fuelled conflict over coca production and undermined alternative development initiatives, *The Drugs Trade, Rural Development and Economic Liberalisation: Lessons from Peru*.

Linking partner interests and thematic priorities

A fertile source of collaborative effort was ICD's growing involvement in capacity development on governance and participation. It chimed well with CIIR's traditional strengths in analysis and advocacy of people-centred democratisation. Support for advocacy capacity on citizen involvement and women's inclusion in decision-making in post-independence Timor-Leste, linked with CIIR's continued international solidarity, provided one demonstration of such joint work.



Another example, as noted earlier, was CIIR's mutually supportive programme and policy work in and on Somaliland. CIIR published *Further Steps to Democracy: the Somaliland Parliamentary Elections, September 2005* to raise awareness of the state- and democracy-building challenges, in particular the need for women's greater participation and representation. It used the publication to engage policy-makers at a meeting in the UK's House of Commons on the need for greater international support to aid the continued development of civil society and public institutions.

Just as CIIR stepped up efforts to draw on programme experience with partners in advocacy and awareness-raising, including on participation issues, it sought a flusher fit between its analysis of international policy trends and the interests of its partners in ICD country programmes. This was the case in relation to mounting pressure in the South and the North for cancellation of Third World debt and new policy approaches to tackle poverty. A CIIR briefing in 2003, also published in Spanish, on World Bank and IMF-supported poverty reduction strategy papers, for instance, saw DWs Sarah Bradshaw and Brian Linneker examine the extent to which the PRSPs of Nicaragua and Honduras tackled gender issues (see Box).

Poverty reduction in Central America: raising UK policy debate on PRSP principles and PRSP practice

A stated principle of PRSPs, which the IFIs required low-income developing country governments to introduce as a condition for debt relief by donor creditors, was that they should be developed through 'stakeholder participation' and be based on 'country ownership'. Using its Nicaragua and Honduras briefing on the need for attention to gender, CIIR took discussion of PRSPs to the UK's House of Commons. Seen by official aid bodies as a flagship for addressing poverty, PRSPs were now the subject of considerable debate. Critics questioned the extent and depth of public participation in developing and monitoring the strategies and whether economic adjustment and growth policies were consistent with poverty reduction objectives.

Work for a sustainable environment was also becoming an increasingly productive source of synergies. CIIR's publication of a Comment on biodiversity in 1993 provided an early marker of institutional concern over moves promoting private control of genetic resources, then still a relatively unfamiliar topic for many in the international development community. Commitment to addressing such issues in policy work grew as ICD's support for partners involved in agro-ecology and the sustainable management of natural resources took even stronger shape as a programme priority, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Drawing on ICD's environmental education project in Central America, for example, in 2004 CIIR invited a representative of the Humboldt Centre, a Nicaraguan environmental NGO partner, to speak at its AGM. It also organised a European speaker tour for him to raise concerns with UK and EU policy-makers on the impact of patenting and genetic engineering of crops on small farmers. At this time, CIIR also published a Comment, *People and Environment on the Edge*, on the policies affecting environmental protection in Latin America and the Caribbean, thus contextualising for wider audiences ICD's grass-roots work on the challenges with partners in the region. It also published a faith reflection, *Living Lightly on Earth*, advocating the responsibility of Christians for stewardship of the environment.

Mutual benefits

Creating a more systematic relationship between CIIR's existing two main work programmes offered mutual benefits. Connecting CIIR's advocacy work more tightly to ICD's work with partners and communities, for instance, provided an opportunity to bolster the Southern rootedness and legitimacy of the organisation's policy recommendations.

Conversely, as reflected by ICD's project partnership criteria outlined earlier, CIIR's work on the ground had always involved concern with the impact of the policy environment on



KATE GOLD

Practical action and policy change: seeking the right mix in Ecuador



Following her time with CIIR, Kate Gold worked for ITDG (now called Practical Action) where her role focused on knowledge-sharing to support its country programmes and UK advocacy. She then spent 14 years with the UK's Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew where she established a training programme to support the international work of Kew's Millennium Seed Bank Partnership. She encouraged Kew colleagues to consider development issues in their work on botany and conservation, including as members of UK government advisory bodies and UK delegations to bodies involved in the Convention on Biological Diversity.

I worked on the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources as a DW in CIIR's ICD programme in Ecuador in the 1990s. With 1992 the year of the Rio Earth Summit – the first time that countries had come together globally to address threats to biological diversity – it was an exciting time to do so.

My initial posting in 1992-93 was with Acción Ecológica (Ecological Action) – the first time CIIR's ICD programme in Ecuador had partnered with an environmental NGO to work on biodiversity – and then I worked with CATER at the National University of Loja until 1998. I wondered what was the most effective: was it the former's high-profile campaigning to change policies, hearts and minds, or was it the latter's practical, on-the-ground, participatory research? It is a question I often returned to then and since.

I believe you need both. Applied research and on-the-ground activities may only have a limited direct impact but provide evidence and case studies that can be used to argue for policy change. Advocacy without evidence convinces few. Research that ends up in scientific journals that few practitioners ever access is of limited value. Much of my post-CIIR career has been spent in knowledge transfer, ensuring that research results reach those who can use them, and trying to ensure that research is designed to address real problems, identified on the ground.

Tensions and synergies

Acción Ecológica, in requesting a DW, had originally wanted to broaden their approach to include participatory research and grassroots development activities. In practice, however, it found that its strengths, and the main interest of most of its members, lay in campaigning. The challenge for ICD in supporting Acción Ecológica, therefore, was the potential tension between the partner's high-profile work and CIIR's cooperation agreement with the Ecuadorean government, which forbade DWs' involvement in 'political activities'. There was concern that if my role within Acción Ecológica led to my accompaniment of activities such as its occupation of the offices of oil companies, it could cause problems for both me and CIIR's overall ICD programme.

Acción Ecológica's continued concentration on campaigning also meant that my specific expertise on participatory, grassroots research was ultimately more relevant elsewhere at the time and so it was that I embarked on the placement with CATER. This is not to suggest that the approach of either organisation was more appropriate than the other. I believe that advocacy and campaigning and applied research organisations both have important roles to play, and that ICD was right to support each partner. Moreover, ICD provided effective DW support for the Ecuadorean Agro-ecology Coordinator (CEA), a national network of NGOs, CBOs, education and private sector members engaged in a range of activities from research to campaigning.

It should be noted that, whatever the type of partner, much of the impact of ICD's work was realised through DW support for the individual staff counterparts we worked with in each organisation. Sadly, CATER later fell foul of institutional politics and was dissolved by the university, yet most of my ex-colleagues are still working on development and conservation issues. Indeed, some of them are now collaborating with Acción Ecológica, which is still active, still challenging, and still facing threats of closure from the government. Twenty-five years on, mining and oil exploitation are still major threats to Ecuador's biodiversity, showing how difficult change is when the power of vested interests is involved.

partner efforts to facilitate people's own empowerment. Building even stronger advocacy possibilities into ICD projects and programmes thus made desirable sense, though ICD's existing experience of linking practical action with the pursuit of policy change had indicated that a careful approach was always needed, taking into account the distinct emphasis and changing needs of partners (see Box). This challenge also reflected ICD's need to protect DWs from security risks in view of possible political sensitivities and its principle that the role of such professionals was to facilitate partners' own pursuit of development progress, not act as direct protagonists of change themselves.



4 Charting a new course as Progressio

'Changing minds, changing lives' for sustainable development
(2006-2010)

Summer 2009

interact

The magazine of PROGRESSIO



LIVING WITH HIV

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'Changing minds, changing lives' for sustainable development
(2006-2010)

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Institutional renewal and launching a new strategy

THE PROMOTION OF GREATER INSTITUTIONAL SYNERGIES described at the end of Chapter 3 culminated in CIIR adopting Progressio as its working name from January 2006 and formally merging its international policy (former education) and ICD departments. Following a process of programme-policy integration, the two mainstays of the organisation's work were now centred solely on the countries and thematic priorities of its DW programming.

CIIR's new name emerged in the wake of an in-depth survey of staff, DWs, members, donors and partners as well as a review over the previous two years of the organisation's vision and values and overall strategy. Progressio was chosen to reaffirm the organisation's rootedness in Catholic Social Teaching and progressive Christian commitment to "justice, peace and human dignity and love" and also strengthen the projection, among both wider faith and secular audiences, of its work for better lives and societies.

Moving beyond name change to project a stronger identity

Multiple factors accounted for the organisation's second name change. Just as the Sword of the Spirit no longer captured what it had become as a result of its growing involvement in the developing world, the name 'Catholic Institute for International Relations', for all its accumulated value within the international development community, had come to be seen as increasingly problematic. As in the past, the organisation and the external environment surrounding it had once again changed.

Overcoming misleading first impressions

In the context of the international solidarity described in Chapter 2, the preposition 'for' in CIIR's name might have been rightly deciphered as implicitly challenging orthodox conceptions of international relations based on the interplay of elite-driven nation states. For CIIR, international relations were about furthering the participation and empowerment of disadvantaged people and the quest of citizens for social justice within and across national borders. But the academic-sounding nature of its name always rendered CIIR prone to being seen as an abstract policy think tank. The feeling within the organisation now was that this image did not reflect effectively either the action-for-change orientation of CIIR's advocacy or the vibrant nature the organisation's partner-led programme of grassroots work in the South. As the previous chapter showed, the latter had vastly expanded and become increasingly important institutionally.

Another longstanding difficulty of CIIR's name in terms of its public resonance was outside association of the organisation with the official Catholic Church and the Vatican. This typically led to understandable yet misplaced enquiries and information requests from the media, the public and church members. It also gave rise to inevitable perceptions among those unfamiliar with CIIR that its mission might be evangelistic, misleading those who might otherwise be strongly attracted by the social justice orientation of its work in practice.

As noted in Chapter 3, this risk had been one of the reasons for the re-launch of CIIR's secular overseas programme as ICD, though stakeholder discussion groups now indicated that 'international cooperation for development' was seen at this stage as too generic a name to warrant its application to the institution as a whole. Meanwhile, the content of CIIR's international advocacy described in previous chapters, alongside its faith dimensions and church partnerships as a distinguishing feature, had also tackled development and social justice challenges from a more general policy standpoint.

Reaching in and reaching out

The [coexistence of faith-rooted and secular progressive outlooks](#), as noted in Chapter 2, had always been a feature of CIIR's distinctiveness and capacity as a pluralistic convenor, especially in view of the common development principles centred on partner voice and empowerment that straddled its UK-based policy work and overseas programming. At the same time, the religious-secular 'identity' question, despite CIIR's openness to people of all faiths and none, had throughout been a source of periodic internal tension that the organisation found difficult to address.

In turn, the identity question had also often been a proxy for debate over how best to boost the public profile and external support of the organisation's work. By late 2005,

CIIR's membership numbered just 1,500 supporters, low in comparison with larger UK-based INGOs in particular but also with organisations of its own size. Customised dual use of the names CIIR and ICD was at this stage seen as confusing, especially now policy and programme work had been steadily integrated.

Disappearance of the adjective 'Catholic' was a loss for those within CIIR who considered it an indispensable signal of institutional commitment to the Church's social teaching and, by extension, emblematic of their own faith-led motivation and involvement. CIIR's board of trustees, however, decided that the name Progressio, as the outcome of a wider process of institutional renewal accompanying the change (see Box), was a suitable choice from a faith perspective and would also be more inclusive of other constituencies.

HELENA MOLYNEUX

Faith in the future



Helena Molyneux became chair of CIIR in 2001 having previously been a trustee and a longstanding CIIR member and supporter.

The early 2000s were a time for renewal. Christine Allen had succeeded Ian Linden as director at the same time as I had succeeded Paul Vallely as chair of CIIR. Mildred Nevile, the organisation's first general secretary, felt like our godmother. She taught me a lot about the founding values and mission of Sword of the Spirit and CIIR and about the organisation's ability to take a challenge and renew itself. So we felt on safe ground with her guidance and support.

There was much pressure to change our name from an acronym to something that would communicate to people young and old and attract them to our purpose and work. There was also much pressure not to change the name which was known and much loved by many. Christine and I banned all discussion of a name change until we had really considered who CIIR was now (at the time), what our values were, what we did and now wanted to achieve. Only after that was done did we embark on thinking about what was the right new name.

After considering many names, we settled on Progressio. It fitted perfectly. It reflected the organisation's values of justice, solidarity, empowerment, development and progress. It reflected our Catholic nature accurately and was meaningful in the different countries in which we worked.

On the one hand, it was felt that the new name reflected the organisation's Catholic roots and would resonate strongly with audiences in the Catholic community by explicitly recalling *Populorum Progressio*, the 1967 Papal encyclical 'On the Development of Peoples'. To reinforce this association and advocate its continued relevance, Progressio issued in 2006 an updated version of *This is Progress*, the abridged translation of this key Second Vatican Council-inspired document on international development and social justice that it had first published almost four decades earlier.

On the other hand, the name was expected to appeal to secular audiences interested in progress on international development. By the new millennium, the issue had gained greater prominence on the UK and Northern public and political agendas, as confirmed by developments such as the 2005 Make Poverty History campaign.

Adapting to a new development NGO environment

As much as a question of institutional identity, deliberations surrounding the name reflected the changing nature and fortunes of the organisation's policy and programme work, in the context of what had become a much more diverse, sophisticated and competitive international development sector, both in the UK and internationally.

One major trend was that CIIR, despite the prodigious scope and continued value of its international advocacy initiatives described in Chapter 3, had found it more and more difficult financially to sustain such a portfolio at scale with its own institutional department. The now-completed SEACA advocacy capacity strengthening initiative in Asia, with the exception of its work in Timor-Leste, was one of the last of its kind to take place without direct links to ICD country programmes placing DWs with partners. SEACA had represented 13 per cent of CIIR's spending at the start of the decade.

The rise and fall of funding for CIIR's international policy work

In the 1970s and 1980s, CIIR's education (international policy) department had been a leading pioneer of UK-based advocacy on international development. It had received funding from agencies such as Oxfam, CAFOD and Christian Aid to work on often politically sensitive issues that they felt unable or reluctant to address at the time, because of the possible risks to their UK charitable status and to their partners in the South receiving project funding.

By the early 1990s, however, following the early lead taken by CIIR, such larger, well-resourced agencies had fully established their own highly active policy and campaign units and were investing heavily in them. Their commitment to funding CIIR continued during the decade, in some cases with block grants and joint partnership agreements to support common work interests, but the overall level of financing was steadily scaled back and became relatively small. Funding from such sources was also more intermittent and often tied to specific project initiatives considered to add complementary niche value. By now, the larger agencies had steadily taken on the high-profile topics on the development agenda and increased the range of policy issues on which they worked.

Wider fundraising for Northern-based international advocacy had also become increasingly competitive, and donors were now showing greater interest in supporting more directly civil society partners in the South itself. Despite the still significant challenges of political transition and democratisation in the global South, and the need for international policies to support national development strategies based on more inclusive and socially just economic foundations, the solidarity orientation of CIIR's country-focused work had found it more difficult to command the same level of appeal it once had. Official donors were now prioritising other countries, issues and approaches.

It was in such a context, for example, that CIIR, with its lasting commitment to addressing the legacy of apartheid in Southern Africa, made the reluctant decision in 2007 to end its UK and EU-focused advocacy work on Angola. One of its last acts was to brief the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, on the Luanda regime's arrest of a UK activist working for the anti-corruption NGO Global Witness. CIIR's international advocacy work on non-ICD countries in Latin America such as Guatemala, Brazil and Colombia had already also ended by this time.

The UK's PPA mechanism: a vital source of support

The policy-programme integration providing the backdrop for the CIIR-Progressio name change, therefore, as well as seeking to maximise the synergistic benefits illustrated at the end of Chapter 3, was also driven by this more challenging financial environment. The pressures, however, had been eased in the immediate term by CIIR's successful application to DfID in 2001 to receive a multi-year grant under the terms of the ministry's Programme Partnership Agreement (PPA), the scheme set up by the Labour government to support NGOs considered to be making a strategic civil society contribution to the UK's overall international development effort. CIIR, as a successful applicant, went on to secure consecutive renewal of its multi-year PPA from 2005.

The PPA provided an unrestricted core grant, rather than earmarked funding tied to the specific aims and activities of individual projects, and gave Progressio continued leeway over how best to allocate the finance to meet the strategic objectives it had agreed in partnership with DfID. Significantly, the PPA mechanism, in contrast with earlier ODA block grant arrangements with CIIR in the 1980s and 1990s linked to its overseas programme, also allowed greater flexibility for capacity-building through DWs to be matched by complementary international advocacy. The PPA would remain a vital source of funding for Progressio's international advocacy. Overall, the PPA represented around 55-60 per cent of the organisation's total budget throughout the 2000s.

Despite the challenges, Progressio sustained its commitment to policy change as an essential pillar of its development contribution, as amply shown during the 2000s by new advocacy initiatives centred on issues directly affecting partners and people on the ground in DW country programmes. Implicitly signalling this commitment, Progressio retained the catchy strapline 'Changing Minds, Changing Lives' which CIIR had adopted in the late 1990s along with a new logo. Its emblematic dotting of the top and bottom of each 'i' in CIIR'S acronym captured visually its people-centred combination of policy work and grassroots practice (see p184).

Strengthening communications and public outreach

A positive development accompanying CIIR's pursuit of institutional renewal and its transformation as Progressio was the organisation's drive to strengthen its communication work, though the level of investment it could muster in absolute terms remained inevitably low in comparison with the UK's big development agencies. In 2010, the organisation spent as little as 5 per cent of its budget on communications.

In the mid-1990s, CIIR, alongside its core combination of 'changing minds' through international advocacy and 'changing lives' through grassroots capacity strengthening, had already added 'changing perceptions' to descriptions of its theory of change in institutional literature. The move recognised the longstanding importance of its publishing and media work. In turn, from the start of the 2000s, CIIR intensified its efforts to enhance the value of its communications work. The drive was part of a wider strategy to strengthen its public engagement and profile and bring its members and supporters much closer to the life of its initiatives. It took fuller shape during the decade as the organisation assumed its new trajectory as Progressio.

From *CIIR News* to *Interact* magazine

One important change took place in 2003 when the membership newsletter *CIIR News* – efforts had already been made to brighten its traditionally more sober design and content – was replaced by *Interact*, a glossy, full-colour [magazine](#), which was published quarterly by Progressio until 2011. The publication retained the informative content and analytical style of *CIIR News* but now gave even greater space to the voices of DWs and partners. Visual images and photo-journalistic displays brought to life the stories and issues at stake in the organisation's work on the ground.

To project the organisation as an active player and collaborator in the wider international development community, the magazine, in continuing to provide institutional news and views alongside a new fortnightly e-newsletter enabling regular updates, also carried country profiles, book reviews, interviews, analytical features and articles from outside contributors. Each issue highlighted a topical theme for in-depth treatment. Building on the efforts already being made by *CIIR News*, *Interact* devoted further attention to the role of Progressio members in raising welcome funds for its work and supporting its UK-based advocacy activities.

Digital tools: boosting Southern voice and interaction with members

By now, the organisation had long had its own website, which was re-launched in 2004 to promote more fluid interactivity with the membership and provide an outlet for the voices of DWs and partners. With the rise of ICTs and digital publishing and communication, DWs were able to set up their own blogging sites, and the Progressio [website](#) provided a collective institutional platform for [DW experiences](#) and partner insights to be shared. A [Poverty Bites](#) blog was also created to carry analytical comment and reflections.

Micro-sites were also set up on key themes and issues – '[Eco-matters](#)', for example, was launched to highlight work in Latin America and the Caribbean to support sustainable agriculture and reduce environmental vulnerability – and over time the Progressio website increasingly carried audio-visual materials. A module on website development was also produced to support partners' own communication efforts in the rapidly emerging digital age. In 2010, Progressio set up a [Facebook](#) page to take advantage of social media's potential for institutional sharing and promoting the organisation's growing campaigning activities.

CIIR's longstanding commitment to partner leadership of the development agenda was now matched by a concerted effort by Progressio to strengthen the projection of their voices, and those of their beneficiaries, in the organisation's communication strategy. The [2007 annual review](#), for instance, consisted entirely of their testimonies. The organisation also gave greater prominence to the individual identity, professional background and partner contributions of DWs, who clearly now merited far greater visibility as the lifeblood of its work. Annual reviews, as in [2009](#) and [2010](#), started to provide full lists of 'our people' with a short description of the issues DWs were addressing in placements with partners.

Changing organisation, changing needs

Stronger communication, as well as valuable in raising development awareness, had at this stage become an urgent institutional necessity for CIIR as it became Progressio. Much of CIIR's past profile in the North had traditionally stemmed from the impact of its UK-based international advocacy rather than its grassroots capacity-building in the South, despite the latter's considerable expansion and heightened institutional importance. A rebalancing was required now that issues of direct relevance to partners on the ground in country-

based programming were being fully considered and placed at the heart of international policy and advocacy work.

The organisation's commitment to partner-led Southern empowerment and facilitating South-South and wider international exchange through its increasingly decentralised recruitment of DWs (see Box) had long since been a major strength. Yet its concentration on maximising local capacity benefits had in the past inadvertently detracted from possible partner and DW interest in seizing opportunities to connect more strongly with its advocacy, solidarity and programme lesson-learning roles in the UK, the EU and the global North.

Global citizens: the continued internationalisation of Progressio's development workers in the South

Building on the trend set in motion by CIIR's ICD programme from the start of the 1990s (see Chapter 3), Progressio remained committed to recruiting DWs from the global South, as well as the UK and elsewhere in the global North, in order to maximise the international exchange of skills, knowledge and learning through its capacity-building. Progressio's continued intent was reflected by the diverse nationality of the DWs it recruited for placement with partner organisations. In 2009/10, when Progressio had a total of 132 professionals in post over the year, DWs represented as many as 39 nationalities, as shown in the list below.

Argentine	Ethiopian	Mexican
Australian	French	Nepali
Bangladeshi	Filipino	Nicaraguan
Belgian	German	Pakistani
Bolivian	Guatemalan	Peruvian
British	Haitian	Salvadorean
Canadian	Honduran	Spanish
Chilean	Hungarian	Sri Lankan
Colombian	Indian	Swedish
Costa Rican	Irish	Thai
Dominican	Italian	Ugandan
Dutch	Kenyan	US
Ecuadorean	Malawian	Zimbabwean

Linkages of this kind had been harder to forge in a more strategic fashion before the early 2000s. This had been due to the relative autonomy of the advocacy work of CIIR's education/international policy (IPD) department and ICD's DW programming, despite the episodic positive efforts of country representatives and London-based departmental desk officers. Ensuring such linkages was now more important than ever for a Southern-driven smaller INGO based in the North needing to sustain and promote the value of its work from London.

Such challenges led in tandem to associated internal debates at this time about the need to reaffirm the solidarity motivation behind the [recruitment](#), placement and role of DWs, the majority of who hailed from the global South. Highlighting such an ethos was felt important in order to ensure that the organisation, in providing partners with [DW professionals](#) of the highest quality, continued to be a platform for a wider process of international development awareness and change as well as an avenue for DWs to combine their vital capacity-building contributions with their legitimate aspirations for individual professional development and career progression. DWs saw Progressio's diverse identity and multi-dimensional development approach as vital strengths (see Quote).

“Working for Progressio is an education because it is a multidisciplinary organisation which brings together development workers of different nationalities.”

Marvin Zavala Ruiz, a Nicaraguan DW, on sharing his expertise as an agronomist with partners in Honduras

Activating member support and campaigning in the UK and Ireland

A now densely populated international development NGO environment also made it increasingly important for Progressio to raise the profile of its work and increase its supporter base. As well as sustaining a diverse publishing programme and strengthening institutional communications in the ways described above, Progressio stepped up efforts already underway to organise public events reaching wider audiences. Photo exhibitions and the showing of documentaries complemented CIIR's traditional advocacy tools of policy seminars, discussion events and partner speaker tours.

In 2006, for instance, Progressio organised an exhibition of photos, *Illegal Portraits*, shot by Italian photojournalist [Gianni Dal Mas](#), a DW, to highlight the injustices facing Haitian sugar cane workers in the Dominican Republic, combined with the screening of an award-winning documentary on the subject, *Bitter Sugar*. The event, coinciding with UK commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the abolition of slavery and US pressure on migrant worker exploitation in Haiti, prompted [media coverage](#). In 2008, as part of Progressio's continued work on the rights of Haitian migrants and Dominicans of Haitian descent, the 2008 London Film Festival screened *The Challenge of Coexistence*, a film directed by Brazilian DW Tigu Guimarães, a communications specialist working in the Dominican Republic.

Inside and outside pressure

Increased public engagement also saw Progressio move to make public [campaigning](#) a stronger dimension of its pursuit of advocacy impact, which had tended in the past to rely on more discreet institutional targeting of policy-makers. As described in detail later, this new approach saw international policy change initiatives to stop terminator technology undermining farmers' rights to seeds, to make water resource problems part of climate change negotiations, and to prevent illegal logging. These were all issues of strategic importance for country partners.

Progressio now increasingly worked to harness the 'outside' pressure of member mobilisation to influencing 'inside' the policy arena as a feature of its advocacy, as shown by one example of its continued solidarity with East Timor (see Box below). Internally, this entailed efforts to tighten planning links between advocacy, campaigning and communication work. Progressio even sought to step up supporter-targeted merchandising, with products such as a themed-calendar on environmental sustainability promoted to raise both funds and awareness.



Reaching for change: transition from CIIR saw Progressio invest in public campaigning. It harnessed the 'outside' pressure of members to advocacy 'inside' policy arenas such as the UK parliament.

Right: Progressio's Belisario Nieto leafletting at the 2009 G20 summit.



A display of solidarity with East Timor: supporters campaign to right UK wrongs

In 2009, Progressio held a photo exhibition, *East Timor: Trapped in the Past*, at the House of Commons. It was the culmination of a 10-month [East Timor: Who Cares](#) campaign, which [called on the British government](#) to sustain and strengthen its financial aid for nation-building and peace in post-independence East Timor. The government was planning to end its contribution to a World Bank trust fund supporting the country. Continued British commitment, argued Progressio, was needed as reparation for UK policy that had deliberately turned a blind eye to the atrocities of Indonesian occupation and repeatedly profited from arms sales to Jakarta since the 1970s. A decade after East Timor's vote for independence, Indonesian military perpetrators of abuses had still not been held to account.

The exhibition attracted a high-profile turnout and its intended impact, as a lobbying event, was boosted by 'outside' pressure. Some 1,800 supporters had written to their MP to state that they cared, sending photos of themselves holding campaign posters. Progressio turned the images into a collage that was presented to an FCO minister at the event.

The politics of impunity

In late 2005, East Timor's Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) report on human rights violations between 1974 and 1999, which the UK government helped to fund, had included calls for the UK to contribute to reparation payments to victims of the conflict and to exercise proper human rights control over arms sales. From 1997 to 1999, the newly elected Labour government, despite its professed commitment to an 'ethical foreign policy', had controversially allowed planned arms deals with Indonesia to go ahead. During a March 2006 visit to Indonesia, Prime Minister Tony Blair had emphasised efforts to strengthen the UK's bilateral military ties with Jakarta, whose continued human rights abuses in West Papua, following a pattern similar to that seen in East Timor, was also a focus of Progressio concern and supporter action.

Impunity for past crimes was believed to be one of the causes of the violence and unrest afflicting Timor-Leste in the years preceding Progressio's 2009 UK photo exhibition, and the legitimacy of its Who Cares campaign was aided by its in-country work with partners seeking to address the impact and underlying problems of the political crises (see later section below). In October 2008, Fernanda Borges, a Timorese MP and former finance minister, addressed Progressio's AGM on the crucial importance of breaking the international silence on impunity and implementing the recommendations of the CAVR report.

Progressio, while supporting the need for effective follow-up of the CAVR report – Timor-Leste was the first Asian country to undertake a 'transitional justice' process – expressed its concern that it had overshadowed calls by UN investigators for an international tribunal to be set up to hold to account the main organisers of the violence suffered by East Timor.

Progressio Ireland

Another noteworthy development coinciding with CIIR's new life as Progressio was the rising importance of Progressio Ireland, which had been successfully set up in 2004 as an Irish charity, CIIR Ireland, with similar aims to CIIR. Progressio Ireland, capitalising on the high number of CIIR-Progressio members and supporters in Ireland and CIIR's longstanding donor relationship with the Irish government, played a significant role in fundraising. By 2010, it accounted for as much as 12 per cent of Progressio's income, then its largest source after DfID. It also held advocacy events in Ireland on topical issues raised by Progressio's country programmes.

Progressio Ireland operated for a decade and played an important role in supporting Progressio campaigns, making a notable contribution in Ireland to the campaign for effective EU action to tackle the illegal timber trade (see below). Progressio Ireland's largest donor was Irish Aid, which contributed significantly to Progressio's work on natural resources and a sustainable environment and on participation and effective governance.

Profile challenges and hidden strengths

The drive to better communicate Progressio's work occurred at a time when institutional 'branding' had long become a feature of larger charities' pursuit of positive public image, recognition and support, including the development NGO community. Progressio's nimble size meant it was largely spared the departmental tensions not uncommon in INGOs, typically between marketing and fundraising on the one hand and communications on policy, advocacy, campaigning and programmes work on the other. Progressio's communication efforts, however, while gaining impetus, took place against a deep-rooted institutional culture that was wary of profile-raising lest it suggest organisational vanity and self-promotion.

Humble duty

Indeed, the organisation saw its role as centred on the humble duty of serving partners and celebrating the development progress that *they* made, not proclaiming its own institutional success. It was telling that a member recruitment appeal in 2003 stated with self-deprecating wit that the organisation intended to do more to share 'the best kept secret in international development'. How best to tell the story, given the organisation's solidarity culture and the understated strengths of its facilitative approach to working with

partners, added another strand to the challenge of building the profile of an organisation with a complex identity (see Box).

CHRISTINE ALLEN

Niche and narrative: a reflection

Christine Allen was executive director of CIIR/Progressio from 2001 to 2012 and went on to become head of policy and public affairs at Christian Aid. She had been appointed director of CAFOD as this publication went to press.

Thinking of specific successes was difficult because we never sought our own success. Our greatest success was when partners did things 'themselves'. That was the whole thrust of our work. The starting point of DWs (whether from the North or South) was that of an exit strategy. They were there to make themselves redundant. In the field of international development, that can be a very radical position.

At the same time, such principles meant that we struggled to make more of our own profile because we didn't think the story was or should have been about us – it was about what our partners achieved and we stood by them. The concept of solidarity was made real through that day to day work. Even with supporters here in the UK, our role was very much encouraging and enabling others without necessarily claiming the credit.

It was difficult to carve out a niche sometimes because of the particular challenges of our identity – too Catholic for some, not Catholic enough for others. Not being an official Catholic agency gave us flexibility to speak out, but it meant we had a challenge in securing enough support from the Catholic community. We worked strongly with others, and perhaps didn't blow our own trumpets enough.

The paradox of Progressio finding it challenging to promote greater external awareness of its work, while possessing considerable evidence of its value, was highlighted in a 2010 [independent evaluation](#) of the organisation's PPA performance. Praising the positive impact of Progressio's capacity-building and advocacy respectively and their firmer integration, the evaluation identified the authenticity of the organisation's commitment to promoting the voices of partners and poor communities as a distinctive strength (see Quotes). In contrast, it concluded from internal and external stakeholder interviews that it "could be bolder and more coherent in telling its own story... and take more ownership of [its] successes". It found that Progressio's profile was still low in comparison with other agencies.

"Progressio's way of working is human resource intensive, but what it offers is rare and effective.... The evaluator has seen many examples of work which are having a high impact on the lives of many of the most socially excluded sections of the societies in which it works.

"[W]hat gives Progressio this rare quality is the very real anchoring of the advocacy work in the lives and reality of partner organisations and their beneficiaries. Many organisations claim to speak on behalf of the poor, but Progressio really does 'walk the talk'.

"Progressio is viewed as an organisation with a good track record of consistently following issues and working to very high standards, rather than relying on easy and shallow slogans.... [It] has a talent and natural inclination for ensuring that the voice of the most socially excluded is at the heart of their messages."

Source: Evaluation of the Progressio-DfID Programme Partnership Agreement, [Final Report](#), September 2010



This constructive criticism was matched, however, by recognition that Progressio's quieter and more subtle approach was often a major advantage in facilitating policy dialogue as well as operationally crucial in situations where sensitive 'behind-the-scenes' influencing was required. Even where a narrative might exist, making the story known, let alone pursuing publicity and profile, was not always desirable or possible. Progressio's UK and international policy work on the conflict in Zimbabwe was a case in point. Progressio's supposed reticence was often good practice.

Progressio's programme priorities: an overview of key developments in policy context

The programme-policy integration accompanying Progressio's emergence also involved a planning process. It identified three thematic priorities for the organisation's strategy from 2005 to 2010:

- **Effective governance and participation:** promoting civil society participation in decision-making so poor and marginalised people, especially women, have greater influence on policies affecting their lives;
- **Sustainable environment:** boosting the quality of life of poor and marginalised people through more equitable and sustainable management of natural resources; and
- **HIV and AIDS:** strengthening the access of people affected by or vulnerable to HIV and AIDS to care, support and prevention and reducing stigmatisation and discrimination.

Tightened thematic focus, sustained ambition

Taking the past capacity-building work of country programmes as a benchmark, this condensed set of priorities did not necessarily constitute a retreat from ICD's diverse array of work areas and topics described in Chapter 3. Indeed, many of the specific issues hitherto being tackled were subsumed under these three overarching themes, which served as a device to tighten the overall strategic focus of the organisation's work and strengthen its public presentation. This was in line with moves to boost the effectiveness of Progressio's communications, which was now formally identified itself as an organisational aim in delivering the strategy.

Several topics were also treated, as had happened previously, as essential tools and considerations in delivering progress against objectives under each of the key themes. Involvement in media and communication initiatives, for example, though an area of work, was seen as a means of boosting the potential for participation in decision-making under the governance theme or changing attitudes on HIV and AIDS. Similarly, concerns over the causes and effects of conflict could not be separated from aims to strengthen governance or promote a sustainable environment, given the rising tensions in many countries over issues such as mining and deforestation and their impact on rights to land and water. Issues of discrimination, identity and diversity were built into and specifically addressed in work on each of the three key themes.



Progressio built links between work on its key themes, as shown in Somaliland (left) and Yemen (right) where support for partners made promoting women's rights a core feature of HIV prevention efforts.

PHOTOS: Kate Stanworth, Nick Sireau



Thematic linking, gender mainstreaming and extending work on HIV and AIDS

One important development, in this regard, was the decision taken in 2005 to mainstream gender as a cross-cutting issue in all work. This was largely uncontroversial as the organisation had adopted a strong gender focus in its work over many years and, as described in Chapter 3, reinforced its approach in the 1990s.

At the same time, the move was not devoid of internal debate. Projects to promote women's rights and other gender initiatives had emerged as an important area of programming in its own right. Their dynamism had been instrumental in promoting institutional recognition and progress on gender as a fundamental issue. All the same, concerns that that mainstreaming might risk diluting Progressio's commitment were belied by the 2010 independent PPA evaluation which stated: "Progressio seeks to be not only gender aware but gender transformative."

In practice, moreover, gender-specific project initiatives continued and those that had played a pioneering role went on to achieve wider effect. Work on masculinities, for instance, already the focus of replication in Latin America and the Caribbean, was built into country programmes in Africa and the Middle East. Overall gender learning, in turn, was applied across the board to programming on HIV and AIDS, health and domestic violence, as well as income generation projects aimed at boosting women's economic empowerment. Progressio further extended the organisation's work on HIV and AIDS in Latin America and the Caribbean, drawing on the regional strengths of its gender-focused work.

Planetary limits and Progressio's social justice approach on the environment

Livelihoods and women's economic empowerment initiatives were now frequently grouped under Progressio's sustainable environment theme, one of whose continued strands was to further promote agro-ecology as an effective strategy for combining the poverty-reducing potential of small-scale agriculture with environmental protection. Ensuring women farmers were better rewarded and enjoyed greater access to land and other resources required dialogue and engagement with men at all levels. Such initiatives also took shape as part of Progressio's work on effective governance with its significant focus on the need for pro-poor local economic development plans.

As this chapter sets out, Progressio's work on sustainable development issues with partners was to provide the main source of its international advocacy and awareness-raising initiatives in the North over the next decade. This focus reflected the continued rise of NGO advocacy to tackle the planetary limits of economic growth and its inequitable distribution of rewards.

A wider approach to effective governance

Meanwhile, Progressio's work on effective governance, reflecting the organisation's enduring concern with civil society participation and empowerment over the years, assumed topical relevance in the mid-2000s. Official development institutions such as the World Bank and NGOs alike, though often from different policy standpoints, had continued to make the strengthening of developing country governance a stronger programme priority (see Box).

Progressio and the 'good governance' debate

In 2006, for example, DfID released its third White Paper on eliminating world poverty, *Making Governance Work for the Poor*. Issued in the light of the UK's chairing of the G8 summit and the Make Poverty History campaign, it placed a welcome emphasis on participation and accountability and advocated a more rights-based framework for action to meet the MDGs, albeit without necessarily marking a break with the increasingly questioned free-market and free-trade faith ostensibly underpinning DfID's earlier flagship document of 2000, *Making Globalisation Work for the Poor*.

Official donor approaches to 'good governance' would face criticism for their allegedly externally driven expectations of Southern compliance with an unrealistic set of Western standards that were ill-suited to local conditions. Some of this analysis, however, tended to focus on whether approaches to governance were effective in relation to the aspirations of official aid donors rather than from the perspective of civil society organisations. The latter often held critical views of donors' policy prescriptions, not least in the economic arena, and advanced alternative approaches to governance, while welcoming the discourse surrounding the concept as an opportunity to invoke the need for the improved accountability of power-holders. For Progressio's partners in the South, how the process and content of decision-making affected the rights of poor people remained a crucial concern.

Progressio's pioneering of participatory budgeting in the Dominican Republic, as shown below, was but one leading example of its 'governance' work during this period. This and other initiatives were in tune with trends in the international development community. It was promoting civil society demand and public participation as a prerequisite for accountable decision-making, both in relation to Southern spending of international aid and the mobilisation and use of domestic public resources and other sources of development finance. A diverse transparency and accountability movement had also been taking shape globally, albeit somewhat weighted towards tackling the problematic role of public officials rather than that of private power-holders. It also tended to focus on developing country governance rather than rich country statecraft and the impact of international institutions and policies.

Through its international advocacy, Progressio sought to consider governance challenges in this wider context. While many of its initiatives at local and national levels, like those of other NGOs, were often typically concerned with their impact on essential service delivery, others equally sought to promote inclusive decision-making in relation to natural resources. Protecting natural resources was crucial for people's livelihoods and for fairer and more sustainable economic development.

Restoring faith

Progressio's new strategy also sought to strengthen the [faith](#) dimension of its work. The intention was both to sustain the distinctive value of its traditional commitment to development justice reflecting Catholic Social Teaching and to make the most of its ecumenical and inter-faith vocation. As an organisation rooted in yet independent of the official Catholic Church, it remained well placed to do so, undertaking initiatives on its key themes with a diverse range of [faith-based partners](#).

Such qualities were particularly valuable in engaging and supporting [faith-based partners working on HIV and AIDS](#), for example, as Progressio further strengthened its engagement of Muslim religious leaders in Yemen and Somaliland and drew on its lessons to replicate the approach in other country programmes. In Latin America and the Caribbean, Progressio worked with Catholic-linked partners to promote debate and action as part of its now larger portfolio of projects on HIV and AIDS, while in Southern Africa productive work was launched to promote inter-faith dialogue on the challenges.

Supporting inter-faith dialogue had for some time been an important feature of CIIR's advocacy, as exemplified by its recent work on conflict in Asia and its continued concern with the reverberations of the 'war on terror' (see Box). It remained so under Progressio, which sought to play a pioneering role in the UK on faith and development as an issue attracting greater attention. In the case of the Catholic Church, as elaborated below, a major opportunity for Progressio to play a topical policy role in reasserting, re-energising and raising awareness of Christian faith commitment to international development came in 2010 when [Pope Benedict XVI made an official visit to the UK](#).

Providing a platform for positive religious values and practice

In the run-up to its re-launch as Progressio, CIIR invited Dr Chandra Muzaffar, a leading Malaysian Muslim scholar and activist, to speak at its 2005 AGM on inter-faith dialogue and the need for religions to translate their progressive and inclusive universal values into effective practice. Such advocacy was important in view of dangers such as rising Christian fundamentalism and Islamophobia and in response to discourse in the West invoking a 'clash of civilisations'. This hypothesis, first advanced by US political scientist Samuel Huntington during the 1990s, had posited that cultural and religious identities would become the prime driver of conflict in a post-Cold War world. It gained disturbing currency amid the 'war on terror' and its exacerbation of global tensions during the 2000s.

Critical climate: playing a new role on economic justice and sustainable development

The main change in Progressio's thematic portfolio, as a result of programme-policy integration, was the organisation's relative scaling back of its own advocacy role on the wide-ranging macro-level international economic justice issues that CIIR's UK-based policy work had sought to tackle to varying degrees in previous periods.

By now, if not far earlier, the prominent policy issues of the 1990s and early 2000s associated with 'globalisation' such as Third World debt, economic adjustment and aid conditionality, trade and investment, financial liberalisation, as well as global supply chains and corporate accountability, had steadily been taken on by a diverse range of other UK, Northern and international NGOs.

Paradoxically, this development might be seen as a mark of CIIR's success. To some extent, its forward-looking initiatives had played their own part in pioneering policy work on some of the economic justice issues that had become a solid feature of NGOs' agendas. One might argue, for instance, that this was the case with CIIR's early involvement in international trade policy.

Finding productive niches in a more crowded NGO environment

At the same time, the more crowded and policy-active NGO environment in which it now worked in the UK meant that Progressio, even more so than during CIIR, had to carve out distinct niches for itself. In taking forward select policy and advocacy initiatives, it needed to bring new issues to topical light or add value to the work of others on issues now established as mainstream. It did so with some success, as shown later in this chapter describing work on ethical trade in relation to asparagus exports and timber supply chains.

As well as seeking specific niches, Progressio also played more of a complementary supporting role. This involved contributing insights and findings to wider NGO initiatives, for example as a member of the [Trade Justice Movement](#), based on its grassroots programme experience of specific issues or on areas of work where it could contribute fresh perspectives with a legitimate voice. The organisation's perennial commitment to working in alliance with others, as well as to promoting the views of Southern partners, enabled Progressio to play such a role effectively.

A topical example of Progressio's efforts to add distinct value in working with others on economic justice issues, particularly through the faith dimensions of its work, was its engagement with NGO responses to the systemic failures of global economic governance. These had again been brought into sharp relief by the international financial crisis unfolding from 2008.

The international financial crisis: bringing a distinct voice to the policy table

Just as CIIR had earlier contributed faith-based ethical perspectives to the Make Poverty History campaign in 2005, Progressio did likewise as an active member of the UK's Put People First coalition of NGOs in 2009. The coalition called for the April 2009 summit of leading G20 nations, hosted by the UK government, to turn the damaging fallout of the banking crisis into an opportunity to radically reform management of the global economy and make social justice and environmental sustainability its core aims.

Food, fuel and finance were the key themes invoked by NGOs involved in the Put People First initiative to illustrate the striking elements of what they called a 'triple crisis' of policy failures on the economy, poverty reduction and the environment affecting the most vulnerable. This combination of failures was one that CIIR itself had highlighted over the years (see Box).

A triple crisis – revisited

Compounding the hardships of the 2007-08 food price rises on people, the international financial crisis threatened many developing countries' access to finance, aid and investment, as well as export earnings and remittances from overseas workers as the rich countries' economies were hit by recession and a reduction in economic demand. The combined shocks pushed millions more people below the poverty line and undermined already uneven developing country progress against the Millennium Development Goals. The crisis also called into further question rich countries' willingness to support MDG 8 on a 'global partnership for development', which invoked their expected responsibilities on aid, trade and debt.

CIIR, as covered in Chapters 2 and 3, had long drawn attention to the repeated failure of Northern policy-makers to tackle the causes of persistent financial crises, including irresponsible bank lending and financial speculation. Financial products fuelling commodity speculation were considered by some analysts to be an underlying structural cause of the food price crisis. More immediate factors included the effects of increased oil prices on farming costs and, amid concerns over global energy supplies, the surging diversion of land and crops to biofuels production.

Policy-makers were aggressively promoting biofuels (fuels made from organic materials) as a supposed solution for climate change, despite the counter-productive damage of large-scale monoculture to rural livelihoods, land rights and eco-systems. In late 2006, Progressio had joined over 100 organisations and individuals in calling for public subsidies for biofuels to be suspended.

The 'triple crisis' of inappropriate and ineffective policies on the economy, poverty and the environment in the new millennium was redolent of the same generic mix of problems CIIR had played its own important role in highlighting during the 1970s oil price crisis and the rise of Third World debt (see Chapter 2).

"In the early 1970s, E F Schumacher used the phrase 'small is beautiful' in his discussion of economic models and sustainable development. Yet in the last 30 years the dominant model has been the exact opposite: big was beautiful and greed was good. Now the bubble has burst and confidence in that dominant economic model is at an all-time low. People are looking for other ways."

Christine Allen, executive director of Progressio, Interact, spring 2009

In support of the coalition's efforts, Progressio helped to organise an ecumenical church service in London ahead of the G20 summit. It attracted an impressive turnout of 2,000 people and was [addressed by Progressio's executive director](#). She urged world leaders to rethink the morality and ethical principles underpinning economic policies damaging people and planet (see Quote).

Progressio's contributions on the crisis, based on its rootedness in Catholic Social Teaching, gained further topical currency as Pope Benedict issued his 2009 papal encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* ('Love in Truth'). Its reflections on the financial crisis advocated the need for economic endeavour and globalisation to be based on solidarity and authentic human development, a message that Progressio worked to amplify during the Pope's official visit to the UK in September 2010.

Pope Benedict's visit to the UK occurred just days before a UN summit to review whether the Millennium Development Goals supposed to be met by 2015 were on track. Progressio played its own part in mobilising support in the UK for rich country responses to the crisis to be centred on social justice, highlighting the positive role that faith-based action could play (see Box).

Faith in justice: Pope Benedict's 2010 UK visit and mobilising for the MDGs

As well as [targeting the media](#), Progressio sent a [briefing](#) to all MPs on the longstanding commitment of the Catholic Church to international development. It [urged](#) MPs to take advantage of the Pope's visit to press the UK to use its global influence to rectify the slow and uneven progress on the MDGs now further jeopardised by the food and finance crises. This pressure complemented the [efforts of Progressio supporters and campaigners](#) to engage DfID's UK Secretary of State Andrew Mitchell on public expectations of supportive government action at the UN summit.

Progressio was among the faith-related UK development NGOs invited to meet Pope Benedict and took advantage of his visit to spotlight for Catholics the international development duties intrinsically involved in their faith. Progressio, having already published its own reflections on *Caritas in Veritate* in the form of [For the Common Good](#), followed up Pope Benedict's visit by producing and disseminating a popular guide to the encyclical, [Love Received and Given](#).

At this time, it was largely other INGOs and NGO groups that dealt with the wide-ranging substance of the international policy challenges at stake in the crisis. The overall advocacy agenda had evolved to take on issues such as tax justice, climate change and the wide range of new dangers for food security in the South acquiring topical prominence such as commodity speculation and the role of private sector agricultural investors in 'land grabs'. Nonetheless, several of the specific issues involved in such problems, as manifested on the ground, were ones that Progressio and its partners were tackling in their daily grassroots practice and on which the organisation had views to share.

Progressio development worker Innocent Bidong Ogaba supporting sustainable agriculture practices in Malawi.

As in Zimbabwe (right), most small-scale farmers were women.

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Supporting the voice of small-scale farmers and climate change action

Progressio, for example, in advance of the looming food price crisis, had organised workshops in 2006 for small-scale farmers without internet access in Central America and the Dominican Republic in order to gather and share their [views](#) in an electronic conference on the Future of Food and Small-Scale Producers. This had been organised with the UK Food Group, the UK Small and Family Farms Alliance and the Indigenous People's International Centre for Policy Research and Education.

The farmers' contributions, included in a report subsequently published and disseminated by IIED, were topical in relation to the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development then being held by the World Bank with UN agencies. The eventual IAASTD report called in 2008 for an agricultural revolution based on the very agro-ecological approaches Progressio had been supporting at the grassroots and advocating with others in policy arenas.

Progressio also drew on its sustainable agriculture work with partners, including farmers' concerns over access to water and land and deforestation, to make a similar contribution on climate change, which had emerged as a critical global challenge commanding the attention of many in the UK international development community. Its 'Just Add Water' campaign (see below), combining the participation of Southern partners and communities with member lobbying of the UK parliament to press for recognition of water problems at climate change negotiations, for example, carved out a niche role for the organisation. It also gave Progressio legitimacy as it lent its support and contributed new perspectives to wider NGO initiatives tackling the overall climate change agenda.

At this time, Progressio joined and [encouraged its members](#) to support the Stop Climate Chaos Coalition grouping scores of UK-based development, environmental and human rights organisations. The coalition was running high-profile campaigns to press the UK government, which had introduced the 2008 Climate Change Act (following its own 2006 Stern review on the economics of climate change and in response to civil society pressure for action), to show international leadership on global warming at the pivotal Copenhagen conference of December 2009. The talks were due to negotiate an agreement to succeed the 1997 Kyoto Protocol expiring in 2012, which had required state parties to cut their carbon emissions against 1990 levels. Kyoto, negotiated under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), had itself only just entered into force as a treaty in 2005, indicating how slow the pace of progress had been.

Progressio was also an active contributor to the IIED and NEF-coordinated Working Group on Climate Change and Development, which produced an influential series of [Up in Smoke?](#) reports on the effects of climate change on people in different regions of the world.

Supporting movements, providing leadership

Progressio's firm commitment to bringing the voices of people to bear in UK policy work and international policy discussions, particularly on natural resource management and environmental sustainability as a distinctive strength, was also matched by its efforts to rally members and supporters in the UK behind its support for wider movements for change. It did so in ways that were reminiscent of the Sword of the Spirit and the early days of CIIR (see Box and Quote).

Old spirit for new times: Progressio, *Livesimply* and solidarity with ‘development of the peoples’

From 2006, Progressio threw its energy behind the [Livesimply campaign](#) launched by organisations of the Catholic Church of England and Wales. Its aim was to turn the momentum of the ultimately time-bound Make Poverty History campaign of 2005 into a continuous movement for change, based on the continued relevance of the progressive thinking of *Populorum Progressio* on its impending 40th anniversary to contemporary action supporting ‘the development of peoples’.

The campaign, open to people of all faiths and none, envisaged cumulative phases of action over several years. It called on participants to make and promote individual and collective on-line pledges to live more simply and sustainably and act in solidarity with the world’s poor.

Involving members and supporters

Progressio used the campaign to link members and supporters with closer awareness of its own grassroots work and policy proposals and the opportunities they afforded for active involvement. It launched its own participation in the campaign with proposals for promoting change on the topical issues of food, energy and trade and later put forward its East Timor: Who Cares campaign as a candidate for *Livesimply* action. Other actions ranged from a supporters group in Penarth raising funds for Progressio projects by selling surplus produce from their allotments to Progressio encouraging members to get involved in a major public event of culture, discussion and reflection, *liveit!*, held in Manchester in 2008.

Providing resources on Catholic Social Teaching

To promote the campaign and understanding of its moral basis and faith roots, Progressio published a theological reflection, [Live Simply: Let Others Live](#), by writer and campaigner on sustainable living, Edward Echlin. Another major contribution was Progressio’s establishment of a website for the campaign, [Catholic Social Teaching: Faith in a Better World](#). Containing a resources library, podcasts, reflections and ideas for action, it was the first UK portal aimed at enabling Catholic audiences to gain a deeper understanding of poverty and development in the context of their faith.

“For Progressio, development is not something that happens ‘out there’ to other people. It is something that happens to us all as a global community... Our work seeks the participation and empowerment of poor people. But development also requires those of us who live in the global North to recognise that we are part of the problem – and that we are called to be part of the solution.”

Source: 2008 annual review

Progressio’s increased participation in UK coalitions and networks during this period, as well as reaffirming the organisation’s commitment to collaboration as a longstanding hallmark of its work, brought important benefits. It provided larger-scale outlets for Progressio to promote its work and yielded resource efficiency gains for the organisation as a relatively small player without a hefty public outreach infrastructure of its own. Nevertheless, as the 2010 PPA evaluation observed, Progressio, in seeking to ‘punch above its weight’ through this approach, risked seeing the profile of its work, for all its positive value, diluted amid other organisations with stronger ‘brand recognition’.

Yet Progressio exercised leadership in mobilising its constituencies around crucial issues of the day and showed high-profile determination to sustain its traditional convening power in the UK whenever it could. Immediately before the Copenhagen climate negotiations, for example, Professor Mohan Munasinghe, former vice-chair of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the body assessing the science on global warming, addressed the October 2009 AGM and delivered a Progressio-hosted lecture at the Royal Commonwealth Society, chaired by BBC journalist and broadcaster Edward Stourton. Co-winner of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize with former US Vice-President Al Gore, the professor spoke on encouraging economic growth and sustainable development without fuelling climate change. The scale of the challenge had been starkly articulated by the UK’s Stern review, which described climate change as one of the greatest and most wide-ranging market failures ever.

Progressio and the changing official aid environment: country losses, country gains

The uncertainties unleashed by the 2008 international banking crisis made for an unpredictable funding climate for Progressio in the UK and internationally. It was in such circumstances that the organisation decided, among other pre-emptive measures at this time to protect its financial security, to close its country programme in Ecuador in 2010.





Progressio, building on CIIR's earlier achievements, left a positive legacy in Ecuador. A strength of the country programme, led since 1992 by Luis Camacho (pictured left), himself an Ecuadorean national, was its work with partner organisations supporting peasant organisations and rural livelihoods. CIIR had had a policy of appointing nationals as country representatives since the early 1990s. British staff member Nicola Murray had preceded Camacho as CIIR's country representative. CIIR's first country coordinator in the 1970s had been Jan Karmali.

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“Whether it’s beekeeping projects, micro-finance, local development or promoting small businesses, the focus of our work together has always been the human person. Not only as an economic entity, but their intelligence, feelings, relationships, spirituality, ethics, culture... A person grows when, with ideas and knowledge, they develop their ability to act to transform reality, and find new socio-economic structures and policies to replace the exploitative and oppressive structures that are still present in our society.”

José Tonello, executive director of the Ecuadorean Populorum Progressio Fund (FEPP), a CIIR and Progressio partner

Ecuador: closing a chapter in Latin America

Closing the Ecuador programme was an extremely difficult decision for Progressio. It ended a deep 37-year relationship in which the organisation had become a quietly influential feature of Ecuador’s increasingly rich civil society tapestry. Working with many players, it had helped to generate developments of major national and regional importance, as in the case of the country’s increasingly powerful indigenous people’s movement.

Since 1973, Progressio had played a [significant role](#) in accompanying the development of diverse civil society organisations in the country and had witnessed their rising engagement with national affairs (see Quotes). Ecuador’s recurrent political crises, for all their immediate disruptive effects, rather than necessarily constituting a barrier to development progress, were a natural manifestation of struggles over how best to resolve the country’s multiple divisions and tensions. The greater strength of civil society now meant that the battling and bargaining over the country’s development direction was no longer the preserve of elites but under growing pressure to involve the effective representation of other social players.

The challenge would continue under Ecuador’s new president, Rafael Correa, who promised a ‘citizens’ revolution’ on his original election in 2007 amid widespread public mistrust of traditional political parties. Joining the very diverse ‘pink tide’ of centre-left and leftist administrations now in power in other (exclusively non-Progressio) South American countries, his re-elected ‘populist’ administrations significantly increased social spending in favour of the poor over the next decade. His governments’ relations with many civil

“The individuals and organisations we’ve worked with in Ecuador have come from different realities, regions and experiences: peasant farmers, women, health promoters, indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorean officials, technicians and professionals. We’ve had the privilege of walking together and seeing them grow stronger, play their part in social processes and political events, and build the participatory knowledge and mutual learning which is the work between people that Progressio stands for... I’ve been privileged to get closer to the people of my country, to share their needs, dreams and aspirations, and to contribute to achieving their aims. I’ve enjoyed the satisfaction of successes, learned from mistakes and, most of all, shared experiences with colleagues and friends. All this has made me grow as a person. And I’m proud of it.”

Luis Camacho, CIIR and Progressio’s country representative from 1992 to 2011
Source: ‘People power in Ecuador’, [Interact \(spring 2011\)](#)



society organisations, however, would be [complex and often tense](#), not least because of their differences over the social and environmental impact of growth continuing to rely on natural resource extraction. Civil society activism and media scrutiny faced frequent official hostility.

Rich peculiarity

Ecuador, over the decades, had not faced the violent conflict and post-conflict challenges that CIIR and Progressio had grappled with in many of its country programmes and in the solidarity work of its international advocacy supporting country struggles for democracy, social justice and human rights. Yet the country's paradoxical combination of ongoing political instability and crisis with civil society action to preserve and enhance the country's relative peace and democratic space had always provided a distinctive complement to the organisation's work in situations of fragility and conflict.

It was such rich peculiarity, often unnoticed by Northern mainstream media and the Northern international development community, that had made Ecuador a hub for aspects of civil society activity in the Andean and wider Latin America region. The presence of regional alternative media organisations described in Chapter 3 was but one example.

Closure of the Ecuador programme, with its close bonds to Progressio's programme in neighbouring Peru and its vibrant contributions to programming in Latin America and the Caribbean over the years – on sustainable agriculture and rural development, popular education and communication for development, for instance – inflicted a heavy blow on the organisation.

Sign of the times: a looming donor retreat from the region

Beyond the pain of individual loss, the Ecuador decision had broader significance. It reflected an overall donor environment in which it was becoming far more difficult for Progressio to secure funding for international development work in Latin America and the Caribbean. The region was increasingly perceived by official development donors as less of a global priority on account of its generally higher levels of economic wealth in comparison with the poorer countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

This de-prioritisation was gaining pace despite the major challenges facing struggles to tackle the sharp social divides and development conflicts arising from economic growth strategies in the region, including in the less powerful and more vulnerable countries where Progressio worked. They were starkly illustrated by the mid-2009 military coup in Honduras against the reformist administration of President Manuel Zelaya who had come to power at the start of 2006 (see Box).

Seen in retrospect, the Ecuador decision marked the start of Progressio's reluctant reduction and readjustment of its presence in Latin America and the Caribbean described in Chapter 5. For the time being, however, Progressio managed to retain its other country programmes in the region, thanks in no small part to its overall PPA with DfID. The PPA had again been renewed for three years in 2008 and included additional funding for work in Latin America. This additional component, however, was part of a one-off DfID

Honduras: repressing pressure for change

The 2009 military overthrow of the Zelaya government, followed by the holding of controversial new elections later that year, was a harsh reminder of elite hostility to efforts to improve the situation of the poor and promote their rights. The crackdown saw intimidation and repression of civil society and the media, and Progressio partners such as the Women's Studies Centre ([CEM-H](#)) reported a sharp increase in abuses and violations against women by the security forces. Women's rights organisations had been actively involved in resistance to the coup.

Despite the dangers, civil society organisations continued to mobilise. Questioning whether mere elections could provide a legitimate and effective solution to the country's problems, they called for inclusive politics based on citizen participation and constitutional reforms to deepen democracy, as reported in interviews carried out by a Progressio DW, Nuria Zayas. She brought the implications of the coup to the attention of Progressio members via [Interact](#).

Though internationally condemned, the coup met ambiguous opposition by the United States, and the Obama administration steadily strengthened its backing of the new government. The forces behind the coup were thus able to consolidate their grip on Honduras. This posed further risks to civil society groups defending communities from local and foreign business interests eager to extend their control over land and natural resources. Honduras has become one of the most dangerous countries in the world for environmental activists and human rights defenders. Inequality, falling before the coup, is now among the highest in Latin America, despite Honduras' re-classification as a low middle income country.

arrangement with UK INGOs working in Latin America as the ministry prepared to scale back its presence and adjust its operations in the region.

Progressio's programming in Latin America and the Caribbean, long a major source of organisational dynamism and learning, thus retained significant scale at this point in time. It represented two thirds of the organisation's total 94 DWs in place with partners at the end of the 2009/10 financial year, in line with the region-on-region balance of the past. At the same time, its future now appeared increasingly vulnerable.

Donor shifts and leaving an independent Namibia

Over the 2000s, the concern of the MDGs with tackling extreme poverty in the world had given rise to moves by official aid donors, in principle if not necessarily in practice, to make the poorest, least developed nations, a much stronger priority for assistance, in particular so-called 'failed' or 'fragile' states. The challenges facing such countries – Oxford academic Paul Collier had underlined conflict and weak or poor governance as stumbling blocks to development in his widely commented 2007 book, *The Bottom Billion* – were a prominent feature of DfID's 2009 White Paper, *Building Our Common Future*, for example.

The new UK framework took up Progressio and other NGO proposals on the importance of addressing climate change and environmental concerns as an integral feature of development, as well as the legitimacy of different models for economic development beyond those based on so-called 'Washington consensus' policies. But, following the impact of the international financial crisis, it warned of austere times globally for official levels of development funding. It stressed the need to ensure 'value for money' and maximise results with available resources.

Arguments for official aid to concentrate on low-income countries with very high national rates of poverty were legitimate for many commentators. The social needs and benefits of aid investment might be greatest in such settings. By the same token, it was in countries afflicted by acute conflict and problematic governance where progress was the hardest to achieve and most urgently needed. But the arguments were open to [debate](#), as Progressio's head of policy, Tim Aldred, explored.

Analysts noted the paradox that, overall, higher numbers of the world's poor people lived in richer developing nations rather than the poorest ones. This posed the question of whether and how aid could be used effectively to help tackle the inequalities and injustices afflicting people in such countries, given the in-principle responsibilities of their national governments to ensure a fairer distribution of wealth, power and resources but also their frequent lack of commitment to do so in the face of elite opposition. A Progressio middle-income country such as Peru had regions where the standard of life could be as harsh as in some of the world's poorest nations.

The trends and dilemmas were starting to impinge not just on Progressio's role in Latin America but its work in other regions too, including sub-Saharan Africa. In 2007, Progressio had decided, due to fundraising constraints in the donor climate described, to close its country programme in Namibia, whose upper middle income country status was now on course to being further upgraded by the World Bank. Namibia's existing middle income classification had already seen official development assistance scaled back to the detriment of NGOs, despite the structural persistence of sharp inequalities in the country and their major impact on poverty.

Loss of Namibia involved another emotional symbolic loss for Progressio in view of CIIR's solidarity with the country's struggle for liberation from apartheid rule and the role of its ICD programme in supporting its post-independence development.

Malawi: building on past work to open a new country programme

Shifts in the donor landscape, however, also indirectly opened up opportunities for initiatives being explored by Progressio to move ahead. Namibia's closure was immediately followed by a decision by Progressio's board to open a new country programme in Malawi. As part of CIIR's past international advocacy in support of national liberation, democratisation and social justice struggles in Southern Africa, Malawi had long been a periodic focus of organisational attention.

The land-locked country, one of the poorest and least developed in the world near the bottom of the UN's human development index, was now dealing with the challenges and opportunities of multi-party democracy. Its increasingly active civil society organisations and faith communities, now pushing for positive political change involving greater citizen participation in decision-making, offered considerable potential for Progressio to play a supporting role. Malawi's predominantly rural society also offered opportunities for productive work on sustainable agriculture, matching Progressio's longstanding expertise in this area in other country programmes.

By 2010, six DWs were involved in placements supporting partner organisations on these issues in the new Malawi country programme.

Strengthening systems to assess development change

Another important institutional development was Progressio's drive to strengthen its monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEAL) in the second half of the decade. From 2007, it developed and launched a new [Regular Impact and Capacity Assessment](#) (RICA) system. Its aim, based on Progressio's [intended pursuit of change](#), was to capture more effectively quantitative information on the achievements and impact of its work, complementing existing qualitative approaches (see Box).

The RICA system: setting progress targets and milestones

In terms of capacity-building, RICA, an indicator-based system, involved Progressio country-based staff and DWs establishing with partners, at the start of DW placements, baseline data and information on the organisations' existing capacity gaps and needs as well as the situation of the 'beneficiary' groups and communities they were seeking to support. The aim was to set robust benchmarks against which progress towards jointly agreed project targets and milestones could be more effectively assessed. This would provide a stronger basis for DW and partner reporting against overall project and country plans.

Strengthening surveys

To generate content for such reports, as well as case study impact stories, a diverse range of survey tools and formats were introduced for customised information-gathering on issues relating to each of the thematic priorities of Progressio's strategy. Feedback and evaluation surveys were also strengthened to gauge the value of participation in specific Progressio activities such as events and country, regional and international exchange visits. Meanwhile, interviews and discussion sessions with project informants and stakeholders enabled Progressio to gather the qualitative information and insights on the process of change that the organisation's MEAL systems had hitherto largely relied on.

In the case of advocacy-oriented projects, Progressio introduced a Participation and Transparency Tool, adapting to its needs a model originally developed by CAFOD. PATT assessed progress in civil society capacity, voice and influence in relation to power-holders in national and international policy arenas as well as corporate bodies.

The importance of partner discussion and contextualised use

PATT was especially useful for examining the progress and impact of Progressio's in-country work on participation and effective governance, though conceptual understanding of its various components needed to be clarified and tied down to the requirements of local context through discussion with partners and DWs. This was particularly important in complex political environments such as Yemen with a weaker tradition of rights-based civil society interaction with power-holders. PATT also helped Progressio to gather information more systematically on the effectiveness of its Northern-based international policy and advocacy initiatives dealing with issues raised by its overseas country programmes.

One motivation behind Progressio's introduction of the RICA system was the growing expectations of donors, including DFID, for grant recipients to demonstrate stronger empirical evidence of development 'results'. This led to concerns among some partners that RICA might involve progress indicators more geared to Progressio's own needs to meet donor requirements and expectations rather than targets that were meaningfully useful for their work. Progressio, however, developed and piloted RICA in a participatory way. It took advantage of relevant DW evaluation expertise, discussed the system's design and roll-out with partners, and held workshops to provide practical training, advice and support on its implementation.

This approach meant that RICA, rather than being considered an outside imposition, came to be seen as an implicit part of Progressio's capacity-building support. Feedback from partner organisations, according to the 2010 PPA [evaluation](#) of Progressio for DFID, indicated that the system had helped them to better define and articulate their strategies for change with Progressio and its DWs and also strengthen the quality of their interaction with the social groups and communities they were jointly working to support. By the end of the decade, Progressio had established RICA as a fully integrated system. It then made it an [integral feature of the organisation's 2010-15 strategy](#), which involved further efforts to embed its effective use.

Being open on performance

Progressio's efforts to strengthen its MEAL and programme reporting systems took place in a context in which the international aid system was under pressure to demonstrate and encourage greater transparency and accountability. Debates over the direction of the aid effectiveness agenda were taking shape within the OECD, and demands were growing for information to be made publicly available in both the global North and South on aid initiatives and their contribution to development progress.

As part of its [commitment to transparency](#), Progressio became one of the first international NGOs to publish data on its work using the global standards developed under the International Aid Transparency Initiative ([IATI](#)). Progressio was also one of 25 INGOs to take part in a [2010 survey](#) of Southern NGOs' views of how well their Northern counterparts supported and worked with them, and publicly disclosed the specific [report](#) on its own performance. The report scored Progressio highly on partner relationships and capacity-building support. Progressio also set out the standards, values and principles underpinning its operations and stakeholder relationships in an [accountability framework](#).

Governance and participation

Having a positive influence

Progressio's work with partners to boost citizen participation, aimed at achieving policies responsive to the interests and rights of the poor and holding power-holders to account for progress, was further strengthened and extended across country programmes in the second half of the 2000s. It built on the advances described in Chapter 3.

Progressio's approach, often taking advantage of the trend towards the decentralisation of decision-making, varied according to national and local context. It depended on available political space, civil society experience and capacity needs, and the challenges and opportunities of securing official commitment to interaction. The work involved commitment to promoting an integral focus on gender issues, given the barriers to women's participation in decision-making generally led by men and the need for public policies responding to women's needs and rights in different areas.

Progressio's support for partner organisations also paid attention to the psycho-social and cultural barriers affecting the confidence of individuals from marginalised social groups to take greater part in public life. Effective social organisation and impact went hand in hand with a process of individual change at a personal level. Progressio thus made support for partner activities promoting community leadership skills an important facet of many project initiatives. They brought palpable benefits for the individuals concerned, as shown by one experience in Peru (see Quote).

"When I arrived from the village I was very quiet.... Now I have changed. EDUCA has trained me to be a facilitator, to express myself better, to be more at ease talking to other people.... As a citizen I have also changed. Now I am a coordinator of the Glass of Milk scheme..... Now I'm [also] on the management committee for the project, and I am training other women. So far I've run training on self-esteem and gender. It's important for us to realise that women are also important, not just men. I think what I can bring is my experience – how submissive I was when I arrived, and how much I have gained from the project. I'd like to transmit that energy to other women."

Devi Juárez Moretto, an indigenous woman living in San Juan de Lurigancho, one of the poorest suburbs of Lima, describing her experience of taking part in workshops run by the Institute for the Promotion of Quality Education (EDUCA), a Peruvian partner supported by Diana Torres, a Progressio DW from Colombia. Source: 2010 annual review



Strengthening the push for responsive local government in Latin America and the Caribbean

Progressio's work on participation and effective governance in Latin America and the Caribbean showed even greater dynamism during this period. As well as achieving landmark progress in the Dominican Republic, Progressio undertook a diverse range of initiatives to promote more inclusive local and national governance across its country programmes in Central and South America. The winter 2007/08 [issue of *Interact on 'people power'*](#) illustrated the diverse approaches and experiences involved. Interviews by [Michelle Lowe](#), a DW supporting advocacy and communications in Peru and Ecuador, gathered a range of partner and DW perspectives from around the region on the issues at stake.

Dominican Republic: scaling up a blueprint for participatory municipal budgeting

Progressio's pilot initiative with [Fundación Solidaridad](#) described in Chapter 3, which had seen Villa González launch its first ever annual budget based on active citizen participation in 2005, along with a gender policy and an office for women's affairs, was not just a milestone for this municipality. It became a blueprint for a new approach to policy-making on decentralisation and public finance that took fuller shape across the country over the decade.

From local pilots to implementing law of the land

Indeed, Fundación Solidaridad, supported by Progressio, building on the positive signs of progress emerging in Villa González since the late 1990s, embarked on successful efforts from 2002 to extend the pilot experience to four other municipalities – Altamira, also in the northern Santiago province, tourist city Puerto Plata on the north coast, Dajabón in the north west next to Haiti, and Villa Altagracia in the southern central San Cristóbal province.

Thanks in no small part to the impetus created by Progressio's partners, a landmark was reached in 2007 when national Law 176-07 was passed. It made participatory municipal budgeting a statutory requirement of all provinces of the Dominican Republic and the national district surrounding Santo Domingo, the capital. The legislation, complementing an earlier law on access to public information, enshrined social participation as a core principle in local administration and outlined a range of bodies and channels at different levels to make it a reality.

This major development provided a stepping stone for wider replication by Progressio and its partners, whose aim was to mainstream nationally effective implementation of the legislation. By 2008, Progressio was working with NGO partners, local civil society organisations and local authorities in 18 municipalities. Two of the early locations – Villa González and Altamira – were recognised by independent evaluators to be the best performers with the highest levels of public participation.

The tangible benefits of progress could also be seen in Puerto Plata. Progressio's support of interaction between the Human Solidarity Promotion Centre ([CEPROSH](#)), a health education NGO working on HIV and AIDS, neighbourhood organisations and the municipal council strengthened guidelines and mechanisms for citizen participation. Some 15 poor communities developed and advocated proposals and saw them incorporated into budgets.

The steady introduction of participatory municipal budgeting took shape in an environment in which Progressio's partners were making dovetailed progress in their calls for effective national action to tackle poverty and exclusion. Following pressure by a civil society network, including the [Juan Montalvo Centre](#) where DW Alexandra Lastra was training community groups on public policy issues, the government set up a commission to promote poverty reduction measures in the national budget. Meanwhile, another DW, lawyer Miguel Pachas, helped three partners secure government commitment to involving ordinary people in discussion of constitutional reform plans.

Promoting the integration of gender in municipal plans

Building on lessons, Progressio also embarked at this time on a two-year effort with civil society and state partners to integrate a focus on gender in all stages of the municipal budget cycle, from design and management to the monitoring and evaluation of

performance. The task involved promoting firm links between application of Law 176-07 and the Dominican Republic's national plan for gender equality.

The aim of the initiative, coordinated with the [Ministry of Women](#) and backed by UN Women and the Spanish aid-supported Foundation for the Local Development and Municipal Strengthening of Central America and the Caribbean ([DEMUCA Foundation](#)), was to launch effective gender auditing in seven municipalities. The joint effort led to women's departments being set up in each of the municipalities, and civil society partners supported by Progressio boosted the participation of women in the budgeting process. As a result, spending targets on issues and sectors of priority concern to them, for example education and health, were met.

A by-product of this experience was the production and eventual 2011 launch, with the additional support of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), of a [gender auditing guide](#). Aimed at scaling up the promotion of better practice across the country's 162 municipalities, it became the recognised framework for official local government use over the longer term. The UN Development Programme (UNDP) praised the progress in gender integration as an example of best practice.

Innovation and DW creativity

Progressio's work on participatory municipal budgeting was innovative and creative in several ways. Its placement of DWs to work with both NGOs and local governments meant that it not only boosted traditional civil society demand for state responsiveness; it also nurtured the capacity and willingness of each party to engage in dialogue, based on a better understanding of each other's needs, positions and constraints. Connecting demand and supply involved shifts in the dynamics of the state-society relationship and laid the basis for more constructive, if critical, process of interaction. Meanwhile, signs of progress and benefits in individual municipalities created a 'snowball effect' in the country (see Box below).

Progressio's support for partners to replicate and scale up public involvement in local budgeting was also enhanced by the recruitment of DWs with a rich body of complementary skills. They brought professional experience gained in Latin America and Europe on local development and citizens' participation, public administration, urban planning and gender programming.

Among the DWs were [Fernando Umaña](#) from Chile, Edgar Noguera and Sergio Vergne from Argentina (the latter a former DW with Progressio in Ecuador) and [Bolívar Sánchez](#) from Guatemala, who extended their work with Progressio's partners in the initial pilot locations to support the replication of expertise and learning in other municipalities. Peruvian DW Cecilia Félix similarly helped [COMUS](#) strengthen women's organisations advocacy of women's rights in local development. By the end of the decade, a growing number of DWs were also working in the western provinces of Dajabón, Elías Piña and Independencia bordering Haiti. The work had become an integrated national effort which drew on DWs exchange of learning, mutual support and cross-pollination of impact.

Becoming a reference point and creating a platform for a new stage

By 2010 Progressio had become a major reference point for advice and support on implementation of participatory municipal budgeting. Trust and appreciation of its role was demonstrated by Progressio's increasingly strong partnership with the Dominican Federation of Municipalities ([FEDOMU](#)), which would enable further progress to be sustained over the next five years.

The next phase of Progressio's work, however, as described in fuller detail in Chapter 5, concentrated mainly on the western provinces where it stepped up efforts with partners to foster cross-border local government cooperation between the Dominican Republic and Haiti as part of an emerging Hispaniola programme. Several DWs, including Italian gender adviser Emilia Rossi, had already been tasked to work with partner organisations on both sides of the border at this stage, while specialists on local development and citizen participation were placed at this time with Haitian partners to do likewise. They included Alice Auradou, who, as outlined in Chapter 3, had played a leading role in supporting the early Dominican pilot experiences on participation in local government.

OSVALDO VÁSQUEZ

Creating a snowball effect in a tropical climate



Osvaldo Vásquez was Progressio's regional manager for Latin America and the Caribbean from 2004 and worked as head of programmes from 2011 to 2013. He joined CIIR in 1986 and took up a series of desk officer and joint programme manager roles for its overseas country programmes in Peru, Ecuador and the Dominican Republic as well as in Central America. He came to the UK as a Chilean exile in the 1970s, having been forced to leave his country in the aftermath of the 1973 military coup bringing the repressive Pinochet dictatorship to power.

I saw many innovative, pioneering projects that contributed to effective practice and thinking on community development during my time working for CIIR and Progressio. Our work in the Dominican Republic with partners such as Fundación Solidaridad to promote a Caribbean version of participatory budgeting – whereby citizens take part in determining public spending priorities and monitoring the implementation of decisions – was certainly one of them. The work drew on Brazil's experience of participatory budgeting, which was originally introduced by the Workers' Party in Porto Alegre in 1989 and then spread to scores of other cities in the country in the 1990s.

Intense consultation

The process of consultation between community organisations and the local authority to agree the annual budget in each of the Dominican municipalities was multi-layered and intense. It started with the organisations consulting their own base groups and communities on their needs and which ones should be prioritised. The consultations produced specific proposals that were then taken to wider meetings with civil society organisations representing other zones of the municipality in question. These, in turn, generated an overall set of civil society proposals for discussion and negotiation with the local authority, eventually leading to an agreed final plan for implementation with available municipal resources.

In each case, Progressio placed DWs with both the municipality and the civil society organisations to nurture their individual and joint capacity and commitment to engage and interact. The DWs shared their expertise and knowledge of participatory approaches to generating development plans and projects, of taking part in negotiations and budgeting, and brought a wide range of other technical and political skills and experiences needed to take each process forward.

I distinctly remember the enthusiasm that these processes created in the communities as well as the concern and apprehension felt by the municipalities we supported. Local leaders and officials were now dealing with a very different process to the centralised and bureaucratic one they were used to. Moreover, they were now having to engage directly with people rather than working with the support of outside experts, who were not necessarily familiar with local problems and views. However, to their credit, they were prepared to take the risk of exploring this new way of doing things.

Sustaining momentum

The initial pilot experience in Villa González, which produced the first ever municipal budget generated in a participatory way in the Dominican Republic, was very positive for both sides. The communities saw their priorities included in the plan and the municipality saw its popularity, as well as its efficiency and effectiveness, rise. The municipality and civil society organisations also created monitoring mechanisms to oversee implementation of the budget. This kept local communities deeply involved beyond the planning and consultation period.

As news of the impact of this pilot experience reached neighbouring municipalities and communities, they too wanted to join the initiative. Each year new municipalities got involved and took up participatory budgeting. The communities became very experienced in planning and negotiating with the municipalities and tracking their performance, which improved as a result. Along with the advantages of municipalities' better operation, an added bonus for the mayors and councillors was that they were easily re-elected. Electoral success was no doubt an incentive for them to join the project!

The heightened interest of central government in the growing results of these experiences led it to implement new legislation passed in 2007 making participatory budgeting compulsory for all municipalities. In 2010 the requirement was also incorporated in the constitution of Dominican Republic.

A crucial driver of Progressio's emerging bi-national approach was the devastating earthquake to hit Haiti in January 2010, which created stronger official incentives for the governments of the two countries to strengthen bilateral cooperation in order to overcome their longstanding tensions. As well as placing DWs to work with Haitian partners in livelihoods, health and education projects, Progressio helped to coordinate civil society responses to the disaster in Haiti from the Dominican Republic. It also promoted a new international approach to Haiti's long-term challenges (see Box). This included sustaining [advocacy](#) for the rights of Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian origin living in the Dominican Republic to be recognised, as marked by the 2011 updating of a [comprehensive survey](#) on international human rights conventions relevant to the challenge.

Haiti's 2010 earthquake: responding on the ground, advocating inclusive reconstruction

The earthquake was one of the worst natural disasters to have hit Haiti. It killed 230,000 people, including thousands of public sector workers, NGO professionals and civil society leaders. It also destroyed much of the country's already insufficient yet vital infrastructure such as housing, schools and health centres. A fifth of Haiti's 10 million people were affected.

Support and coordination

The crisis prompted a major international response, part of which was led from the neighbouring Dominican Republic where Progressio's country representative, Sonia Vásquez, played an important role in supporting and coordinating civil society relief efforts. She chaired the project committee of the Ayuda a Haiti (Help Haiti) platform, which worked to match relief donations with identified priorities for emergency project support. The flexibility afforded by the PPA with DfID enabled Progressio to redirect the energies of DWs from their ongoing development work to emergency response on both sides of the border. Those based or redeployed in Haiti, such as Raquel Casares, were [often the first to deliver aid because of their presence of the ground](#). A Chilean DW, [Daniela Peirano](#), helped a Haitian women's group in one community, Fond Parisien, to support women-run businesses, reaching over 8,000 people in the area.

Progressio, though not a humanitarian relief agency, used its capacity-building role to support partner organisations in the Dominican Republic on the governance and organisational aspects of their relief efforts. A DW specialising in media and communications, for example, provided strategic support and advice on use of the Ayuda a Haiti website to channel information on the emergency and response needs. Progressio collated information and shared key messages from partners in Haiti and the Dominican Republic with humanitarian agencies, official donors and, at a political level, with the FCO in the UK and the EU.

Urging international recognition of Haitian civil society

As attention turned to the challenge of reconstruction, Progressio worked with Haitian civil society partners to secure their attendance of a high-level donor conference held in New York and stressed the crucial need for their voices to be heard. Yet UN meetings were for a long time not held in French or Creole and, throughout 2010, Haitian civil society partners criticised the weak and disorganised involvement of the Haitian state as well as the failure of the international community to recognise their role as active participants in reconstruction and consider their views in plans.

Progressio highlighted the participation gap by publishing Haiti after the Earthquake: *Civil Society Perspectives on Haitian Reconstruction and Dominican-Haitian Bi-national Relations*. Based on field visits, partner interviews and DW findings, the [report](#), assembled by policy and advocacy officer Lizzette Robleto González, stated that reconstruction should be based on a new strategy of decentralised decision-making to support local development, with aid delivery supporting this aim. The report welcomed revival of the [Haitian-Dominican Bilateral Mixed Commission](#) (CMB) originally created in 1996. It called on the two governments to turn the earthquake response into an opportunity for improved relations based on cross-border trade and economic development and fair approaches to migration.

Such proposals were built into a 2011 joint briefing with Christian Aid, CAFOD and Tearfund targeting the UK parliament, [Building Back Better: An Imperative for Haiti](#). In October 2010, to help keep Haiti on the UK's international development agenda, Progressio had invited human rights worker and former Haitian prime minister, Michelle Pierre-Louis, to address the AGM. She spoke at a roundtable, attended by DfID and the FCO and the ambassador of the Dominican Republic, chaired by Lord Leslie Griffiths, a Methodist minister with long experience on Haiti.



Devastation, determination: Progressio harnessed the expertise of its development workers to provide a rapid response to the Haiti's 2010 earthquake and helped to mobilise emergency relief in the Dominican Republic. Official humanitarian responses, however, were criticised as weak and disorganised. Pictured left, Sister Maryse George Francisca surveys the ruins left behind five months after the earthquake had struck the capital, Port-au-Prince.
PHOTOS: Natasha Fillion



Peru and Ecuador: extending opportunities for dialogue and accountability

Progressio's work in Peru, led by Peruvian national Dina Guerra until 2008 when longstanding country office staff member Marianela Gibaja replaced her as country representative, stepped up its support for partners involved in citizens' participation initiatives.

This work took advantage of the greater political space for now available as the country continued to emerge from the autocratic rule of Alberto Fujimori. His 1990-2000 government had sought to restrict the work of civil society organisations throughout the 1990s under the pretext of stemming Shining Path terrorism and other rebel group insurgencies. Some 70,000 people died or disappeared during the 1980-2000 conflict, whose deep wounds Progressio's partners still had to address. British human rights worker Charlotte Smith helped the Lima-based [Bartolomé de las Casas Institute](#) (CBC), the body founded by liberation theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez, coordinate a Justice and Reparation initiative and strengthen its international communications work.

Building commitment to inclusive education

In Cusco, Progressio provided further support to the [Pukllasunchis association](#) whose citizen participation and advocacy project meant that, by 2008, it had become a regional reference point for state-society dialogue on the need for socially inclusive education policies reflecting Peru's multicultural and multilingual identity. Supported by Spanish DW, [Oihane de Gana Romero](#), Pukllasunchis was now working to strengthen the capacity of a regional education network of 32 CSOs to advocate reforms of education policies. It was also an active facilitator of civil society participation in a regional participative council on education, a forum for state-civil society dialogue, and also an active member of an NGO network promoting the rights of the child.

The partnership with Pukllasunchis was part of a wider body of complementary work on citizens' participation in the Cusco area. Progressio's partner [COINCIDE](#), taking advantage of the decentralisation process launched by the government in 2003, was involved in strengthening regional civil society organisations as effective interlocutors with local government officials, with DW María Belén Pont supporting its work to train local leaders. Community leadership training was also the aim of Progressio's work with the Bartolomé de las Casas centre in Cusco and the neighbouring south-central Apurímac region where Nicoletta Verlardi, an Italian DW, also worked with the CBC. She promoted the political participation of indigenous men and women, which had been hindered by cultural and ethnic discrimination.

Further south in Ayacucho, a DW, Susana Araujo, took part in a project to help a network of female councillors share learning and expertise among themselves as well as with a new cohort of women councillors due to take up political office. More women were now getting involved in politics, following a 1997 law establishing a 30 per cent quota for female candidates on political party lists. The project aimed to boost women's standing in anticipation of critical reaction by their male counterparts seeing their role as a threat to their sense of power and control.

Community leaders, active citizens

As noted by the director of the [CBC](#), María Rosa Alayza, who made the challenge of post-conflict reconciliation and active citizenship in Peru the theme of her address to Progressio's 2007 AGM on community participation and leadership, it had taken time for civil society in her country to regain strength amid a lingering climate of public fear and mistrust. Yet public expectations of more transparent and accountable governance were rising. At the end of the decade, Progressio even placed a DW, Florencia Diehl, with the anti-corruption watchdog, [Proética](#), a member of Transparency International, to support its monitoring of public policies.

In neighbouring Ecuador, Progressio supported a range of initiatives to promote participation in local development, again focusing on social groups with less voice and influence. It placed local development specialist Michela Accerenzi and [Paulina Aguilera](#), a Chilean journalist and knowledge management expert, with the Christian Youth Association ([ACJ/YMCA](#)). They worked respectively in Quito and the coastal city of Portoviejo in Manabí province to help the ACJ advocate policies supporting the rights of children and young people. During her time in Ecuador between 2008 and 2010, Aguilera also supported Ecuador's Consortium of Provincial Councils ([CONCOPE](#)). Progressio also placed an Argentine gender and local development specialist, Mercedes Jatuff Bustos, with [Women for Life](#), a national association with branches across Ecuador advocating equitable policies to tackle all forms of social exclusion and discrimination.

Staff member Belisario Nieto addressing a 2006 regional meeting in the Dominican Republic. It brought together partners from Progressio country programmes in Latin America to share the lessons of work for citizen participation in local government decision-making.



Progressio's work with partners sought to challenge gender discrimination hindering women's participation in public life. Pictured below is a group of women involved in a project run by IMU of El Salvador advocating a 'social care economy'.



Nicaragua: linking citizenship, local development and livelihoods

Work to promote an integrated approach to local development became an even stronger feature of Progressio's country programme in Nicaragua during the second half of the 2000s. Combining support and engagement of both local government and civil society partners, it linked the promotion of citizen participation in decision-making with pursuit of official responsiveness to the economic development needs of communities, including the protection of local natural resources. Economic survival and pursuit of sustainable livelihoods remained a crucial priority in the country.

Municipal partnership

Progressio consolidated its relationship with the Association of Municipalities of Nueva Segovia (AMUNSE) in the north by placing several DWs with the organisation. [Luis Valles Darsa](#), a Spanish DW, provided technical support which enabled participatory planning to take place in eight of the Nueva Segovia department's municipalities. The processes led to the emergence of specific municipal plans. These were developed with high stakeholder involvement, including the participation of women. The progress included a strategic plan for Ocotol, the departmental capital.

Meanwhile, with decentralisation requiring proper support and resources to have a pro-poor orientation, another DW, Galo Muñoz, an Ecuadorean communications specialist, was placed with AMUNSE to support its advocacy. He built on the earlier efforts of Paulina Aguilera, who had now left the Nicaragua programme (see previous section) to share her expertise regionally by joining Progressio's local participation initiatives in Ecuador. [Galo Muñoz](#) worked closely with the mayor's office in Macuelizo municipality as well as with the Chorotega Indigenous Peoples Organisation (CPICH) where he supported the coordinating body's efforts to empower indigenous people in local development, including through use of community radio.

Another DW placed with AMUNSE in Macuelizo, [Alex David Zapata](#) from Honduras, worked with the municipality to promote the integrated management of water, soil and forest resources, including agro-ecological production by small farmers to reverse deterioration of the area's river basin.

Pushing for local development protecting natural resources

Making the protection of natural resources an essential aim of local development – and promoting the participation of communities in local government plans and decisions in order to do so – was also at the heart of Progressio's partnership with Association for Municipal Development (ADM), an NGO involved in practical projects and advocacy promoting rights-based approaches to decentralisation in Nicaragua. Among the DWs Progressio placed with ADM were Carlos Parra, María Violeta Cotado and [Franck Tondeur](#). Their contributions helped to strengthen ADM's institutional structures and service delivery, build its capacity to advocate pro-poor policies, and also support community organisation to protect natural resources and defend local people's rights of access.

Promoting cross-regional learning on participation and local development

Four years after its first event on the topic, in October 2006 Progressio organised a follow-up conference in the Dominican Republic to track progress on civil society participation and local development in Latin America and the Caribbean. It brought together representatives of NGOs, grassroots civil society groups and Progressio DWs from country programmes in Central America and the Andes, as well as the Dominican Republic.

The event, which also enjoyed the analytical contribution of invited policy experts, was aimed at sharing further regional learning on encouraging local government and national policies on local development to involve and benefit communities. It noted that the World Bank, the IMF and the IDB, while stressing the importance of citizen participation, expected such involvement to take place within the restrictive parameters of governments' existing policies on economic stability and growth rather than changing them in favour of socially fairer alternatives.

Thanks to the additional financial support of Christian Aid, Trócaire, One World Action and the EU, the event also involved the participation of representatives from Progressio's country programmes in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. The aim was to promote wider exchange and learning across Progressio, now that work on participation, governance and local development was taking fuller shape in the other regions.

Meanwhile, other local development initiatives included supporting sustainable eco-tourism as part of efforts to diversify the rural economy. [Solange Carrasco](#), a local development adviser from Chile, and Sandra Monge, a Costa Rican DW, helped the National Federation of Agricultural and Agro-Industrial Cooperatives (FENACCOOP) develop community-based eco-tourism ventures and advocate greater national government support for them. The challenge of boosting livelihoods through responsive local governance was a difficult one. As another Progressio-hosted regional conference held in 2006 had found, restrictive national economic policies hindered their potential (see Box above).

El Salvador: linking pursuit of better local planning with pressure for supportive national policies

Progressio's support for municipal engagement likewise took strong shape in El Salvador. A Bolivian DW with extensive regional experience on citizen participation in public policy, María Martínez Mita, helped the Community Development Council of Morazán and San Miguel ([PADECOMSM](#)) to develop the capacity of civil society to hold local authorities to account, through social audits. Audits were held in eight municipalities in the north-eastern Morazán department, one of the poorest in the country.

From cooperation to tackling resistance to change

As in Nicaragua, Progressio-supported initiatives in El Salvador sought to engage local authorities on the need for socially and environmentally sustainable approaches to economic development. [Marcos Cerra Becerra](#), a Spanish geographer, for example, supported the efforts of the Salvadorean Ecological Unity coalition ([UNES](#)) to develop participatory land use planning and promote effective land use regulations in partnership with the mayor's office in the San Francisco Menéndez municipality in the north-western Ahuachapán department.

The aim of this initiative, linking environmental protection with pursuit of social justice, was to protect the San Francisco Menéndez area from El Salvador's extreme vulnerability to natural disasters – tropical storm Agatha in 2010 was to wreak damage there – and to prevent human activity from exacerbating the risks. Deforestation caused by land clearance for larger-scale farming was making the municipality's lowlands prone to flooding and the effects of climate change. Demand for land also meant action was needed to protect the rights of local people to land against encroachment by powerful groups.

In El Salvador, as elsewhere in Latin America and the Caribbean, such partnerships sought, wherever possible, to promote constructive dialogue and mutually supportive action by municipal authorities and civil society to tackle local development problems, with national government also encouraged to provide proper support to make decentralisation work. The hostility of powerful local, national and international economic interests to change, however, often made such partnerships and national backing for them difficult to achieve on a wider scale. Official willingness to engage in discussion could not be assumed and often required civil society pressure to emerge. Communities undertook protests and direct action when officials and politicians refused to talk or were reluctant to act.

Getting the powerful to act: civil society's long battle for water

The importance of civil society pressure was reflected by the intensification of battles from the mid-2000s for policy action to halt damage to water resources and ensure the public right to water. UNES, for example, not only provided legal advice and national advocacy support for communities fighting local threats to water; it joined forces with other groups to mount what became a long-run campaign for comprehensive national legislation to tackle El Salvador's mounting crisis of water scarcity, contamination and inequality of access. Some 90 per cent of El Salvador's rivers were polluted by industry, municipal

From the people to parliament: keeping water on the political agenda

In 2006, UNES and other civil society groups drew on the energy of mass mobilisation against government water privatisation plans to submit proposals to parliament for a law establishing public control of water resources and services and a holistic system for their management. The proposals, based on community-based research and consultations, were opposed by the right-wing ARENA government.

Election of El Salvador's first FMLN government in 2009 meant that the proposals, further updated and strengthened by UNES and its coalition partners in the Water Forum, were received more favourably by the left-wing party now in power. Still, the draft law and constitutional amendments enshrining the right to water were repeatedly blocked in the following years by ARENA and other opposition parties. Yet the fact that El Salvador's legislative assembly has been continually obliged to discuss a comprehensive water law and take into account civil society proposals was an achievement in itself.



“At first it was hard work. We had the right information, but in ASIC we had no idea about communications. We started taking part in training and learned how to create materials on the damage caused by mining. The videos we made managed to grab the attention of journalists at the national level. We learned to talk to the media, and produce graphic flyers and bulletins for people in the community, which have been very effective. Bit by bit we have built up communication tools which have helped us to consolidate ourselves as an organisation.”

Miguel Rivera, leader of the Friends of San Isidro Association (ASIC), a local community organisation in Cabañas, quoted in Progressio's 2010 Annual Review. He was one of several community leaders to face threats and intimidation for opposing mining projects. His brother, Marcelo, had been kidnapped, tortured and murdered in 2009.

waste water and agricultural chemicals. With many areas suffering water rationing and shortages, farmers were finding it harder and harder to grow crops.

Progressio DWs Marcos Sanjuan and Javier García shared technical expertise with UNES to support its research, design and advocacy of legislative proposals which became the centrepiece of the campaign. Though the proposals would be repeatedly blocked in right to water. UNES, for example, not only provided legal advice and national advocacy parliament, civil society lobbying ensured that they were kept on the political agenda over the next 10 years and beyond (see Box above).

One crucial aspect of civil society's push for a say on water from the mid-2000s did bear immediate fruit. Its opposition to the plans of foreign mining companies – they risked polluting water in the Cabañas department and the Lempa River basin vital to the country's water supply – was a factor in leading the then ARENA government, concerned at the electoral implications of this contentious issue, suddenly to declare a moratorium on metal mining in late 2006. The move came despite ARENA's earlier approval of exploration permits. The FMLN administration succeeding the ARENA government in 2009 then upheld the moratorium, and civil society subsequently pressed for its retention and conversion into a permanent ban. Coordinated by the National Roundtable against Metal Mining, the calls were also backed by several Catholic bishops and members of the Church.

To support civil society's struggle in Cabañas, Progressio, placed an Italian DW specialising in advocacy and communications, Nicoletta Marinelli, to help the Social and Economic Development Association of Santa Marta (ADES) create a stronger platform for its views to be heard locally and nationally on the risks of mining. This support brought benefits for the work of ADES and its local partners (see Quote above).

Tension and conflict over the future of mining, however, saw threats, attacks and murders in Cabañas over 2009-11 against environmental and human rights defenders critical of mining plans. In painful echoes of the repression during El Salvador's civil war, defence of the temporary moratorium came at a price. But it was also the start of longer-term success in protecting El Salvador's water. In the next decade the country became the first in the world to ban metal mining (see Box).

Fast forward to 2017: a world first in banning metal mining

In 2017, after a decade-long legislative tussle and the failure of a Canadian-turned-Australian mining company to sue El Salvador in a World Bank investment tribunal for multi-million-dollar compensation for profits allegedly lost because of the moratorium, the FMLN government re-elected in 2014 enacted legislation to ban metal mining permanently. Based on a bill that [UCA](#), an old CIIR partner, had helped to draft, the law made El Salvador the first country in the world to do so.

The drive to promote mining as a major growth sector in El Salvador had been quite recent. Until the 1990s its presence was relatively small. The country had now decided that the threats to water resources, social peace and human rights were too high a price to pay.



Local pressure, national action: pictured top is a 2010 protest march in capital San Salvador ('For the right to water: stop the destruction'), while below young Salvadoreans voice local calls for schools to be built and quality education.

Tackling the gender barriers to women's beneficial economic participation

As in the 1990s, a significant Progressio focus was to support the creation of stronger conditions for women's beneficial economic participation. Women's 'economic empowerment' had gradually become a mainstream interest of official aid donors. Progressio's approach, however, stressed the crucial importance of tackling the gender-influenced obstacles not only to women taking greater part in the economy but also being treated and rewarded fairly.

Indeed, while an official policy case was increasingly being made internationally that addressing gender could benefit economic growth as more women joined the workforce, ran businesses and spent money as consumers, it was not clear that existing growth policies were good for gender equality. The promise of greater access to employment and income, with potential benefits for women's sense of self-worth, independence and status, was being questioned as a given. Critics argued that a 'feminisation of poverty' was occurring as a result of economic adjustment policies hitting social spending, employment levels, job security and working conditions. Gender discrimination affected the extent and nature of their participation in the economy, which often involved abuses and exploitation. Progressio's work with partners in El Salvador thus pursued a multi-pronged approach (see Box).

The 'feminisation of poverty' and Progressio's multi-pronged approach to supporting women's rights

Progressio projects to boost the economic involvement of women, such as DW support for partners to help women set up and run their own local businesses, also sought to address the problems of unpaid and under-supported family care. The unequal division of domestic labour increased women's workload and affected their role outside the home. Projects thus underlined the need to address the damaging interplay of structural gender discrimination with socially unjust economic policies causing poverty and pushing women into precarious and unsafe work environments.

Development worker Gloria Araque, for example, as well as helping the Institute for Women's Research, Training and Development ([IMU](#)) to win Ministry of Economy backing for business initiatives she had developed with women's groups in the south-east Usulután department, supported IMU research to advocate support for a 'social care economy'. She also co-authored an EU-financed Progressio report on [economic violence against women in El Salvador](#) with Adriana Ospina, a Colombian DW helping the Flor de Piedra (Stone Flower) women's association to advocate the rights of female sex workers in work on HIV prevention (see later section).

Meanwhile, another DW, Spanish communications specialist Andrea Bilbao, worked with both IMU and Flor de Piedra to increase women's access to the mass media in order to raise awareness of discrimination and violence against women. Dutch DW Sanne te Pas had earlier supported communications work on sexual violence and domestic and child abuse with Las Dignas women's association.

Honduras: building grassroots alternatives, facing a backlash

The challenges facing citizen participation and responsive local and national governance – and the fact that effective civil society action often meets a backlash by the powerful – were also critically apparent in neighbouring Honduras. Xiomara Ventura was now Progressio's country representative there, having replaced Carlos Leiva at the start of the decade.

Progressio, building on its earlier gender analysis of the country's poverty reduction strategy noted at the end of Chapter 3, placed a DW, Lincoln Villanueva, with the Social Forum on Foreign Debt and Development ([FOSDEH](#)) in 2007 to help facilitate its grassroots efforts to make policy action against poverty a reality at local levels. FOSDEH was concerned that the PRSP, introduced as a donor condition for creditor write-off of much of Honduras' foreign debt, was not leading to resources being freed up to support rural areas where higher numbers of people lived in extreme poverty. Funds were being misused and the country's budget and national plans and programmes were centralised.

Bottom-up proposals and progress under threat

To tackle the problems and redress the balance, FOSDEH held regional forums across the country with community organisations to consult and mobilise people on their expectations. It used the findings and the social mobilisation involved in their generation to develop and advocate a coordinated set of regional development plans responding to local needs. This bottom-up approach offered an alternative framework for integrating local and national planning and boosting poor people's access to essential services, appropriate infrastructure, housing, land and natural resources.

The 2009 military coup, however, severely restricted the political space for such potential to be realised. It also threatened positive signs of progress in other initiatives dealing with issues of vital concern to rural communities. For example, the application of a new national Forestry Law raising hopes that forest resources would be protected from illegal exploitation, passed in 2007 following Progressio advice and support for partners (see later section below), was placed in doubt.

Africa, the Middle East and Timor-Leste: creating opportunities in difficult political environments

Work on participation and effective governance took fuller shape in Progressio's country programmes in Africa, the Middle East and Timor-Leste during this period. Political institutions and democratic space enabling civil society voice and interaction with local and national governments were even more fragile and less developed in these settings in comparison with Latin America and the Caribbean. Nevertheless, Progressio's work with partners showed dynamism, taking advantage of possible opportunities and building on the gains of earlier efforts outlined in Chapter 3.

Malawi: access to education and protecting democratic space

Progressio's new country programme in Malawi, showing similarities to work on budgeting and social spending priorities in the Dominican Republic, embarked on a partnership with the Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education. The aim of the CSCQBE, a network of 42 CSOs, was to strengthen education access and quality by pressing for education spending to be more transparent and effective.

To support the CSCQBE's work, Progressio recruited [Viola Kuhaisa Muhangi](#), a former teacher-turned NGO worker from Uganda where civil society had considerable experience of tracking and holding decision-makers to account for education spending. She helped CSCQBE develop its advocacy strategy, including the design and roll-out a trainer-of-trainers course. Its objective was to strengthen local citizen pressure, through 20 district education networks, for improved service delivery. A key concern was to increase benefits for girls, many of whom were failing to progress from primary and secondary to tertiary education. This was a loss for their long-term development and that of their country.

With multi-party democracy in Malawi still relatively new and facing mounting strains as the 2004-12 government of President Bingu wa Mutharika became increasingly autocratic and repressive, Progressio supported partners working to protect and enhance civil society and political space. A Zimbabwean DW, [Mandlenkosi Mpofu](#), helped to strengthen the advocacy and networking skills of the [Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace](#) and faith leaders, in support of their promotion of free, fair and non-violent elections. The CCJP organised a team that monitored voting in 22 constituencies in Lilongwe, Malawi's capital, during the 2009 elections.

Zimbabwe crisis: linking local civic education with national and international influencing through networks

Progressio's support for partner efforts to promote citizen participation and influence policy required a sensitive approach in Zimbabwe in view of the mounting political crisis and governance problems in the country. It was largely with and through the more protective, networked structures of the Church, and at a local diocesan level, that Progressio sought to take forward such work. It launched an 'Action for Better Governance' pilot project with the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe. Its aim was to help the [CCJPZ](#) develop its ability to promote civic education in communities as a starting point for creating the conditions needed to engage and lobby local leaders and representatives effectively.

Parish advocacy committees: piloting 'action for better governance'

The project started as a pilot in Chinhoyi diocese in Mashonaland West province. Progressio helped the CCJPZ to consult local citizens on issues of most concern to them conduct surveys on the nature of participation and levels of transparency in decision-making. Having trained diocesan representatives in advocacy techniques, it then helped the CCJPZ to use the findings and insights to develop lobbying and advocacy plans with the participation of communities. The approach included holding well attended of 'meet-your-representative' meetings with local leaders.

To sustain momentum, Progressio also worked with CCJPZ to hold a training-of-trainers workshop to promote parish advocacy committees capable of cascading advocacy expertise and knowledge to other communities with the consent and support of traditional leaders. Following the pilot's initial signs of success, the 'Action for Better Governance' initiative was further rolled out in Chinhoyi and extended to other dioceses. It produced continued gains over the coming years (see Chapter 5).

At the same time, Progressio sought to connect this grassroots local approach, capitalising on the moral authority of the Church, with engagement on national policy issues, carefully seizing available opportunities at this higher level. It did so by supporting networks and alliances and their potential for mutual support and collective protection and leverage in a difficult political environment.

For example, Progressio recruited another Ugandan specialist, Beatrice Mukasa, to advise the Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network (ZWRCN) on working with its civil society members and partners, in particular its women's and youth organisations. The aim was to promote official commitment to tackling gender issues in the budgeting and planning process.

Child rights in Zimbabwe: alternative reporting to the UN

Musa Chibwana, a Progressio DW specialising in child rights, worked with the Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children (ZNCWC) to strengthen the work of its 120 member organisations. As well as training child rights workers, he helped the council boost its engagement of policy-makers and the media. He enabled the umbrella body, for the first time, to present an alternative report to the UN on Zimbabwe's record against the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Working for collective NGO leverage on youth rights

Youth issues, complementing simultaneous work on child rights with other partners (see Box above), also became one thematic focus of a partnership with the National Association of NGOs. NANGO had approached Progressio and the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Zimbabwe to join forces in researching policy proposals for civil society advocacy on issues of crucial importance for the country.

"Policy-making is an elitist process and it was important in this project that the process was led and run by the people and communities who are going to benefit. At NANGO we had no clue about how to do this. In the past at NANGO we would have just engaged a consultant on a project like this. This project represents a paradigm shift because for the first time our members are doing it themselves – owning the process, doing the advocacy – not employing someone else to do it."

Machinda Marongwe, NANGO



NANGO's initiative in the late 2000s, supported by [Christopher Mweembe](#), a DW who later joined the 'action for better governance' project and supported Progressio's work on a sustainable environment, included community-based consultations on the situation of youth among other themes. The consultations were aimed at grounding policies in people's own views of their support needs and building their confidence and capacity to engage with the technicalities of the proposals as they were advocated and discussed at official levels. Advocacy of NANGO's paper on youth policies led Zimbabwe's cabinet to discuss revision of national programmes on the situation of young people. A decision was eventually made not to reintroduce the controversial National Youth Service training programme, claimed by some to be harmful because of its links with aggressive youth militias. NANGO valued Progressio's support in helping to facilitate the expertise it needed to carry out its initiative (see Quote above).

From EZN to the practice of ZEN: ensuring civil society is heard in international decisions on Zimbabwe

In 2008, Progressio helped to set up the Brussels-based Ecumenical Zimbabwe Network on (EZN) to coordinate the response of faith-based organisations working in Zimbabwe to the country's multiple problems. It was also a founder of the Zimbabwe Europe Network ([ZEN](#)) grouping over 30 civil society and trade unions from 10 EU countries.

With Britain having a vital but sensitive role on Zimbabwe because of its position as a leading emergency aid donor and colonial legacy, Progressio's bridging role in ZEN was significant. It connected policy engagement of the UK government with the network's lobbying of other EU member countries and the EU's Brussels institutions. ZEN's aim was to promote sustained and coordinated EU political commitment to Zimbabwe and ensure that it took on board the views of Zimbabwean civil society.

Parliamentary evidence in the UK

In 2010, for example, Progressio's Steve Kibble presented written and oral evidence on behalf of ZEN to the international development committee of the UK's House of Commons. Drawing on the analysis of Progressio's civil society and church partners in Zimbabwe, it received extensive coverage in the IDC's report. The [IDC submission](#) was just one instance of Progressio's work in the UK as a member of ZEN, which included continual dialogue with the FCO.

One of partners' main concerns reflected in the IDC submission was the ongoing militarisation and political violence in the country. Violence had not abated, despite the signing of a 'power-sharing' agreement and the 2009 formation of a supposed 'unity' government between the ruling ZANU-PF party and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Under the auspices of ZEN, Progressio advocated the need for policy-makers to make the human rights situation a key factor in decisions on lifting EU sanctions. In 2011, Progressio became the chair of ZEN, which continued to monitor the EU's approach and hold it to account.

Another NANGO paper consulted on and examined the predicament and potential contribution of diaspora communities, who were both the target of official suspicion and a vital source of potential expertise in terms of Zimbabwe's need to overcome international isolation and build a new political settlement.

This paper was one strand of Progressio's EU-funded 'Towards a New Zimbabwe: Sharing Skills for Dialogue for Pro-Poor Policies' project. It complemented the organisation's wider work to advocate people-centred international diplomatic action to address Zimbabwe's crisis and its attendant political violence. As with its careful accompaniment of partners' in-country work at a local level through protective church structures, Progressio's approach to promoting international support for change in the country was often through networks. It helped to foster important new international initiatives in the later 2000s (see Box above).

Becoming Somaliland: advancing recognition of under-represented social groups

CIIR's success in Somaliland in nurturing civil society institutions and their organisational strength over 1995-2005 (see Chapter 3) now enabled Progressio to place much greater emphasis on supporting partners' capacity for rights-based advocacy. Their advocacy urged the fledgling country's nascent political institutions to address participation and discrimination challenges hindering state-building.

As Somaliland continued its impressive yet sometimes tricky consolidation of peace and political stability – its second-ever presidential elections in 2010 saw a peaceful handover of power to an opposition candidate, but only after several delays of the contest had prompted civil unrest and seen the arrest of journalists – this work yielded important results for the social groups involved.

Towards a new age for youth rights

SONYO, the youth network, for example, received training and advice from Progressio DWs such as Rita Izsák and Stephen Mwalo bringing international and regional experience in human rights, civic education and youth issues. With their support, SONYO's lobbying eventually led in 2011 to law being amended to reduce the minimum age for Lower House election candidates from 35 to 25 (see Quote below). SONYO also pushed for the introduction of a national youth policy.

Alongside earlier reduction of the voting age eligibility to 16, this development had ground-breaking potential for the political representation of youth and Somaliland's wider democratisation and development. While clan elders were widely credited for maintaining the peace in the critical post-war years, groups such as SONYO had seen the ingrained age bias of the political system as a barrier to both young people's progress and the energy they could bring to nation-building. Some 70 per cent of Somaliland's population was under 30 years old. Their lack of skills, paid jobs and recreational facilities was driving some to migrate via dangerous means, and the overall situation of youth at home was a potential source of social and political instability.

SONYO's achievements would not have been possible without the indispensable gains in its organisational strength that Progressio had helped to nurture, including through the three-year contribution of Yvette Lopez as the first DW it had placed with the network in 2003. By now, SONYO had **structures and systems** in place to plan strategy, renew its leadership, promote member participation and enhance network expertise in areas such as working with the media. It was also the recipient of UNICEF grants, investing in local youth organisations and developing links with student unions internationally.

"To secure the change in the law, we engaged with the government and organised public debates and personal meetings. We even called a conference that brought together people from different backgrounds, including government officers, young community leaders, from all over Somaliland. We also created pressure groups to work directly in the parliament."

SONYO's Amal Osman, quoted in Progressio's 2011/12 annual review

Women in politics: seeking to break the glass ceiling

A related barrier to Somaliland's continued democratisation was the under-representation of women in politics, despite their role in peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction and as breadwinners. Though the 2001 constitution recognised women's equality, just two of the 82 members of the elected House of Representatives were women, and the unelected upper House of Elders was exclusively male.

In response, Progressio sustained its support for the women's network **NAGAAD**, which had been running a 'women in decision-making' training, civic education and public awareness-raising initiative since the start of the decade. This had provided a platform to push for women's greater public involvement and recognition, including within the political system.

With a cycle of multiple elections now underway and new contests due, Progressio placed DWs with NAGAAD to help further develop the advocacy expertise of the network and its member organisations. Wairimu Munyini and **Edna Onyango**, both advocacy specialists with African experience, for example, provided advice on NAGAAD's campaign for a quota system to ensure women's fairer representation in politics. They facilitated the network's efforts to encourage, support and equip a greater number of women not only to take part as informed voters with their own views and demands, but also to stand successfully for public office.



Progressio's sustained support for the women's rights organisation NAGAAD helped to increase female participation in Somaliland's emerging political system and cycle of regular elections.
© Kate Stanworth



When the presidential election was eventually held in June 2010, women of all ages turned out in large numbers. Their high visibility as voters and campaigners reflected the growing pressure on political leaders to support women's rights and participation. Indeed, during the election campaign, the opposition party due to take power promised a 25 per cent quota for women candidates in future elections and the new president held a consultation. The proposals to emerge, however, lowered the quota to 15 per cent and, to the dismay of NAGAAD, the male-dominated House of Representatives rejected a women's quota outright.

Structural barriers

As Progressio's now outgoing country representative, Adan Abukor, [reflected](#), Somaliland had made significant development progress since its emergence from the collapse of Somalia 20 years earlier. Indeed, the fact that women's political representation had become a topic of public discussion and was on the political agenda was a milestone achievement itself. It remained a focus of partners' women's rights advocacy in the years ahead (see Chapter 5).

By the same token, as demonstrated by resistance to the women's quota, clan-based loyalties revolving around the position of men continued to exert strong influence over politics. In response, NAGAAD undertook a wider set of policy and advocacy initiatives to tackle the underlying gender inequality issues affecting women's position in society.

In 2010, for example, NAGAAD presented the new government with an advisory paper on tackling gender inequality and disseminated a report co-published with the Ministry of Justice and Progressio, [Women's Human Rights in Somaliland](#). Written by Maria Tungaraza, a Tanzanian DW with longstanding expertise in international human rights law, it documented where customary law infringed women's rights and needed to be harmonised with effective standards for their protection. Progressio went on to support NAGAAD's work with a community to develop a gender-sensitive local council plan. This was integrated into Somaliland's national plan and money was allocated to tackle the issues identified.

Welcome and lasting commitment: observing Somaliland's elections

Following successful collaboration in the 2002 local and 2005 parliamentary elections, Somaliland's NEC invited Progressio and its UK partners, University College London's development planning unit and [Somaliland Focus](#), to coordinate the international mission to observe the country's second-ever presidential election in 2010.

The mission, comprising 59 members from 16 countries and four continents, visited polling stations in all six regions of Somaliland and continued its work after the voting to monitor the handover of presidential power. Supported financially by the British embassy in Addis Ababa and the EU, it found that the contest, despite specific irregularities and threats by Islamist militant groups, had been peaceful, free and fair. Its final report, [Change and Continuity](#), authored by Progressio's Steve Kibble and UCL's Michael Walls, emphasised the crucial role of civil society in the successful holding of the election, in particular [women's participation](#) and the mobilisation of Somaliland's diaspora. The value of Progressio's continued support meant that it would again be invited by the NEC to observe the 2012 local and 2017 presidential elections (see Chapter 5).

Time to back a relative peace

Somaliland's continued holding of peaceful and credible elections in a post-conflict situation where political institutions were still incipient was a major achievement. It contrasted with the ongoing instability and violence in the rest of Somalia where Western powers had been concentrating their geo-political energies.

Progressio, as set out in the 2008 publication, [Becoming Somaliland](#), commissioned from Somalia expert Mark Bradbury, argued that the 'international community' ought to do much more to back the political settlement being achieved de facto by Somaliland, despite the latter's lack of international recognition as a sovereign state. Progressio's election observer missions helped to advocate stronger diplomatic support for the consolidation of peace and democratic participation on the ground, while taking no formal position on the territory's international status.

Twin-track democratisation: linking civil society support with official partnership

While seeking to influence Somaliland's emerging political process, networks such as NAGAAD and SONYO also aided its operation and continued institutionalisation. NAGAAD and SONYO, along with the non-state actor forum [SONSAF](#) and the Forum for Peace and Governance (FOPAG), both also Progressio partners, trained and mobilised 800 local observers to monitor the 2010 presidential election. This mobilisation played an essential

role in what was now the third international observer mission to have been coordinated by Progressio with other partners (see above Box).

Progressio's collaboration with both the National Electoral Commission and civil society networks – Progressio recruited a DW, Ahmed Mohamoud, to advise and support FOPAG's election monitoring – illustrated its twin-track approach in Somaliland. This involved seeking to empower citizens while engaging and accompanying official institutions in peace and democracy-building.

A major advantage of supporting and working with Hargeisa-based civil society networks in the country programme was that their member organisations enabled Progressio to reach local areas beyond the capital. This was important in view of the still-present security risks that made the remote placement of DWs unadvisable.

Tackling exclusion: helping to build a wider community of networks

Meanwhile, by developing partnerships with a strategic range of networks, Progressio sought to nurture a critical mass of partner capacity and action at a national level to boost the voice of some of the most under-represented and socially excluded groups in Somaliland. It built mutually supportive links and learning between the organisations with the additional support of donors such as Comic Relief.

Besides partnerships with SONYO and NAGAAD on young people and women's rights, for example, Progressio further developed work with disability organisations and networks such as Dose of Hope, supported by Kenyan DW Samuel Ogwang, and the Somaliland National Disabilities Forum (SNDF), supported by a Ugandan DW, Robert Kirenga, an experienced human rights practitioner, as well as with the HIV and AIDS network, Talowadag. Progressio's support enabled NAGAAD to raise awareness of the situation of marginalised groups through its production and dissemination of a [2010 state of human rights report](#).

Such networks were now in a stronger position to contribute to policy discussions. As NAGAAD attested, this progress had been aided by Progressio's approach to capacity-building based on DWs' sustained daily accompaniment of partners (see Quote). Even so, the space for partners to work on politically sensitive issues was vulnerable to official hostility, despite Somaliland's political progress. In 2007, for instance, the government had interfered with the leadership of the Somaliland Human Rights Network (SHURO-Net), a Progressio partner. The move followed the partner's criticisms of the government's record on media and political freedoms and the impact of arbitrary security powers on civil liberties. Promoting recognition of the importance of civil society space remained a feature of Progressio's support for partners and their engagement of Somaliland's political institutions.

"Instead of short training sessions or workshops, it is always better to have someone there to work side-by-side with us, to be part and parcel of the organisation, see how the organisation works and be part of an exchange of skills. The Progressio development workers have really helped us build our skills and get more confidence. We really think now we can help make things better in our country."

Amina Warsame, NAGAAD executive director, quoted in the 2010 annual review

Local advocacy in Yemen: from building progress to facing political setbacks

Complementing its efforts to boost the responsiveness of health service delivery in Yemen, Progressio expanded its work on citizen participation in decision-making to other sectors and other partners during this period. As in other country programmes, the aim was to promote opportunities for poorer, under-represented groups to have a greater say specifically at local government level. Its approach, alongside building the capacity of individual CSOs, again involved supporting the development of civil society networks. The aim was to capitalise on the potential for their member organisations to support and

learn from each other and also exert stronger collective pressure for more transparent and accountable governance and responsive official action.

This was a very ambitious venture in the political context of Yemen. The foundations for its very emergence were not given – civil society's experience of interacting with the state from a rights and accountability perspective was incipient – but had to be nurtured over time, as had occurred in Somaliland. To build momentum, Progressio undertook a civil society capacity-strengthening project in the southern Aden and northern Hodeidah governorates in 2006-11.

Advocacy: civil society capacity is not ready-made

A two-part evaluation of this initiative, drawing on insights from Progressio's now former country representative who had originally been involved in designing and launching the initiative, Abdulla Yousuf Syari, underlined the challenges Progressio faced in promoting advocacy on local decision-making. The [first report](#) noted that Yemeni CSOs, though keen in many cases to engage state and non-state power-holders, often had a charitable orientation. It meant they could be more concerned with directly assisting vulnerable groups than promoting rights-based citizen demand for stronger and better policy support for service delivery. The concept of citizen empowerment was not well understood, and awareness of advocacy's value for their social beneficiaries was latent at best.

A more prosaic but no less significant challenge facing Progressio in embarking on work with partners was that many of the CSOs involved lacked not just funds but also strong management, planning, monitoring and evaluation and learning systems. Such institutional gaps inevitably constrained both their individual capacity to carry out advocacy and their immediate preparedness to undertake joint policy action through networks.

Practical problems of this kind, not uncommon in Progressio's country programmes, constituted a sobering backdrop to the enthusiasm within the international development community, including Progressio's own, for work on governance. They contrasted too with the frequent expectations of relatively rapid civil society results on the part of aid donors whose discourse had been hailing 'good governance' as an indispensable prerequisite for development progress. Yet civil society expertise and action did not come necessarily ready-made or for free. Thanks to the flexibility of DfID's PPA, however, Progressio was able, as in other challenging settings, to adopt a more gradual approach in Yemen, allowing time for preparatory capacity development.

Laying foundations

Through its capacity-building initiative, Progressio made headway in helping civil society partners to tackle their organisational support needs as a building block for their involvement and collaboration in local advocacy initiatives.

Progressio's support, rather than involving one-off training events, involved the sustained technical input of DWs across a wide range of areas, which led to gradual improvements in organisational practices. Advice on various aspects of management, for example, saw more organisations introduce job descriptions, work plans and contracts, financial planning and reporting tools, as well as take institutional steps to review and clarify their organisational mission and strategy.

Similarly, the sharing of knowledge on current debates and methodological trends in international development, coupled with the organisation of international exchange visits (see Box), led to partner interest in new ideas and approaches. They included use of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and participatory action research to boost community voice and ownership in gathering information for partner initiatives and developing policy proposals for their advocacy.

Learning circles: from Somaliland to Yemen to Timor-Leste and back

In 2009, Progressio partners from Yemen visited Somaliland to learn about the progress being made by civil society organisations and networks and the approaches involved. In turn, Progressio organised an exchange between the main women's networks in Somaliland and Timor-Leste to share tips on effective advocacy and how to influence policy in favour of women's rights in conflict-affected environments. Work with and through networks had also become a feature of Progressio's work on its key programme themes in Timor-Leste.

Supported by Progressio, partners such as the Abu Musa Al Ashary, Wedyan and Al-Tadhamon associations carried out participatory planning exercises and raised communities' awareness of their rights as citizens and the responsibilities of local authorities, building the confidence and expertise they needed to engage. For its part, the Yemeni Environmental Protection Association mobilised communities and organised school awareness campaigns.

Of crucial importance and highly valued by partners was Progressio's support for their fundraising, with DWs organising training courses and providing mentoring on project design and donor proposal development. Progressio's facilitation and accompaniment of partner approaches to donors led to a significant increase in the number of projects securing funding. Covering a diverse range of issues of concern to partners and communities such as water and sanitation, disability and child rights, some involved community-driven advocacy, others involved promoting partnerships with government and the private sector.

Gains and results, stumbling blocks

The gains of Progressio's capacity support enabled CSO partners eventually to establish networks in Aden and Hodeidah and secure their official registration as they entered the next decade. Notwithstanding the continued need to further strengthen their identity, governance, strategy and member ownership, this was an advocacy achievement in its own right in the challenging circumstances of Yemen, as noted by [Joseph Omondi Aloo](#), a Kenyan DW attached to the Abu Musa association. He had helped to bring CSOs together in the northern port city of Hodeidah and, in addition, secured EU funding for an anti-discrimination project in nine of its districts on the rights of female prison inmates. He later went on to support an FCO-supported project combating discrimination against women in a placement with the Reach out Foundation and the Half Society organisation (see Chapter 5).

It was in Aden, however, that Progressio, now led by a new country representative, Abeer Al Absi, saw a promising sign of partner progress in rights-based influencing of local government. This was the Citizens' Participation in Local Governance project in Al Bureiqa district involving the Wedyah and Al-Tadhamon associations, supported by Nepali DW [Krishna Karkee](#). It also illustrated, as the second evaluation [report](#) observed, how Yemen's governance problems and deteriorating political situation could cause setbacks. Turning stronger CSO expertise and greater community awareness and influencing capacity into lasting change remained a big challenge.

Building on results of a 2007 PRA in Al Khaisha fishing village facilitated by Joy Jako-Salem Balane, a Filipino DW, Wedyah and Al-Tadhamon had organised further participatory planning workshops with communities. Then, with Progressio's advice and support from 2009, the partners helped the communities to develop and promote a citizens' local development plan reflecting the views of women and men and setting out gender-sensitive proposals and progress indicators. In a major achievement, it won the approval of the local council. Significant parts of it, however, were blocked by national government, which still held the purse strings and political power amid the incomplete process of decentralisation launched in 2002. Official resistance, it was alleged, had been due to the influence of business interests with competing plans for use of local land. Al Khaisha was situated along a prime stretch of beach and an attractive coast line.

Future directors of the council in Bureiqa district were reluctant to engage with the citizens' plan, in contrast with an earlier incumbent who had welcomed and supported the initiative's approval but was then removed from office. He was a centrally appointed rather than locally elected official. The question raised for Progressio and its partners was whether and how they could have better anticipated and addressed such 'political economy' dynamics, to use the jargon now in vogue in development circles, in particular through national advocacy to ensure central backing for the local plan. In 2010, Progressio organised a national seminar on official decentralisation policies and the nature of relations in practice between central and local government.

Yemen and the Arab Spring: security dangers and work on hold

At this time, however, the prospects in Yemen for national-local advocacy of the kind seen in Progressio's work in country programmes such as El Salvador or the Dominican Republic were starting to be thrown into question. Yemen, amid the regional upheaval of the Arab Spring, was descending into political crisis. Mass civil unrest throughout 2011 over issues such as corruption, youth unemployment, and over Ali Abdullah Saleh's plans for president-for-life constitutional changes, forced the decades-old leader out of office at the start of 2012.

The [security dangers](#) obliged Progressio in 2011 to evacuate DWs from local areas and eventually the whole country at this time, affecting its immediate plans with the Wedyan association to replicate the participatory planning experience in Daar Saad district. For most of the year, Wedyan, while undertaking analysis of the political and social situation with the involvement of young men and women, was unable to engage the local authorities and forced to put implementation plans on hold. Nonetheless, the fact that Wedyan was keen to replicate participatory planning in its work with smaller CSOs, provided some indication that Progressio's capacity support had been welcomed.

Timor-Leste: working for social peace and inclusion in a still traumatised society

Mounting political tensions also provided an alarming backdrop for Progressio's work on governance and participation in Timor-Leste, which held its first post-independence presidential and then parliamentary elections in mid-2007. The contests were deemed peaceful, free and fair by international observers. But they also formed an uneasy parenthesis as the unhealed wounds of Indonesian occupation exacerbated the tough challenges of nation-building.

Political clashes and social cleavages

In 2006, clashes between army and police and the eruption of factional violence had forced 155,000 people (15 per cent of the population) to flee their homes, leading the UN to dispatch security forces to restore order. Then, in 2008, another bout of unrest was sparked when a splinter group of the military critically injured President José Ramos-Horta and shot at Prime Minister José 'Xanana' Gusmão in a separate assassination attempt. Only in 2011 could the UN hand over operational control of the police to the Timorese authorities, before closing its overall peace-building mission at the end of 2012.

It was this crisis that lay behind Progressio's UK-based East Timor: Who Cares campaign, which urged the British government to support and mobilise international efforts to address its underlying causes (see Box earlier in this chapter). The 2009 campaign meshed with on-the-ground partnerships launched by Progressio in Timor-Leste at this crucial time to help the country tackle the divisions and grievances of its traumatised society.

Impunity for human rights abuses perpetrated during Jakarta's occupation and violent withdrawal was a major source of the tension. It was compounded by and added to rising public unhappiness at the slow pace of socio-economic improvements in people's lives under independence. International donor-supported moves to promote the rapid introduction of a more market-oriented economy had disrupted local modes of production and increased social disharmony as competition over economic opportunities intensified. Progressio worked with the economic justice monitoring group [La'o Hamutuk](#) and Caritas Dili, a socio-economic development foundation of the Catholic Church, to raise awareness of such problems.

Action on human rights impunity, justice and security

As the political crisis unfolded, Progressio provided vital support and advice for local partners pushing for effective action on the CAVR truth and reconciliation report, drawing on its previous expertise on 'transitional justice' in other countries described in Chapter 3. The partners' advocacy led Timor-Leste's parliament to agree to a body being set up to implement its recommendations, though the speed of its establishment and nature of its approach remained unclear, as Progressio's [Pathways to Justice](#) briefing drawing on 2009-11 research noted. The country's top political leaders seemed more inclined to downplay the need for full reckoning with the past in the interests of future relationship-building with Indonesia.

Meanwhile, with under-equipped and under-resourced judicial and police systems unable to handle high caseloads quickly and effectively, the routine difficulties of access to justice and public security had become a corrosive factor endangering Timor-Leste's peace. Vigilantes and militant groups were dispensing their own forms of justice in relation to citizens' disputes, communal conflicts and organised crime.

In response, Progressio's country programme, now led by country representative Tibor van Staveren, recruited and placed barrister Mark Hunter and human rights law expert Tamara Wiher with the [Judicial System Monitoring Program](#), a Timorese NGO human rights watchdog. The two DWs, as well as helping the JSMP to train police and community groups, promote human rights awareness among young people and support [victims'](#) access to justice, worked to bolster the organisation's pursuit of a stronger justice system overall. They did so by building the skills of its lawyers and supporting them to replicate their training on human rights standards and good legal practice with their Timorese peers.

Birth of a young nation: the Timorese Catholic Church played a vital role in East Timor's achievement of independence, but the legacy of Indonesian occupation meant the new nation was undergoing growing pains. CIIR's long solidarity with the role of the Timorese church was now complemented by the expansion of partnerships with a wide range of both civil society and state bodies during the Progressio period.

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link timor

News, analysis and action in support of justice for East Timor

No.56 October 2002

Double
Issue

No justice for East Timor's victims

The first trials of Indonesian officials charged with responsibility for atrocities in East Timor in 1999 have ended with six acquittals and only one verdict of guilty. The outcome provoked outrage among human rights groups around the world. Foreign governments and the UN high commissioner for human rights have also criticised the trial proceedings.

On 14 August, the former governor of East Timor, Abilio Soares, was convicted of failing to prevent the killing of more than 100 people and sentenced to three years' imprisonment. The next day, five Indonesian military, police and government officials accused of failing to prevent a massacre in Suai on 6 September 1999 were acquitted, as was the former Regional Police Commander, Brigadier General Timbul Silaen, who was responsible for security around the 1999 independence ballot. A UN enquiry found that at least 1,000 East Timorese were killed by pro-Indonesia militia groups that were organised and funded by the Indonesian military in an effort to influence the vote.

The trials are being conducted by an ad hoc human rights court set up in 2001. The court's mandate is limited to only a few cases in three of East Timor's 18 districts in April and September 1999. Eighteen military and civilian officials have been charged, but none of them are senior military figures.

Mary Robinson, the UN high commissioner for human rights, arriving in Dili on 23 August, said the results were 'not satisfying' in terms of international human rights standards. She said she would take up the issue with the UN Security Council.



The burnt out remains of Suai church, after the 1999 massacre

The European Union expressed concern at the Indonesian court's limited mandate and procedural shortcomings (see page 6), while a US State Department official expressed disappointment that 'prosecutors in these cases did not fully use the resources and evidence available to them from the United Nations.' The Bush administration is seeking to re-establish connections with the Indonesian military — disrupted as a result of the Indonesian-sponsored terror campaign in East Timor in 1999. At the beginning of August, US Secretary of State Colin Powell announced a \$50 million aid package for Indonesia, most of it for the police but also for military training in counterterrorism and military-civilian relations. The outcome of the trial makes it harder to justify this move.

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Violence against women: working to close the policy gaps

One crucial feature of JSMP's operation was its victims' support service, a legal aid unit supporting victims of domestic violence. Domestic violence was the country's top crime. Official surveys further revealed that at least a third of women aged 15 or over experienced some form of violence and that around 70 per cent of men viewed physical punishment of women as justified if they 'neglected' children or left home without male permission. Rape and sexual assault of women had been widespread and gone largely unpunished during Indonesia's occupation.

Due to the increased capacity and advocacy of partners supported by Progressio since the start of the decade, some progress had been made in promoting state commitment to women's participation and rights in Timor-Leste's emergence as a new nation. Indeed, the 2007 parliamentary elections saw a higher number of women MPs elected than in the 2001 transition-to-independence polls, and pressure for women's greater representation in politics saw introduction of a 30 per cent quota. Yet the grim statistics on violence against women threw into stark relief the deep-rooted challenges still needing to be addressed in society at large.

In response, women's rights networks stepped up their advocacy and achieved a significant victory in 2010 when the government promulgated a law criminalising domestic violence. Pressure for action involved the members of [REDE FETO](#), the umbrella body CIIR and Progressio had been nurturing since the run-up to national independence. In the second half of the decade, Progressio DWs such as Edna Tesoro and Napapan Der Kinderen had continued the process of supporting REDE FETO's ability to plan and coordinate work on women's political involvement, gender-based violence (GBV) and national policy and legislation. REDE FETO had played an active role in supporting women during Timor-Leste's political crises (see Box).

Responding to the crisis: women in need, women in action

With their offices burnt and looted and many staff displaced, CSOs were badly hit during the political violence of 2006, yet Progressio's partners responded to the impact of the crisis on communities as best they could. REDE FETO, with the support of Progressio, worked with its 18 member organisations to provide emergency relief and support for women in 56 internal displacement camps, linking up with the Ministry of Health, UN agencies and local NGOs.

The 2010 law, in principle, gave teeth to the national action plan Timor-Leste now had in place on GBV, and it complemented longer-term moves for change such as mandatory school education on the subject. The challenge at this stage was to enforce the law. Awareness-raising and capacity building were needed to overcome the gap between positive developments in the policy arena on gender equality and the harsh realities particularly afflicting women in everyday life.

REDE FETO's efforts to bridge this gap received the additional support of [Margaret Happy](#), a Ugandan DW. As well as providing advice on women's political representation, including the push for a quota, she advised the network on development of a GBV trainers manual as well as its 2011-15 strategic plan.

Strengthening local policy monitoring and national state-civil society dialogue

Timor-Leste's legacy of conflict and structural violence hindered the consolidation of peace, so supporting partners to tackle the problem was a priority for Progressio at this time. By the same token, creating the conditions for stronger democratic participation was crucial to future nation-building. Despite the challenges of fragile political circumstances, Progressio embarked on work with civil society partners to strengthen the public accountability and pro-poor responsiveness of decision-makers. Meeting the needs and furthering the rights of poorer citizens was a matter of both social justice and political cohesion.

Progressio's approach, aimed at promoting civil society capacity and strategy to engage policy-makers at both national and local levels in a mutually supportive and integrated

manner, was two-pronged. The first prong involved helping the Timor-Leste NGO Forum (FONGTIL) to strengthen its institutional structures as an umbrella body, so as to capitalise on its potential to influence national policy-making and maximise advocacy impact through its diverse membership of 450 local, national and international organisations. FONGTIL was one of several Timorese civil society organisations and networks to be supported jointly at this time by Progressio-recruited Maria Ladaga, a Filipino DW specialising in institutional strengthening.

In tandem, Progressio launched a citizen engagement initiative with FONGTIL members at a local level, in response to incipient official moves to promote decentralisation and overcome the absence of the state from the lives of most of the population. The government had experimented with local assemblies in eight of Timor-Leste's 13 districts and a 2009 law envisaged a single municipal authority for each, with the prospect of elections. The state had also started to make some resources available for local small-scale infrastructure projects. Pressure was rising for more of Timor-Leste's revenues from oil – now becoming country's dominant source of income – to be spent on social development.

Gautam Biswas was one of several DWs to support the decentralisation and citizen engagement initiative, which started with a pilot project with a FONGTIL-affiliated civil society consortium in Ermera district. It scrutinised delivery of several official public works projects on health, water and community buildings, using research and monitoring tools that Progressio had developed with the consortium's NGOs and CBOs and also provided training on. The experience led the FONGTIL members in Ermera to plan further use of the tools and skills they had acquired. They developed a strategy to sustain the monitoring in existing local areas and replicate it more widely within the district, as Chapter 5 describes.

Nationally, FONGTIL, thanks partly to Progressio's support, went on to negotiate a formal agreement with the Ministry of State Administration and Territorial Management on monitoring the country's overall process of decentralisation. It offered the potential to institutionalise state-civil society dialogue on the issues at stake and lay the basis for a more transparent and accountable working relationship between the two parties.

Towards a sustainable environment

Hungry for change in a changing climate

CIIR's early overseas work with peasant federations and rural development NGOs, promoting small-scale agriculture as the mainstay of rural livelihoods strategies, came to encompass an increasingly important focus on environmental sustainability from the early 1990s. As described in Chapter 3, this emphasis was shown by the involvement of ICD country programmes in environmental protection and education. The initiatives involved, instead of having a narrow concern with conservation, saw environmental degradation as a cause and effect of poverty in rural areas as well as the consequence of unequal social, economic and political power relations.

A social justice approach to environmental protection

Poor people, reliant on natural resources such as soil, land, water and forests for work and income, food, energy and health, had a vital interest in their protection. But they sometimes had little choice but to over-exploit them, particularly in the absence of adequate official support for their livelihoods. Governments, moreover, were often more inclined to frame their policies for agricultural 'modernisation' and economic development around approaches favoured by powerful national and international business groups. Their practices frequently involved the damage, depletion and people's loss of control of local resources as well as repression and human rights abuses.

Progressio's people-centred approach to the environment-poverty relationship provided a cohesive focus for the organisation to pull together the diverse strands of work with partners on the ground. In turn, such cohesion provided a spur for the organisation to complete the integration of its programme and policy work as it transitioned from CIIR to Progressio. Indeed, grassroots work on sustainable environment issues became the source of most of Progressio's international policy, advocacy and campaigning initiatives during the second half of the decade.

In tandem, Progressio's portfolio of work on the theme increasingly involved engagement on climate change. This was now emerging as an overriding threat to the livelihoods of small farmers and rural communities, who were already far more vulnerable to natural

disasters and economic and political shocks. Such vulnerability, however, also led communities to develop their own forms of social and environmental resilience, and it was the value of their long experience and learning that Progressio sought to enhance through its support for partners as they battled against [climate change](#).

Agro-ecology: helping to forge the future of food

Promoting agro-ecology was now a fully-fledged characteristic of Progressio's support for partner organisations working with small farmers and linking poor rural and urban communities. This work now also featured strongly in country programmes in Africa and the Middle East and was getting underway in Timor-Leste. Meanwhile, programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean continued to host the largest and most diverse range of such projects.

The initiatives, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, benefited from the continued sharing of expertise between countries, including through regional exchange visits between partners and DWs. Numerous DWs, having finished assignments on one country, also took up a placements with partners in other country programmes as part of their enduring commitment to sharing expertise internationally.

An alternative vision: growing together

Agro-ecology was not just about producing healthy, nutritious food without relying on costly or damaging fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides that needed to be bought from companies and exposed small-scale farmers to risks of debt. It involved a broader vision. This was based on harmony with nature, boosting local culture, valuing traditional knowledge and practices and promoting small-scale farmers' access to and control of productive resources. As such, it could strengthen the local economy and improve poor people's living standards.

Agro-ecology's holistic approach, comprising economic, social, cultural and environmental elements, contrasted with large-scale commercial agriculture. Agribusiness was more inclined to view food as a profitable commodity like any other and the eco-systems required for its production as mere inputs.

"Years ago, organisations just bought and implemented the Western vision of the world. Our strategies for managing natural resources rely on our indigenous knowledge, not just the Western vision... Indigenous culture believes that the things in nature – mountains, trees, lakes – are people. People should not think they are apart from nature. People belong to nature and nature belongs to them."

Roberto Conejo, president of CEPCU, quoted in [Interact](#), winter 2005/06

Promoting traditional knowledge

The alternative philosophy of agro-ecology assumed additional cultural and spiritual significance for indigenous peoples, as summed up by the Centre for Pluricultural Studies (CEPCU), one of Progressio's Ecuadorean partners involved in agro-ecology and environmental education (see Quote).

CEPCU, an NGO led by indigenous professionals, combined promotion of local food security with protection of biodiversity and indigenous knowledge and culture. It helped small-scale producers in Ecuador's northern highlands to strengthen their production techniques and set up farmers' markets in towns in order to sell cheaper and higher-quality produce directly to consumers. As in Peru with its equally diverse ethnic and racial identity, an intentional by-product of this approach supported by Progressio was to encourage recognition of indigenous communities and foster inter-cultural bonds.

Rural-urban links

CEPCU's work, supported by DWs such as Rocío Sotelo López from Peru and [Fernando Ruiz](#) from Colombia, was part of a growing movement in Ecuador to build rural-urban links and circumvent marketing intermediaries keen to pay lower prices to producers. It involved the creation of producer and consumer networks. They ran schemes such as community 'food baskets' and promoted a common rural-urban interest in consumption of local produce rather than foodstuffs imported from large, well subsidised overseas producers taking advantage of the easier market access afforded by trade liberalisation.

This movement, supported by other Ecuadorean partners such as [CEA](#), the national agro-ecology network, and the Cuenca-based Agro-Ecology Network of the South, was further enhanced by lobbying and campaigning for greater official backing for agro-ecology initiatives and approaches. Such influencing, as shown earlier in describing the links between Progressio's work on participatory governance and protecting natural resources in promoting local rural development in its Central American country programmes, included targeting municipalities.

Progressio, furthermore, continued its efforts to support urban-based food self-sufficiency initiatives adopting organic production techniques. This was the case in Nicaragua and also Honduras where 700 [women](#) belonging to the Mother Earth Movement in Tegucigalpa grew vegetables for their families and communities. They used recycled rainwater to irrigate their crops in the face of the capital's severe water shortages.

Seeds of self-reliance: from practical promotion to political defence

Agro-ecology's promotion of self-reliance, as well as involving grassroots practice, had important political dimensions. Indeed, another significant initiative of Ecuadorean partners was their support for a national network of seed-saving centres to collect and distribute seeds and also recover and share knowledge on seed-saving. Partners included CEA where Progressio placed Myriam Salazar, a biodiversity expert from Colombia, who had earlier supported Progressio's sustainable agriculture partnerships in the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

Indigenous seeds adapted well to local conditions and were more resilient to extreme weather. Yet the age-old Andean rural practice of saving and sharing traditional seeds, as elsewhere in the world, was under threat. The commercial seed market, controlled by handful of global companies (also pursuing highly restrictive controls on their use via international trade rules protecting intellectual property rights), was strengthening its foothold. Progressio research in Zimbabwe on seed-saving and climate change published in 2009, for example, found that policies and laws did not protect the rights of smallholder farmers to their plant genetic resources. They were biased in favour of commercial seed production companies instead.

Such trends now included the additional threats arising from the increasingly aggressive promotion of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). In 2005-08 Progressio played a leading role in the UK in supporting successful global campaigning against so-called '[terminator technology](#)' developed by the multinational seed and agro-chemical industry with the support of the US government. Plans were being made to bring GM 'suicide seeds' to the market (see Box)

Deadly harvest?

Progressio urges the UK and EU to back a global 'no' to suicide seeds

In 2006 and 2008, meetings of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity respectively decided in Brazil and confirmed in Bonn that a 2000 CBD moratorium on 'terminator technology' – the genetic modification of plants to make them produce sterile seeds – should be upheld. This was despite a major push by the governments of Australia, New Zealand and Canada, backed by the UK, to allow case-by-case assessment and 'field-testing'. Progressio played its own important part in protecting the moratorium.

In 2006, Progressio, as chair of a UK working group on terminator technology, persuaded 224 British MPs to urge the UK government to defend the moratorium. In 2008, some 2,000 supporters, who had been mobilised with the support of information leaflets and other campaign materials, sent postcards to the UK government. Another 500 made Valentine's Day appeals to the EU's environment commissioner, asking him to show his 'love for farmers'. He recognised that the force of public opinion had outweighed the supposed evidence of 'scientific research'.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) had earlier spoken out against GM terminator technology, and Progressio set out the moral and theological case against it through the 2008 publication [Unless the Grain of Wheat Shall Die](#). It also produced a briefing to target policy-makers, [Against the Grain: Why Governments Must Defend the Right to Germinate against the Biotech's Push to Terminate](#).



WARNING: TERMINATOR SEEDS MAY
EXACERBATE WORLD *HUNGER* AND *POVERTY*
IF RELEASED INTO THE ENVIRONMENT!

SAY NO **TO TERMINATOR SEEDS**



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Certified success: scaling up to reach wider markets

Though concerned with the local production and consumption of food, and retaining local control of food systems, partner initiatives supported by Progressio sought to scale up recognition and adoption of agro-ecology in the context of a rapidly expanding fair-trade movement and growing consumer interest in organic produce. Partners aimed not just to reach and strengthen their position in domestic markets but where possible tap into international niches for speciality products too. Progressio DWs supported partners' efforts to carry out joint marketing strategies and sometimes explore opportunities for positive partnerships with business groups and international traders.

Honduras and the Dominican Republic: building on gains

In Honduras, for example, Progressio's support for partner organisation LIDERS, where development worker José Ramos advised on strengthening the quality and marketing of organic fair trade coffee, enabled local farmers to obtain higher prices and increase exports. This led to income gains which boosted local living standards and all round investment in the community. With Progressio's encouragement, LIDERS highlighted the benefits, and the importance of international backing, of fair trade in a 2006-07 UK parliamentary inquiry on the subject held by the IDC.

Similarly, in the northern mountains of the Dominican Republic, Progressio built on its earlier success in helping the COOPSOL agro-ecological cooperative gain organic and fair-trade certification for its coffee and cocoa (see Chapter 3). The same was achieved with coffee producers from the Agro-Ecological Farming Union of Salcedo (JUNACAS), a member of the peasant federation CAFESA.

This further success, which received sustainability awards from the Brugal rum company and Ford, was the result of longstanding Progressio partnership with the three producer organisations. Recent Progressio support had included that of marketing specialist Manuel Pereira and rural development adviser [José Antonio Jiménez Vélez](#). To sustain the partners' progress, the latter, an Ecuadorean DW, helped to train and form a joint group of recognised agro-ecology promoters. They undertook replication activities with other rural producers and communities in order to strengthen food production and community development based on environmental sustainability.

Going organic in Malawi and Zimbabwe

Meanwhile, in its new country programme in Malawi, Progressio's [championing](#) of agro-ecology quickly made progress. Progressio helped the Malawi Organic Growers Association ([MOGA](#)), grouping 3,200 members nationwide, to work with the country's official standards bureau on standards for organic production to be adopted in law planned for 2010. The absence of recognised standards was a bottleneck for the scaling up of markets for organic produce.

In a break with the previous orthodoxy of international donors discouraging developing country subvention of farmers, the Malawian government had introduced a much debated chemical fertiliser subsidy programme. MOGA, however, viewed organic production, involving natural inputs such as manure, leaves and ash, as an environmentally and financially more sustainable alternative for Malawi. It would increase and diversify production while replenishing soils amid the threats of drought and climate change.

MOGA was supported by Tirifavi Shuro, a Progressio DW who helped it to develop verification, inspection, certification and farmer accreditation systems, as well as by [Innocent Bidong Ogaba](#), a marketing specialist from Uganda, who went on to advise [Environment Africa](#) on promoting sustainable agriculture in the country. He worked in the central Salima district in central Malawi, one of the areas in the country most prone to drought and floods. As well as promoting beekeeping and honey production, he encouraged small-scale farmers to grow [a wide range of vegetables](#) and drought-resistant, marketable crops such as sorghum as well as to adopt agro-forestry, a system in which trees and shrubs are planted around or among crops or on pasture to preserve the land or enhance its productivity. The planting of hardy moringa, neem and jatropha on a local sustainable scale, as well as stopping soil erosion and restoring land, provided additional sources of nutrition such as edible leaves. The crops also yielded [by-products](#) such as seed oils that could be used for producing fuel, fertilisers and soap.

Progressio also partnered [Environment Africa](#) in Zimbabwe. [Melody Kwanayi](#) helped EA staff and government extension workers pilot and promote agro-ecological production methods in their work with rural communities, including through farmer field schools to promote and replicate learning by doing. EA's Progressio supported work with women farmers in [Wedza](#) district in Mashonaland East province helped them to triple their income, which put them in a stronger position to feed their families and afford school fees for their children.



Meanwhile, another DW, Angeline Chamunorwa-Mujeyi, worked with EA to help farmers to develop new products and reach higher-value markets. Farmers near the market town of Chingondo, hitherto struggling to sell their honey because of consumer health and safety worries, adopted hygienic packaging and became better able to market their Chingondo honey in eponymously labelled jars.

Branching out through agro-forestry: trees are more than timber

Agro-forestry techniques had become a feature of Progressio's support for agro-ecology elsewhere. Trees – regarded by powerful agricultural interests as timber to be extracted or as a nuisance to be cleared to make way for cash-crop monoculture or ranching – held much greater value for partners promoting a symbiotic relationship between better livelihoods and environmental protection. Trees protected water sources, kept soils moist and fertile and prevented floods and land collapse. They also provided shelter, safeguarded biodiversity and, in combatting climate change, stored carbon.

In Honduras, for example, [Marvin Zavala Ruiz](#), a Nicaraguan agronomist recruited for his past experience of supporting [UNAG](#)'s farmer-to-farmer programme in his home country, worked with the Pico Bonito National Park Foundation ([FUPNAPIB](#)) to help small farmers convert from conventional agriculture to agro-ecology, including agro-forestry techniques. He helped them to introduce quick-growing *guamo* trees to form natural terraces along the contours of the hillsides of Honduras' best known national park in the north.

As a result, organic production of food staples and cocoa increased. This not only boosted local food security and generated additional income through the sale of surpluses on the market; it also produced conservation gains. Use of costly chemicals fell, and 10 local varieties of maize, beans and rice were rescued from the human-made threats to biodiversity [concerning Progressio-supported farmers](#).

Meanwhile, in the northern border area joining the Dominican Republic and Haiti, Progressio, as part of its bi-national response to the development challenges facing each country in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake, stepped up work with partner organisations to promote reforestation and agro-forestry as an integral dimension of their support for farmers and communities adopting agro-ecological farming.

The work, described in fuller detail in Chapter 5, included supporting the setting up of family gardens and tree plant nurseries as well as the introduction of eco-stoves using organic waste to help communities reduce their consumption of charcoal. This was crucially relevant in Haiti where poverty and a lack of available and affordable sources of energy forced people to cut down trees and burn the branches and logs in order to produce charcoal for fuel. Their reliance on charcoal was a major cause of devastating deforestation. It had degraded land and made Haiti even more vulnerable to the effects of 'natural' disasters and climate change as soils were eroded and unable to retain vital water. Charcoal was an equally burning issue in other country programmes such as Somaliland and Timor-Leste, as shown below.

Thirsty for progress: seeking a new course on water and land

Progressio's promotion of agro-ecology with partners was now firmly part of a multi-dimensional approach in which pursuit of rural livelihoods based on social justice and the sustainable management of natural resources was connected with the organisation's contribution to the battle against [climate change](#).

For Progressio and its partners, small-scale farmers were crucial not only to agricultural development as a means of reducing poverty but also to safeguarding the future of food in an increasingly uncertain climate and production conditions. Progressio called for their voices to be heard as policy-makers struggled to provide an effective global response to the 2007-08 food price crises (see Box).

But if small-scale farmers were vital to solutions, they equally bore the brunt of mounting problems. Many lived on land prone to extreme weather – increasingly exacerbated by climate change – and were finding it harder and harder to grow crops. Centuries-old production cycles and patterns were being disrupted by unpredictable rainfall and changing seasons, hitting yields. Floods, droughts and water scarcity were having a devastating effect.

Moreover, amid the threat of fiercer competition for access to natural resources undergoing depletion, small agricultural producers looked set to lose out against agribusinesses.

Fiddling in Rome as the world burns? Progressio backs calls for a new approach on food and agriculture

In 2009, Progressio joined others in calling for policy-makers to put the world's half a billion small-scale farms at the heart of strategies to tackle future world food crises, disseminating a policy report to target November's Rome food security summit held by the FAO. The event followed the 2007-08 food price rises pushing the number of under-nourished people above the 1 billion mark for the first time.

The report, *Fertile Ground*, urged governments to reverse decades of declining official international aid for agriculture. Such aid, and public financing in the South, had neglected small-scale farming and tended to leave the food challenge mainly in the hands of 'modern' large-scale intensive agriculture occupying much of the world's prime agricultural land. Yet the productivity of small-scale farmers on marginal lands, the majority women, was often higher in land-ratio terms. Far from 'backward', they fed a third of world's population.

Evidence for an agricultural revolution

The report stressed the urgent need for the UK and other international donors, as well as governments in the South, to redirect and increase their investment in small-scale agriculture and provide effective policy and technical support. Drawing on evidence from Progressio's work in Ecuador and Malawi, it supported calls for an agricultural revolution based on agro-ecology, as recommended by the 2008 IAASTD report, stating that such an approach would be far more effective in tackling the causes and effects of climate change.

Fertile Ground built on earlier contributions such as Progressio's 2006 Comment, *Food Sovereignty: The People's Alternative* written by [Ernesto Cañada](#), a Spanish DW involved in communications initiatives in Nicaragua supporting eco-tourism and rural development. The new report acquired topical relevance amid the so-called triple crisis of food, fuel and finance.

Smallholders could be barred from accessing water for irrigation and their water pumps were often no match for big farms whose intensive use of water endangered aquifers. Progressio's DWs and partners witnessed the seriousness of such problems on the ground

Peruvian asparagus: stopping 'virtual water' leaving people high and dry

In climate-affected Peru, for example, agricultural expansion in the coastal Ica region south of Lima, epicentre of booming production of asparagus for export, had led to surging irrigation needs. With Ica's own water sources drying up as a result of poor management and weak regulation, demand was being met by redirecting water from highland Huancavelica, one of Peru's poorest regions most vulnerable to climate change. The move damaged small and medium-scale farmers and worsened the food security problems of its mostly indigenous rural communities.

Progressio, aware of the need for international collaboration to complement the local policy action required to address the problem, undertook a joint research project with Peruvian rural development partner [CEPES](#) and Water Witness International. It assessed the water security and water access effects of asparagus exports and tracked the supply chain responsibilities of the actors involved.

The *Drop by Drop* report: making a splash

Progressio turned the research findings into a 2010 report, *Drop by Drop*, which sparked significant media coverage, including a [two-page spread](#) in the UK's internationally read *Guardian* newspaper. As a result, UK supermarkets such as Marks & Spencer, Tesco and Sainsbury's supplier Barfoot's showed interest in assessing the 'water footprint' involved in sourcing Peruvian asparagus.

Drop by Drop also called for an effective global standard on the sustainable management of water in poor countries, stressing the need for policy-makers and businesses to take account of the hidden 'virtual water' costs of goods and services. It questioned whether the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the World Bank's private sector lending arm, had exercised water due diligence in supporting export-led agricultural investment in Peru.

This international spotlight on Peru, aided by a [Spanish summary](#) of *Drop by Drop*, lent weight to and derived legitimacy from Progressio's partnership with CEPES on the ground. Progressio had recruited a DW, [Cindy Krose](#), to help the organisation raise awareness of its local work with farmers and communities in Huancavelica on sustainable agriculture, environmental protection and adaptation to climatic extremes as well as to strengthen its local and national advocacy on the policy issues at stake. A communications specialist, she helped CEPES highlight the value of [traditional water harvesting techniques](#) and to produce wider public awareness outputs. In one [video](#), women and men in Huancavelica talked about the gendered impacts of climate change on food production and their lives.



How Peru's wells are being sucked dry by British love of asparagus

Industrial-scale production risks water tragedy, charity warns

● **UK relies on 'virtual' water from drought-prone countries, says report**

● **Basic countries to absorb 42% of water demand by 2030**



▲ A worker weighs asparagus at a processing plant in the Peruvian city of Ica. Photograph: Pilar Olivares/Reuters

Asparagus grown in **Peru** and sold in the UK is commonly held up as a symbol of unacceptable food miles, but a report has raised an even more urgent problem: its water footprint.

The study, by the development charity Progressio, has found that industrial production of asparagus in Peru's Ica valley is depleting the area's water resources so fast that smaller farmers and local families are finding wells running dry. **Water** to the main city in the valley is also under threat, it says. It warns that the export of the luxury vegetable, much of it to British supermarkets, is unsustainable in its current form.

The Ica Valley is a desert area in the Andes and one of the driest places on earth. The asparagus beds developed in the last decade require constant irrigation, with the result that the local water table has plummeted since 2002 when extraction overtook replenishment. In some places it has fallen by eight metres each year, one of the fastest rates of aquifer depletion in the world.

Andean action: from Peru to a final push in Ecuador on water and natural resources

The initiative on asparagus was part of a wider portfolio of initiatives in Peru on water, land and climate change supported by DWs. Indeed, one of authors of the *Drop By Drop* report, Spanish environmental scientist Bruno Güemes Delgado, had helped CEPES carry out participatory research on water resources elsewhere. Consultations on the information generated helped CEPES to promote the creation of local multi-stakeholder environmental committees in the Lima region's arid Huaral province where Colombian DW Jaime Torres, an ICT specialist, had also worked earlier with the partner. He helped it to pioneer the creation of an open-source computerised database and information management system to support valley farmers reliant on mountain water.

The new system, accessible in telecentres whose establishment Peru had been promoted by CIIR's ICD programme (see Chapter 3), simplified and speeded up the collection, updating and dissemination of information on water availability, water needs, crops, weather and markets. It was a huge advance on the cumbersome paper-and-pencil system previously administered by the Chancay-Huaral irrigation council.

Much further north, in Cajamarca, a poor region whose water resources continued to be threatened by conflictive mining projects of the kind described earlier, two Progressio partners were involved in developing a regional biodiversity strategy. Sonja Bleeker, helped the **IDEAS** centre to build a gender perspective into its inter-cultural work with rural communities on food security and natural resource management. Laura Lucio, meanwhile, supported the efforts of Rural Educational Services (**SER**), a citizens' rights NGO, to promote the integration of environmental issues in an economic zoning plan for Cajamarca and legislation on territorial planning and land use.

Linking support for highland communities with national advocacy

In neighbouring Ecuador, Progressio, complementing its promotion of agro-ecology with CEA and CEPUC, launched a three-year project with partners to enable 37 poor highland communities across four provinces to promote socially fair and environmentally sustainable systems for managing water, land and seeds. Funded by the Big Lottery, this was one of Progressio's last main initiatives in Ecuador before closure of its country programme.

One of the project's main partners on water was Ecuador's Training Consortium for the Management of Renewable Natural Resources (**CAMAREN**), which grouped public universities and NGOs, where Progressio placed two DWs as part of a two-pronged approach. While Guillaume Juan helped CAMAREN members to strengthen their capacity to support grassroots management of water resources, German Gálvez focused on providing advice for their development of policies on community access to water and national advocacy on water as a human right. The partners' efforts played an important part in Ecuador becoming one of the first countries to enshrine the right to water in its constitution – as part of the new charter Correa's government had introduced in 2008. In the years ahead, however, the provision would face risks of legislative dilution enabling privatisation.

Supporting local water management committees and struggles for water legislation

The battle in Ecuador to protect water resources and guarantee fair public access through law would thus be a long-run affair. It echoed the case of El Salvador described earlier. The challenge was even tougher in neighbouring Honduras where a Spanish DW, Juan José Amate Ruiz, a water management professional, worked with the Environmental Movement of Campamento (CAM) to develop policy proposals on water rights.

Dangerous concessions in Honduras

Honduras did approve a new national water law in 2009, but this was in the repressive aftermath of the coup against the Zelaya administration, the stark implications of which were quickly seen. The new transitional government, without parliamentary debate or public consultation and vigorously opposed by civil society, gave immediate go-ahead to hydro-power, mining, forestry and agribusiness concessions jeopardising a third of the country's water resources.

Such extractive projects posed acute threats to natural resources and human rights defenders. It also created testing circumstances for Progressio to harness the possible benefits of legislation to its support for partners promoting grassroots awareness and action on protecting water resources. A Colombian DW, Álvaro Rivas Guzmán, a natural

Organising communities to save a lake eco-system in El Salvador

In El Salvador, the work of the Maquilishuatl Foundation (FUMA), supported during the decade by [Hans Joel Bernal](#), a German-Colombian DW, enabled community organisations to organise themselves in environmental and advocacy networks to protect the Olomega lagoon eco-system in the far south east of the country. The lake and surrounding groundwater sources were heavily polluted, due to farming fertiliser run-off and the excrement of cattle, and this was damaging local fishing and causing widespread illness and even death. The communities' mobilisation, as well as pressuring Olomega's mayor and the environment ministry to support interim solutions such as digging deeper wells to source water, won a major victory in 2010 when the lake was declared a wetland of international importance. This status provided leverage for securing finance and policy support for the recovery, protection, preservation and sustainable management of the lake, benefiting the 18,000 people living around it.

resources expert, had been working with [ASONOG](#), Honduras' NGO umbrella body, to support the creation of local water management committees.

Supporting the emergence, capacity and official recognition of local water management committees had now become a cross-cutting aim in Progressio's work with sustainable environment partners in its country programmes in Central and South America. Despite the frequent constraints of power politics and vested interests, local action showed that it could achieve positive results (see Box above).

Getting the message across on bottom-up water solutions

Communication, awareness-raising and sharing lessons was important for strengthening practice and getting messages across on water. Progressio capitalised on the sustainable water management and agro-ecology experience of DW Fernando Ruiz in Ecuador by supporting his continued contribution elsewhere. In Honduras, he set up with Caritas a radio programme on environmental sustainability which reached a mass audience in the country's western departments. In El Salvador, Progressio's work with the ecological coalition [UNES](#) extended to using communication to involve [children in action](#) against climate change.

The range and depth of Progressio's work with partners struggling at local community and national policy levels to address water challenges put the organisation in a strong position to work with them to push for strategic action on water in global climate change negotiations (see Box below). It advocated an approach based on the grassroots proposals of people rather than the top-down solutions of negotiators relatively disconnected from the pressing realities of the issues at stake.

Progressio's 'Just Add Water' campaign to include water in a climate change agreement

Progressio's preparations for the Copenhagen climate change summit culminated in the summer of 2009 with its '[Just Add Water](#)' campaign. It pushed for water problems – alarmingly neglected so far in negotiations, despite changes in rainfall, droughts and floods – to be made a critical issue in a successor agreement to the Kyoto Protocol. The campaign, drawing on Progressio's grassroots experience overseas, saw 2,340 people write to their MPs, urging the UK and other governments to prioritise the water sector in funding for climate change adaptation. It received good media coverage, including a letter from partner organisations published in *The Guardian*.

Bringing Southern voices to the negotiating table

Progressio, with the support of DfID, Irish Aid and the Big Lottery, worked to ensure that Southern voices were heard. It brought the [leader](#) of Salvadorean partner UNES to lobby pre-summit negotiations in Barcelona and then supported [Fabiola Quishpe](#), an indigenous farmer and community leader from Ecuador, [to do likewise](#) at the Copenhagen summit itself. They expressed [disappointment](#) at the weak outcomes of the Copenhagen talks, which hindered progress on water at the time. Still, [Innocent Ogaba](#), a DW supporting sustainable agriculture and action against climate change in Malawi, who attended the follow-up 2010 talks in Bonn on behalf of Progressio and its partners, retained hope of progress.

Signs of a breakthrough

Indeed, continued pressure meant that [signs of a breakthrough](#) on water were achieved in late 2010 when the UNFCCC climate talks held at the Cancún conference in Mexico agreed to place the subject on the agenda of the next meeting of the IPCC climate science evidence body. The move followed a call by six countries for water to be addressed. They included Ecuador and El Salvador, both the target of lobbying by Progressio-supported partners.

The leader of UNES, for instance, had been invited to join El Salvador's official delegation at Cancún in the wake of a mass mobilisation campaign for climate justice in the country. UNES, supported by Progressio DW [Maggie von Vogt](#), a communications professional from the United States, had held a series of community-based policy consultations which led to a set of proposals being presented to the government after an October march in San Salvador. UNES's grassroots action and national mobilisation was part of a year-long process held by the [Mesoamerican Climate Justice Campaign](#). A Honduras-based DW, Anne Bordatto, also provided regional support to Progressio's climate change partners in Central America.



Working to halt the vicious cycle of deforestation

Curbing deforestation became a vital dimension of Progressio's work during this period. Trees, after all, held things together. They were the source of the agro-forestry forming part of Progressio's support for agro-ecology, and they were essential to Progressio's support for livelihoods involving socially fair and environmentally sustainable natural resource management in a climate-affected world. Indeed, trees provided critical protection for soil and land through water retention and reduced carbon emissions, thus tackling the causes and effects of climate change. Deforestation accounted for around a fifth of global greenhouse gases.

Fuelling alternatives in Somaliland and Timor-Leste

Deforestation, however, was tearing things apart, as seen in Somaliland where its interplay as a cause and effect of climate change, including the onset of constant rather than frequent droughts, was leading to a [vicious cycle](#) of environmental and livelihood problems.

Charcoal dangers

Water scarcity and the lack of water storage systems meant that pastoral communities were finding it more and more difficult to survive through traditional livelihoods such as breeding and selling livestock, exacerbating existing problems such as restrictions placed on their exports by trade partners in the Middle East. To earn income, they were resorting, as was rural youth in the absence of local job opportunities, to producing charcoal as a source of cheap and readily available fuel for heat and cooking. In addition, wealthier groups with trucks were involved in illegal production and trading, itself disrupting the livelihoods of local herdsman. As in Haiti, charcoal was the main driver of deforestation, damaging soils and land fertility as tree-enabled water retention was impaired and caused hard ground run-off on the sparser occasions it rained. The situation also particularly affected women, who, as carers of animals, faced the inconvenience and dangers of having to walk further for water.

Charcoal, along with over-grazing, threatened to denude Somaliland of tree and plant cover and was an issue of major concern and action for the NGO [Candlelight for Health, Education and Environment](#) with which Progressio formed a partnership from 2010.

Meanwhile, over the previous two years, Progressio had sought to address water and soil conservation through its continued partnership with [Amoud University](#) whose library services it had previously helped to develop (see Chapter 3). It placed two DWs, Teklu Erkossa, an Ethiopian agronomist specialising in conservation, and Ingrid Hartmann, with its faculty of agriculture and environment. They helped the faculty – the first to exist in Somaliland and Somalia – to set up a pilot project to test the suitability of deep-root vetiver grass for stabilising soil and replenishing groundwater and as a raw material for thatching houses, pest control and medicinal purposes.

The felling of native trees was also a problem in Timor-Leste as people's need for cooking fuel and income generation combined with the impact of inadequate policy, regulation and law enforcement on natural resource management. In response, a Progressio DW, Nick Molyneux, worked with the [Haburas Foundation](#), a [member](#) of Friends of the Earth International, to develop and win AusAid funding for a successful alternative fuel project. This involved the production of bio-briquettes from coffee and rice husks and recycled paper. He provided training for groups involved in the collection, production, sales and marketing process involved. A marine biologist from Australia, he also advised Haburas on protection of mangrove forests vital to coastal eco-systems and fishing livelihoods.

Felling by force and fighting for the force of law

Whatever the role and responsibilities of rural communities in causing and tackling the deforestation affecting their environment and livelihoods, more often than not the damage arose as a result of the predatory exploitation of legal and illegal business interests also causing human rights abuses. This was another vicious cycle. Work to help prevent the illegal logging of timber and protect communities' forest resources became an important focus of work in several Progressio country programmes during this period, building on existing partnerships and partner interests.

Ecuador and Honduras: logging serious problems

In Ecuador, Germán Luebert, a Chilean DW with experience of citizens' rights advocacy and expertise in geo-referencing information systems, helped the environmentalist NGO

[Acción Ecológica](#) and the [Chankuap Foundation](#), a community development organisation concerned with indigenous rights originally set up by Salesian priests, to set up a database and information systems. Their purpose was to map and monitor illegal logging in the country's Amazon region and strengthen the partners' national and international advocacy on the damage being caused.

Meanwhile, in Honduras, interest in Progressio stepping up support for work on illegal logging had risen sharply during the decade, not least because of growing awareness of the need for sustainable natural resource management in the wake of 1998 Hurricane Mitch (and Progressio's environmental education response to it) described in Chapter 3.

A legal reference guide for action on forestry, water and climate change

In cooperation with the global law firm Mayer Brown International, Progressio published a [Climate Change Legal Reference Guide](#) in 2010 outlining key laws on forestry and water in the context of climate change. The guide, also disseminated in [Spanish](#), aimed to help organisations working on climate change to understand the issues from the perspective of international environmental law.

Interested parties included the Olancho Environmentalist Movement (MAO) involving church leaders and civil society and environmental activists from Olancho department, Honduras' main timber extraction area where logging was having devastating effects on the environment and people. According to MAO, half of the 52 water currents emanating from the department's La Muralla national park had dried up by 2007, while the anti-corruption NGO Global Witness and others estimated that over half of the country's forests had been destroyed over the previous 30 years. Concession permits had been granted illegitimately or without necessary regulatory requirements being fulfilled, affecting the 2 million people living in wooded areas.

From signs of positive political action to renewed violence and threats

In response, a DW, Francisco Hernández Montoya, who worked first with MAO and then with Progressio's related partner CAM based in the municipality of Campamento, helped the organisations draft proposals to influence discussions of a new Forestry Law. Drawing on analysis of legislation in Ecuador, Bolivia and Colombia, they sought to capitalise on the Zelaya administration's greater official openness to addressing deforestation. They lobbied for the new law to have clearer offences and penalties for infringements as well as effective oversight and enforcement.

With the support of Progressio, the partners achieved a major step forward in September 2007 when the national congress passed a new forestry law which entered into force in 2008. The political turmoil of the 2009 coup, however, as with the new water law targeted by CAM, disrupted its application. The new government only agreed specific implementation plans for the new forestry law at the end of 2010, and by then the crackdown had led to a renewed vicious cycle of repression of human rights and environmental defenders. Partners working on logging had already faced intimidation, violence and murders for their previous efforts, so application of the law, requiring state commitment and local civil society involvement in oversight, was an even tougher and more dangerous challenge amid official hostility to citizens' organisation and participation.

Using Southern evidence to bring effective international pressure to bear

The extremely dangerous circumstances led Progressio to explore alternative forms of support for partners that would also avoid placing DWs at risk on the ground. Following a scoping study, it was decided to gather case studies and testimonies on the social impact of logging with partners in Honduras and Ecuador, with the aim of furnishing Southern evidence and legitimacy for an international advocacy campaign by Progressio. It turned out to be a highly successful one.

The campaign, undertaken from 2008 to 2011, saw Progressio exercise its own policy leadership and lend distinctive weight to wider INGO calls, including from the World Wide Fund for Nature, Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, for the UK and EU to stop traders sourcing and selling illegally harvested timber and derived timber products in their markets. The [pressure for change](#) culminated in October 2010 when the European Parliament (EP) and the Council of the EU agreed, despite resistance within the regional bloc, to introduce an EU-wide ban through the European Union Timber Regulation (EUTR) from 2013 (see Box below).



Stop the illegal loggers

"If illegal loggers keep sawing down our trees we will end up with nothing but a desert," says David Amador, a farmer from Olancho, Honduras.

It ruins lives and livelihoods, destroys ecosystems and contributes to global climate change – but we can put the brakes on illegal logging by banning illegal wood in Europe, writes Keith Ewing

"I feel rage when I think that Europeans might be sitting on chairs made with illegally logged wood from our community," says David Amador, a 38-year-old small-scale farmer from Olancho, Honduras.

The father of two surveys a thick copse of pine trees in the community where he farms, an area that for decades has been under siege from illegal loggers. "People in Europe need to be more aware of illegal logging," he says. "If illegal loggers keep sawing down our trees we will end up with nothing but a desert."

David and his neighbours are at the sharp end of the fight against illegal logging, which supplies between 20%-40% of the world's wood production. It is a sharp end that involves powerful elites, drug cartels, corruption, connivance from military and police, threats to farmers and the killings of activists who oppose the loggers.

Consumer power

Far away from these stark realities, in Europe, a lack of legislation means that consumer demand is helping to drive a trade which brings 3 billion euros worth of illegal wood onto our markets and into our homes.

But now a potentially historic decision to ban illegal timber from Europe is close: in July, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) will be asked to vote on an outright ban on importing illegal wood.

Please act now

One year ago such a law was already within Europe's grasp. The European Parliament voted for a strict ban on trade in illegally logged timber, but the Council of Ministers watered down the proposals. Now MEPs on the Environment Committee have fought back, proposing tough new measures which will go to a full vote in July.

Progressio supporters have already got involved, emailing MEPs on the Environment Committee, and writing to Caroline Spelman, the new DEFRA (Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs) minister, urging strong backing from the UK for an outright ban.

Please go the final yard and tell our politicians that we don't want illegal timber in the UK or Europe. Go to www.progressio.org.uk and take action before 5 July!



Stumping livelihoods, stoking the climate: building on its environmental education work with partners in Central America and the Andes, Progressio made tackling deforestation a major focus of its programming and advocacy campaigning in the second half of the 2000s.

Planks for policy progress: how Progressio helped win UK and EU measures to ban illegal timber

To meet its aim, the EUTR would require 'due diligence' by EU traders to reduce risks of illegal timber in their supply chains and also instruct buyers and sellers of timber and timber products already on the market to keep records of suppliers and customers. The EUTR, though the result of diverse INGO pressure, was greatly aided by Progressio's distinct contribution. The regulation's eventually agreed form was also a victory for the organisation's ambitious policy stance. Progressio had advocated throughout that mandatory official EU commitment to prohibiting illegal timber and wood products was needed rather than mere encouragement of best-endavour practices by self-regulated operators.

Creative strategy and multi-faceted approach

The success, as an [independent review](#) noted, followed cumulative phases of Progressio action in which it adapted its advocacy and campaign strategy creatively to changing political circumstances and mustered its influencing effectively in different policy arenas and locations, backed by public pressure on politicians. Of significance, in terms of the campaign's contextual prospects for success, was 2008 amendment of the US Lacey Act to include prohibition of imports of illegally sourced timber and wood products. The move presented incentives for the EU to follow suit and provided a pressure point for renewed NGO advocacy, including targeting the UK as an EU member.

Sustained relationship-building was vital to the advocacy. Progressio worked closely with Caroline Lucas, then a Green MEP and special rapporteur of a European Parliament environmental sub-committee, to generate political commitment within the EP to the EU's 'trialogue' decision-making process having a positive direction. In tandem, it resolved to keep in strong dialogue with the UK's Department for Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) as the relevant ministry feeding into the 'technical' discussions of the Brussels-based EC and the UK's participation in the 'political' discussions of the EU Council of Ministers. The two-pronged approach gradually paid dividends.

Though a UK private member's bill on logging originally put forward by Labour MP Barry Gardiner had not progressed in 2008, due to insufficient UK government support and despite Progressio and wider NGO pressure, DEFRA warmed to the prospect of EU regulation in the light of the Lacey change. Progressio, through the relationship it had in place with DEFRA, was in a strong position to resume intensified lobbying of its then secretary of state, the Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP. It urged the UK to take a strong lead in the EU's Council of Ministers as it negotiated with the EP's environmental sub-committee.

Vital legal advice and joining forces with Progressio Ireland

Progressio also deliberately targeted the EP's environmental sub-committee itself. In partnership with Advocates for International Development ([A4ID](#)), it secured the pro-bono support of global law firm Shearman & Sterling, which helped staff to provide technical legal advice and timely commentary on sub-committee drafts of the EU regulation. This input proved invaluable in preventing vital provisions of the EUTR from being diluted.

In addition, such legal support put Progressio Ireland, with which Progressio shared the legal advice and all policy submissions and case studies, in a strong position to lobby the Irish government as another EU member with timber importers and wood and paper companies. The Irish government made wood and paper part of a sustainable public procurement consultation. Some of the companies lobbied by Progressio Ireland, including one in which former US vice-president and climate change advocate Al Gore had investment, changed their procurement to Forestry Stewardship Council certified sources.

Setting a positive UK example

A major sign of progress in the campaign, and of official UK commitment to setting a positive example itself, came in April 2010 when DEFRA, following lobbying by Progressio, introduced its own tough new public procurement guidelines on timber. They meant that wood imports used by UK public bodies had to come from environmentally sustainable sources and have been produced in socially responsible ways.

Such momentum was successfully maintained after the UK's May 2010 elections as the Conservative Party manifesto and the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government agreement, to the parties' credit, vowed to ban illegal timber from the UK. This paved the way for continued UK pressure within the EU as Progressio worked constructively to engage the new DEFRA secretary of state, Caroline Spelman MP.

Ingredients of campaign success

Part of Progressio's overall success in engaging DEFRA during the campaign was its ability to demonstrate clear links between EU policy and European business practice and the real-life impacts of timber extraction on people. Staff and DWs worked closely with partners to provide grassroots insights and stories for policy submissions and case studies sent to the UK government and EU bodies.

Another important factor, reinforcing high-level policy influencing, was Progressio's mobilisation of public support for the campaign, both through the digital platform AVAAZ and its own urgent action emails targeting supporters. Pro-forma email texts generated an increasingly high response rate as the campaign progressed, followed by individually written appeals in its later stages. In the run-up to crucial votes, staff made individual phone calls to MEPs from different countries sitting on the EP environment committee, making a verbal case for Progressio's policy position paper that had been sent to them.

This range of pressure was crucial throughout 2010 as some EU governments, lobbied by business, pressed for exclusion of an explicit EUTR ban. To head off this risk, Progressio sought with its INGO allies to engage the private sector, for example through the UK's Timber Trade Federation, which took a supportive position, and the multi-stakeholder European Retail Roundtable on sustainability. Engaging the diverse actors involved in supply chain policies and practices was an important factor of the campaign's success.

The technical and location-specific requirements of successfully influencing the EU meant that the campaign inevitably became somewhat remote from the daily efforts of Progressio's partners in-country, notwithstanding their vital indirect support in the form of grassroots insight and evidence. Nonetheless, achievement of a formal EU intention to ban illegal timber created the potential for partners to pursue its possible future benefits on the ground. In theory, countries such as Honduras would find it harder to access external markets if their forestry practices did not improve.

The EUTR entered into force in March 2013 as part of the EU's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) action plan, which also comprises the negotiation of trade accords known as Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) with producer countries. Honduras became the first country in the Americas to embark on VPA talks with the EU, albeit amid [civil society partner concerns](#) about how open, inclusive and accountable the process would be as they made plans to engage. At the time of writing in 2018, an agreement was still pending, following field tests and consultations on verification procedures. The quest for better forest governance faced a situation in which there had been no let-up in repression of human rights and environmental defenders.

HIV and AIDS

Strengthening institutions and galvanising support for the rights of people

Progressio consolidated and extended its overall engagement on HIV and AIDS in the second half of the 2000s. This further push built on CIIR's longstanding prioritisation of work on HIV and AIDS in Southern Africa. It also followed the piloting of efforts, described in Chapter 3, to support partners working to stem rising HIV prevalence in Somaliland and Yemen as well as Latin America and the Caribbean where prevention strategies were relatively less developed.

Based on emerging lessons, Progressio's methodologically diverse approach grew in strength and sophistication, and Progressio applied its benefits to the wider geographical scope of its work on HIV and AIDS. A broader spread of initiatives took shape with both civil society and church partners in country programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean. This was also the case in Southern Africa where Progressio, following closure of the Namibia programme, matched its continued focus on HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe by embarking on work with partners in its new programme in Malawi. In Somaliland, Progressio's HIV care and prevention, went from strength to strength. It reinforced its engagement of faith-based actors, an approach that also moved forward in Yemen.

Meanwhile, from 2008, Progressio also launched work with partners in Timor-Leste to prevent HIV prevalence from rising amid the serious gender inequality and violence problems highlighted earlier. Such efforts would bear significant fruit during the first half of the next decade, as described later in Chapter 5.

Somaliland: becoming and supporting leaders in the field

The strides forward in Progressio's work on HIV and AIDS were particularly notable in Somaliland. Its piloting and promotion of research and awareness-raising with diverse partners and stakeholders from the start of the decade had helped a diverse range of institutions and initiatives to emerge. From the mid-2000s, their work to tackle HIV and AIDS made important progress.

Progress included the 2006 creation and subsequent impact of the Talowadag Coalition against HIV and AIDS. Talowadag had been formed by three organisations that had been set up by women, who were determined, despite their lack of financial resources, to support people living with HIV or AIDS (PLWHA) in their communities.

Talowadag: from personal determination to realising organisational potential

By 2010, Talowadag, aided by Progressio, which had spotted the nascent coalition's potential, had secured more stable funding for its work through several donor-funded

projects and also established a well-functioning team and office. Crucially, moreover, the organisation was making a [tangible difference in addressing the problems facing people's lives](#). Indeed, it had become the leading local civil society body dedicated to providing care and support for those living with HIV and AIDS and raising public awareness to challenge the stigma and discrimination they faced. It was carrying out advocacy to promote recognition of their rights at all levels of society, from families and communities to religious and political institutions.

Progressio, with the support from 2007 of Mary Chigumira, a Zimbabwean DW, and Kenyan HIV and AIDS adviser [Ali Abdulihai Abdi](#) had helped Talowadag to set up a home-based care programme and also launch income generation initiatives to support people, particularly women, living with HIV or AIDS. Talowadag was also now involved in community education on sexual health and had established support groups for affected people to share their experiences and receive emotional care. It had made impressive progress in a short time (see Quote).

"Previously, we did not know what home-based care was. If we hadn't had a development worker, we wouldn't have been able to support the 50 families we support now.... We began our work with one lady who lived in a shack, having been thrown out of her home by her family. We wanted to help her but were too scared to even go in and hold her hand. Today we live with people living with HIV and AIDS, we eat with them, and we touch them. When others see this it sends a powerful signal to them."

Gulleid Osman Abdi, Talowadag executive director, quoted in [Interact \(summer 2008\)](#)

Talowadag had also taken up and driven forward the work Progressio had earlier launched in Somaliland to engage faith and clan leaders on religious attitudes and cultural practices, including on gender, affecting those living with HIV or AIDS. To nurture this work, Mary Chigumira had organised a Talowadag staff learning visit to Zanzibar as a predominantly Muslim location with longer and stronger experience of running HIV and AIDS programmes. Sheiks engaged by Talowadag began travelling Somaliland in buses with loudspeakers to promote public support for positive action. The coalition's ambitious approach and growing impetus led it to receive the [International Service human rights award](#) in 2010.

Joining forces with others and mobilising key groups

Talowadag's concern with the gendered-impacts of HIV and AIDS on women and girls, as well as attracting the support of bodies such as UNIFEM (now UN Women), enabled joint work with [NAGAAD](#). In tandem, Progressio's partnerships with organisations supporting children and young people facilitated HIV awareness-raising to engage directly and target publicly this demographically crucial group. For example, it placed a youth HIV adviser, Rogasian Massue, with the General Assistance and Volunteers Organisation ([GAVO](#)) to help it integrate a focus on HIV prevention into the organisation's work. GAVO worked with street children, promoted peer education in schools and was forming youth committees as part of its community development initiatives.

Harnessing stronger civil society networking to wider strategies on HIV
Meanwhile, [Eliezer Wangulu](#), a Kenyan DW specialising in communications who had worked with Progressio earlier in the decade to support the Harare-based Southern African HIV and AIDS Information Dissemination Service ([SAfAIDS](#)), joined another DW, Chinyeke Tembo, in strengthening the media work of the youth network [SONYO](#) and the Hargeisa Youth Development Association ([HYDA](#)), with the latter later supported by a [Zimbabwean journalist](#) DW, [Regina Nyelenda Nyirenda](#). Wangulu also worked to strengthen the communications of the Somaliland HIV/AIDS Network ([SAHAN](#)) and helped to form and support a network of journalists covering HIV and AIDS.

Talowadag's burgeoning work complemented Progressio's partnership with the Somaliland National AIDS Commission (SOLNAC) set up in late 2005. Progressio provided advice and support for SOLNAC's national strategy involving anti-retroviral treatment, VCCCT programmes and public information campaigns. It also helped SOLNAC mobilise at-risk communities to reduce their vulnerability to HIV. An important contribution was made by Jitendra Panda, a DW from India, who worked with the commission to involve 2,000 people in developing and implementing 20 community-based strategies and also produce a resource manual aimed at faith leaders. It encouraged leaders to use sermons to tackle public misunderstanding, ignorance and prejudice and preach messages of tolerance and compassion for PLWHA.

In May 2008, Progressio and SOLNAC hosted a conference to bring together faith leaders from across Somaliland to discuss how best to respond to rising infection rates. The event – the first of its kind – saw civil society partners Talowadag and SAHAN share and discuss information on the situation with the leaders. As a result, the latter pledged to form a council that would meet formally and regularly to help address the HIV and AIDS challenges in the country.

Using raised public awareness to strengthen treatment and care services

Though concentrating on rights-based awareness-raising and prevention in Somaliland, Progressio successfully supported the expansion of treatment provision as well, forging mutually supportive links between the two strands of work.

With the encouragement and advice of Progressio, the Hargeisa Group Hospital set up an Integrated Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support Services (IPTCS) facility in 2006 and, thanks to the community-based mobilisation of civil society partners such as Talowadag, the number of people receiving anti-retroviral treatment and psycho-social support increased sharply over the following years. Dr Abdulrahman Mohamed, a Somali-Ethiopian DW, played a key role in setting up and building the management and service delivery capacity of the IPTCS facility. He trained staff in all aspects of service delivery and supported the development of effective outreach to increase service uptake among potential users.

The centre's rapid achievements saw the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria recognise the Hargeisa hospital as a centre of excellence. Progressio's role in enabling local organisations to reach and support vulnerable groups led one UNAIDS observer to state that the organisation was a leader in the field in Somaliland.

Faith in change: engaging religious leaders on HIV

Progressio's continued targeting of faith leaders as a distinctive feature of its HIV and AIDS initiatives in Somaliland also went from strength to strength in neighbouring Yemen. Work with civil society partners taking this approach in the country added value to collaboration with official bodies such as UNAIDS and the Yemen National AIDS Programme. As in Somaliland, civil society organisation formed a key part of efforts to support an effective national response to HIV.

From Somaliland to Yemen: building on strengths

Faith leaders such as imams had high credibility with communities and government. Provided they took an open, positive and well informed approach, they represented a powerful channel for tackling discrimination and stigma at the grassroots and mobilising wider support for prevention, treatment and care interventions. Their influence could match, if not outstrip, that of other key shapers of public discourse targeted by Progressio such as the media.

Working within doctrines and promoting their positive application

During this period, Progressio extended and sustained its programme of workshops and follow-up accompaniment in Yemen. It combined dialogue, information-sharing and training with faith leaders and preachers such as imams and khatibs as well as female religious guides (*murshidat*). Workshops started with an exploration of participants' existing views and, following sustained discussion and exchanges in sessions, culminated in their development of model new sermons based on the knowledge and understanding they had gained.

One strength of Progressio's approach was its combination of outside expertise and knowledge with partners' intimate local grasp of how best to involve faith leaders in

societies and communities where attitudes to sex and sexuality could be very conservative. Another was to take a gradual approach, facilitating the learning and commitment of leaders from within the framework of their faith and its reinterpretation rather than seeking to change theological doctrines themselves. The latter would have created defensiveness over adopting new views and practices.

The result was an increase in the number of faith leaders, preachers and religious guides better equipped and prepared to spread positive messages on HIV and AIDS (see Quotes).

"This training has changed my understanding of the global, regional and national situation of HIV and AIDS, and of many technical aspects which it is important that imams know so that we can communicate more convincingly. After my lecture on HIV and AIDS, people became very concerned and wanted to know more."

Sheik Sammer Hasan Waheeb, imam and khateeb at Ali Ibn Talib mosque, quoted in [Interact \(autumn 2006\)](#)

"I honestly had doubts at first. But as I listened, my views started to change. And once I got to know people actually affected by HIV, I totally changed my mind. I am no longer afraid of them... In my sermons I now encourage the Muslim community to make a place for people with HIV. And outside the mosque, I've been on TV and radio programmes, written articles, lectured students. Even when I go to the barber shop, I talk to the barbers about how they can prevent the spread of HIV... if you reach an imam, he can reach another 2,000 people."

Sheik Sammer Abdulla Mohammed El Oadesi, an imam from Sana'a, quoted in [Progressio's 2010 Annual Review](#)

Supporting the rights of PLWHA in partner work on governance: productive links

Progressio's work targeting faith actors had become a feature of its now higher number of partnerships with civil society organisations in Yemen working on HIV and AIDS. Their individual capacity and networking was supported by [Irfan Akhtar](#), an Indian DW, who was instrumental in setting up Yemen's first support group bringing together PLWHA. His work with the Interaction in Development Foundation, an NGO based in the capital Sana'a, was matched by Progressio-supported HIV prevention partnerships with the Abu Musa Al Ashary association, an Islamic NGO based in the Red Sea port, Hodeidah, as well as the Women's Association for Sustainable Development. WASD, a women's rights NGO based in Aden, was working to tackle the gender impacts of HIV and AIDS making women particularly vulnerable. The last two partners were supported by a Nepali DW, [Prachanda Man Shresta](#).

Efforts to scale up the impact of work on HIV and AIDS across the country at a local and national policy level were also aided by the involvement, along with Abu Musa Al Ashary, of the Al-Tadhamon solidarity for development association. The two partner organisations were receiving Progressio support for their work on governance and participatory decision-making described earlier in this chapter. Productive links forged between governance and HIV and AIDS partners and their investment in advocacy, following several years of Progressio support, contributed to a new law being passed to protect the rights of PLWHA. As in Somaliland, Progressio played a key role in developing voluntary counselling and testing centres in Yemen.

Progressio, building on the original piloting and continued pioneering of faith-based work on HIV and AIDS in Somaliland and Yemen, strengthened its replication in other country programmes.

Zimbabwe and Malawi: key roles and coordinated church action

In contrast with the still low rates of HIV prevalence in Somaliland and Yemen, countries in Southern Africa had been acutely affected by HIV and AIDS. The crisis brought into even sharper relief the importance of faith leaders in tackling stigma and discrimination and providing emotional and practical support. Whatever its scale and location, faith leaders were often called on to provide advice, counselling and even mediation on family problems arising from HIV and AIDS. With the loss of a middle generation, a major issue was responsibilities for caring for orphaned children or older people. The role of churches could complement that of other organisations dealing with such challenges. In Zimbabwe, for instance, the children's welfare body [ZNCWC](#), a Progressio partner, was working to address the tough situation of orphaned children, [as painfully described by development worker Musa Chibwana](#).

In Zimbabwe, Philemon Handinahama, a DW with local experience of coordinating HIV programmes, worked with the National Faith-based Council of Zimbabwe (NFBCZ), the body grouping Catholic and other Christian church bodies. His contribution strengthened the Council's work to reduce sexual violence against women in the context of HIV and AIDS

Left: Musa Chibwana, a Progressio DW with the ZNCWC, telling a story to orphaned children at the Mbuya Hehanda children's home, outside Harare.

Right: meeting of women's group in Sirewe village supported by Batsirai, a Zimbabwean partner aided by Progressio DWs such as Stancelous Mverechena. The group supported young orphans and child-headed households in the area.



©: Marcus Perkins

and gender inequality, which affected their participation in decisions relating to their sexual health. He helped the NFBCZ, in partnership with the Zimbabwe Institute of Systemic Counselling, to organise training. It strengthened the HIV and AIDS counselling expertise of 60 pastors and church leaders in Harare and Manicaland provinces.

In Malawi, the work of Progressio DW Renias Mundingi with the Malawi Inter-faith AIDS Association (MIAA) and the Malawi Network of Religious Leaders Living with or Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS (MANERELA+) saw religious leaders representing all major faiths in the country issue a statement pledging stronger collaboration and action to tackle HIV and AIDS. The DW provided training for MIAA and MANERELA+ staff and leaders, as well as district level inter-faith committees comprising Christian and Muslim leaders, on HIV and AIDS advocacy.

This work led in the immediate term to 60 PLWHA support groups being established in churches and mosques with the involvement of over 300 religious leaders, benefiting an estimated 900 people. The work of faith communities in addressing HIV and AIDS in Malawi was the topic of a story entered by [one of two finalists](#) sponsored by Progressio in the 2012 international journalism competition run by the *Guardian*.

Pushing faith boundaries, opening doors to better support

Working in a pluralistic way with a diverse range of faith-based and civil society partners, in both Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa and the Middle East, enabled Progressio to engage constructively with faith leaders and church actors on their own terms, while pushing boundaries and encouraging critical debate, mutual support and collective action with their civil society counterparts.

Progressio used the insights and lessons of its work in country programmes to engage faith-based development partners internationally. In the case of the Catholic Church, Progressio's status as an NGO rooted in Catholic Social Teaching but independent of the official Church put it in an advantageous position both to speak out and raise debate on the challenges of HIV prevention itself and also help open space for others to do so with greater confidence.

Following CIIR's efforts to promote Catholic and wider Christian debate and action on HIV and AIDS earlier in the decade (see Chapter 3), Progressio acted to boost momentum by publishing a series of follow-up faith reflections in 2009. They covered Christian responses to the HIV pandemic in the context of [structural violence and vulnerability](#) in society and the need to promote [gender justice](#) and tackle [stigmatisation and discrimination](#) against PLWHA.

Latin America and the Caribbean: bridging gaps and building bridges for positive church and civil society action

Progressio, building on the array of work it had launched with mainly civil society partners in Latin America and the Caribbean described in Chapter 3, used the momentum to invest in greater efforts to work with faith-based partners during this period, in particular those linked to the Catholic Church as the majority religion in the region.

Conservative constraints and bottom-up benefits

The push was needed as a gap tended to exist between the official stance of Church hierarchies in the region and the approach of priests, nuns, diocesan bodies and congregations in their respective countries. It was the latter who often led grassroots responses to HIV and AIDS in ways valued by affected individuals and communities. Yet they could face opposition for their work, though some bishops were sympathetic to it or made an implicit decision not to stand in its way.

One major problem was the positions of conservative sectors within the Church on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and issues of sexual orientation and identity. As well as their impact on public attitudes, they exerted strong influence within Church hierarchies and on state policies. This hindered discussion and promotion of condom use as an ethically legitimate and socially necessary response to rising HIV infections.

An associated challenge, as argued by [PROSA](#), the Peruvian PLWHA group CIIR had earlier supported through ICD, was that Church efforts on HIV and AIDS, though changing, still often tended to concentrate on benevolent solidarity with PLWHA rather than on rights-based preventive action and care.

A major aim in Progressio's work, therefore, was to support Church-linked partners keen to raise public awareness of HIV prevention and to advocate changes in the position and approach of the Church, based on practical evidence of the benefits of their grassroots support for PLWHA.

Action, exchange and debate in the Andes

One example of bottom-up faith-based action responding to the needs and realities of people, was the work of the Ica-based Casas de la Salud association in Peru. It had come a long way in supporting PLWHA since CIIR first partnered the organisation through ICD at the start of the decade, helping it to launch work on HIV and AIDS (see Chapter 3). Casas de la Salud, as well as providing emotional and practical support for PLWHA through a team of volunteer 'accompaniers' and organising training to enable them to set up their own support groups, was now running diverse HIV prevention initiatives. They included workshops providing sex education and information on condom use. With half of new infections affecting the under-30s, it was targeting young people in particular through peer education, work with parents, public events, videos and radio programmes.

Progressio seconded Pablo Soto, a Chilean DW, to Casas de la Salud to help it undertake research and develop an awareness-raising strategy for HIV prevention in the Ica region.

Challenging stigma, changing agendas: pictured top (right) is Progressio development worker Jorge Martínez helping to run a street stall in Lima set up by Peru's ombudsman's office.



Bottom (centre): Dina Guerra, CIIR and Progressio's country representative in Peru, on an exchange visit to Uganda in 2003. CIIR used its long experience of supporting HIV prevention in Southern Africa and its exchanges with Uganda in launching work in Somaliland and Yemen to inform its growing work on HIV and AIDS in Latin America and the Caribbean.



Soto, a journalist, brought experience from his communications capacity-building with Progressio partners in neighbouring Ecuador where he had recently supported RedSIDAzuay, the network of HIV and AIDS organisations in the southerly Azuay province, and then the [Kimirina Corporation](#), a health rights organisation specialising in HIV and AIDS. Progressio's policy of promoting regional exchange and learning also meant Kimirina benefited at this time from the continued DW contribution of Ana Teresa Rodríguez. She shared expertise enriched by her work at the start of the 2000s with Casas de la Salud and PROSA in Peru.

Progressio's partnerships in Ecuador also included Church-linked partners. For example, in Azuay's capital Cuenca as well as Babahoyo and Vinces in Los Ríos province, DWs such as Sergio Torres, [Leticia Carrillo](#) and Lara McLachlan respectively supported diocesan bodies making HIV and AIDS part of their pastoral work. The role of church partners in the country programme sat alongside that of civil society groups such as RedSIDAzuay and Kimirina, as well as media partners raising debate on youth and sexual and reproductive health and rights issues through radio discussion programmes and soap operas. Media partners again included [ALER](#), now supported by a Colombian DW, Alexander Amézquita.

The joint presence of civil society and church partners in Progressio's work enabled critical dialogue and interaction on their respective approaches to HIV and AIDS. It also generated opportunities to promote church commitment to addressing the rising HIV problem at a Latin American level (see Box).

Promoting regional ecumenical commitment on HIV and AIDS

With Progressio support, the Cuenca Social Pastoral, an Ecuadorean partner, organised an ecumenical meeting to bring churches from across Latin America together for the first time to discuss religious responses to HIV in the region. Held in March 2008, the event involved presentations by religious leaders from eight countries. It was attended by representatives of church, faith-based and social organisations linked to the Catholic, Anglican, Jewish, Methodist, Baptist and Evangelical churches.

Church partners, while committed to providing information on condom use, were keen to avoid positive Church action being stymied by thorny debates over official orthodoxy on contraception. They worked on the basis that condoms, as a life-protecting device, were one vital tool in a wider set of solutions, including the need for behaviour change. Civil society partners, meanwhile, saw traditional approaches associated with the Church, urging sexual abstinence and fidelity within marriage, as dated, socially unrealistic and ineffective. All the same, they argued that condom promotion, though indispensable, had to be part of a rights-based strategy aimed at overcoming the gender and social inequalities that made women and poorer social groups more vulnerable to HIV and hindered their access to prevention, treatment and care support services.

As outlined in Chapter 3, CIIR's ICD work in Latin America and the Caribbean had made tackling gender inequality an essential feature of supporting the response of partners to HIV and AIDS, and Progressio sustained this approach. Without greater recognition of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, on the one hand, and progress in changing the male attitudes and behaviour shaped by patriarchy and a culture of machismo on the other, women would not have the power to decide whether and when to have sex and enjoy control over their own bodies. Men, in contrast, would continue to act in irresponsible if not aggressive and violent ways that caused HIV risks and rights abuses against women.

Central America: challenging approaches and collaborative action

In Nicaragua, Progressio continued its longstanding partnership with the feminist gender and development NGO [Puntos de Encuentro](#), which had helped to promote the gender-and-masculinities methodology first pioneered and replicated in Central America by [CANTERA](#) and now being further replicated in the [Dominican Republic](#) by Progressio with the support of the UNFPA. DWs placed with Puntos de Encuentro in the second half of the 2000s included [Jean Casey](#), a future [Progressio gender review](#) consultant and Progressio board member, and [Yerina Rock](#), a Swedish communications specialist. They provided further support to strengthen Puntos' media and campaign initiatives and its youth and gender projects.

SARAH BRADSHAW

Feminism and Catholicism in Nicaragua: an unholy alliance?



Sarah Bradshaw is professor of gender and sustainable development at London's Middlesex University. Her work in Nicaragua as a DW, as well as supporting Puntos de Encuentro, involved gender-focused placements with the regional research organisation CRIES, the emergency relief civil society coalition CCER, and the health and children and young people's rights organisation CISAS. She is author of Gender, Development and Disasters (London: Edward Elgar 2013), a member of the advisory panel for the Plan International report Because I am Girl: The State of the World's Girls, and worked with the UN's Sustainable Development Solutions Network initiative on shaping the post-2015 development agenda.

I joined CIIR's team of ICD development workers in Nicaragua in January 1998 having decided to take a 'career break' from Middlesex University where I worked as a lecturer in gender and development studies. I hoped that my work as a DW would give me the opportunity to put my development knowledge into practice. Having an MA and PhD focused on Latin America, I looked forward to being based in the region.

I was drawn to CIIR by its approach of placing DWs in professional posts to share skills with a local counterpart in order to benefit the partner organisation as a whole as well as wider society. The chance to learn as well as put theory into practice was a unique opportunity – one that has helped to shape my professional development since, including my recent promotion to professor. Of crucial value was the experience of witnessing and helping to address the daily challenges of development on the ground. Indeed, in my first year in the country Hurricane Mitch hit Central America, bringing into sharp relief the implications of poverty and inequality in Nicaragua.

With the support of CIIR and then Progressio, I worked with Nicaragua's feminist NGO Puntos de Encuentro for over 10 years, thanks later to three-month contracts enabling me to sustain my engagement over summer 'breaks' having officially returned to my job at the university. Since then I have maintained links both personal and professional with Puntos. My most recent visit to Nicaragua, and of working with colleagues from Puntos, was in March 2017 when I returned to undertake a small research project.

Gender: how much has changed?

What has been achieved in terms of gendered rights in Nicaragua? In reflecting on nearly 20 years of working with the same people, in the same country, on the same issues, I feel tempted to say "not a lot" as news from Nicaragua is each year more distressing: the incidence of extreme acts of violence against women, including femicides, rises at the same time as international support, in financial and solidarity terms, for women's groups and movements in the country declines. This is a pattern sadly repeated across the globe.

I cast my mind back to Mitch. In many ways the years after one of the worst 'disasters' in the region represented a more optimistic time and, for all the alarming challenges since, I still believe that the work of Puntos, and the wider women's movements that I was privileged to be part of, did change the way sexual and reproductive rights were understood. The strategies Puntos used to achieve this, including its telenovela (television soap opera) promoting gendered and generational rights, were truly innovative and creative. Yet the fragility of such advances was thrown into sharp relief when in 2006 the Catholic Church entered into an unholy pact with the two leading political parties ahead of the elections, making even therapeutic abortion illegal and condemning countless women to die as a consequence.

Courage and understanding: making a partnership work

Working in a feminist organisation promoting women's right to decide in a highly patriarchal context with a strong and 'fundamentalist' Catholic Church framing everyday life is not easy. The challenge was potentially further complicated by my own role and outlook as a Western feminist working for a Catholic-rooted organisation in this context. Yet the relationship worked, and it worked for 10 years.

That CIIR and Progressio would work with Puntos at all demonstrated the organisation's commitment to women's rights. That it would support the production of a telenovela demonstrated its drive to find innovative responses to promoting rights. And that it would sustain its support over the years showed its understanding that development 'solutions' take time. Given the gendered challenges currently faced in Nicaragua and elsewhere in the world, the work of CIIR and Progressio will be sorely missed now that the organisation has closed.

Targeting youth and promoting inter-generational approaches, Puntos challenged conservative cultural and religious views of gender and sexual and reproductive health and rights hindering the struggle against HIV and AIDS. The terrain was increasingly the source of political strains between civil society on the one hand and Nicaragua's Catholic Church hierarchy and FSLN government, which had undergone rapprochement at this time, on the other. That Progressio, like CIIR earlier through ICD, was prepared to support a challenging feminist organisation while engaging constructively with Church partners in Nicaragua and elsewhere in Latin America and the Caribbean, said much about the organisation's independent courage and pluralistic commitment. Navigating boundaries and building possible bridges was an essential part of its approach (see Box above).

Meanwhile, in El Salvador, Progressio, with EU financial support, had launched a major programme enabling different groups to join forces in order to tackle HIV and AIDS. They included a women's rights partner and a youth development organisation, as well as two Church-linked groups committed to addressing problematic masculinity as a vital focus of the response. One was the **CONTRASIDA** (Against AIDS) foundation, which had emerged from a HIV and AIDS programme founded by a member of the Maryknoll Sisters and had been originally run by the Archdiocese of San Salvador. The other was the **CBC**, the Dominicans-affiliated organisation Progressio had partnered since the early 2000s.

The CBC, supported by Chilean DW Héctor Nuñez González, was now tackling HIV and AIDS through its Escuela Equinocial (Equinox School) initiative, which took men through a process of self-discovery and potential change through the gender-and-masculinities



approach that Colombian DW [John Byron Ochoa](#) had earlier helped the partner to adopt. Ochoa was now working with CONTRASIDA to strengthen its HIV prevention from a new masculinity perspective, organising awareness-raising targeting key male groups. Men might know how to use condoms and be aware they could avoid infection of others and themselves, but their willingness to do so was impaired by the deeply ingrained attitudes they held.

El Salvador had a low rate of HIV incidence overall but the rate of infection was growing. Women were particularly affected, as were the most marginalised members of Salvadoran society such as the urban poor, sex workers, gang members, and men who have sex with men.

Reaching key groups and tackling sensitive issues

A defining feature of Progressio's work with partners on HIV and AIDS, building on the earlier steps and foundations laid by CIIR's ICD-recruited DWs, was the wide range of vulnerable groups and promoters of change that it supported and targeted.

Engaging youth – in their own voice, on their own terms

As previous sections indicate, younger people, particularly women, were a crucial target group in Progressio's support for partners. This was due to the reality or likelihood of their early experience of sex – desired, the result of peer pressure or unwanted – and the frequent lack of honest and factual information on sex and relationships. Sex education, if available in the face of opposition, was too often moralising in approach and shrouded in taboos.

Targeting health professionals and schools

Nicaraguan partners such as Puntos de Encuentro engaged young people from a gender perspective and on their own terms. So too did [CISAS](#), with the support of DWs [Astalo García](#) on masculinity and [Ainara Arregui García](#) in her work to boost the NGO's public outreach. As well as strengthening CISAS' efforts to encourage health professionals, youth groups and faith organisations to support and empower the voices of PLWHA, she promoted HIV prevention in secondary schools. Her support and engagement of young people was in turn aided by Spanish DW [Andrea Luque](#), a communications and advocacy specialist. She worked closely with CISAS' network of young health promoters to develop communication tools and initiatives that would resonate with such audiences and their tastes. They included graffiti, theatre, music and poetry.

Such popular communication techniques similarly characterised the work of Nicaragua's [Luciérnaga Foundation](#) where Spanish DW [Ernesto Cañada](#) helped groups such as ANICP+VIDA, an association of PLWHA, produce and promote videos. These enabled PLWHA to tell their own stories and amplified their voices through screenings at well attended public events.

Inter-generational action

Progressio and its partners supported young people, as in the case of other groups, not as passive targets or victims but as people with rights and enablers of change themselves. Its efforts, moreover, took place in often tough circumstances, as in Zimbabwe. One initiative led by young people in the country not only brought benefits for their peers but also for the wider community, fostering the inter-generational solidarity that also often typified Progressio's approach with partners (see Box).

From resilience and determination to help at hand

In Chinhoyi, a deprived former mining town in Zimbabwe's Mashonaland West Province, Christopher Nyamandi, a Progressio DW with partner organisation Batsirai, supported a 'Young People We Care' initiative. This had been set up by a group of out-of-school youths to support children, adults and communities affected by HIV or AIDS.

They provided home-based care, supported funerals and used recreational games and theatre to raise public awareness and attract and motivate peer educators. These cultural activities enabled the young people to register with the National Arts Council and charge fees for certain performances as part of the income generation projects they set up to finance their community work. The latter included poultry projects and vegetable gardens, with surplus produce and income used to support home visits and help out families. The high number of orphans and vulnerable children due to the devastating effects of HIV and AIDS made such groups a priority for support, with Batsirai also helping out on issues such as school fees.

Working with those facing the greatest risks and discrimination

Alongside its significant engagement of young people, Progressio made a concerted effort to target, support and engage social groups facing most HIV risks. It focused on the poorest groups and those facing sharp discrimination and social prejudice.

Supporting the dignity and rights of sex workers

One such group was female sex workers, who faced high levels of abuse and HIV risk. Yet if sex workers were accepted and supported as people rather than shunned or neglected, they could play a key role in fight against HIV and AIDS. This meant the adoption and promotion of safe-sex practices, both by themselves and on the part of their clients. In Yemen, for example, a woman involved in sex work recounted how contact with Progressio's partner WASD had led her to take up condom use whenever she could.

In El Salvador, Progressio provided sustained support for [Flor de Piedra](#) (Stone Flower), a women's association based in the red-light district of capital San Salvador, which had now joined Progressio's multi-partner HIV and AIDS initiative described above combining the promotion of women's rights with work on masculinity. The organisation, the only one in the country working with sex workers to protect and promote their rights, provided support in the areas of health, education, psychotherapy and legal advice. It worked with the women to promote condom use in order to protect their health and safety and that of their clients.

A vital part of Flor de Piedra's work was communication, public awareness-raising and advocacy. Though prostitution was legal in the country, the women faced social opprobrium and public hostility as a result of their work, with little understanding and recognition of its underlying causes, in particular poverty as a key factor intertwined with the unequal gender power relations in sex.

In the absence of effective public policy action to deal with gender discrimination and [economic oppression affecting women](#), Flor de Piedra's approach had changed over time. It had shifted its emphasis from equipping sex workers with skills to 'reintegrate' into society to concentrating on the need for society to recognise their rights and dignity. This also meant boosting the women's self-esteem.

Progressio's support for this partner was thus multi-dimensional. On the one hand, it placed a DW, [Virginia López Tito](#), to support Flor de Piedra's health education and public outreach with sex workers and their clients. This involved training the women to become health education and HIV prevention promoters themselves. On the other, it involved sustained investment in strengthening the association's use of mass media to raise public awareness and gain a voice for the women in advocating their rights. Several DWs, including Andrea Bilbao and [Adriana Ospina](#), supported this area of work, consolidating the earlier efforts of Mónica Calvo Ortiz. A Spanish gender and communications specialist, Calvo Ortiz helped to organise the first meeting of organisations representing Central American women sex workers in 2005.

For some DWs active on women's rights, supporting Progressio's HIV prevention work with partners seeing sex workers as agents of change rather than mere targets of support gave their sense of sisterhood and solidarity added significance (see Box). For other DWs active on HIV and AIDS, reaching out to this often vilified group entailed new insights and changed their own personal views (see Quote below).

ADRIANA OSPINA

Listening with respect to sex workers in El Salvador: an experience in sisterhood and solidarity



Thanks to the women's movement's recognition of Progressio's programme in El Salvador, following the way paved for well over a decade by country representative Carmen Medina and the contribution of her various teams of DWs, I had the privilege of accompanying the daily work of Flor de Piedra and the Women Sex Workers Organisation (OTS) for almost three years from 2006. My role included strengthening partner strategies to enable women involved in sex work in the country gain greater visibility for their efforts to organise, supporting their advocacy initiatives with local governments and awareness-raising campaigns aimed at civil society.

Respect and listening

As a woman, I was able to create bonds of empathy and sisterhood with other women whose best livelihood option, in contrast with my own situation, was to perform sex work in the chaotic city of San Salvador. As a Colombian woman, moreover, I had the opportunity to learn invaluable lessons on resistance and dignity from a society that was still experiencing the effects of a prolonged and intense armed conflict. This situation was relevant to the one that my own country is still struggling to emerge from even today. As a DW, a woman and a Colombian, I was able to establish that development cooperation has meaning if it is built through daily interaction between human beings based on respect and listening – on the conviction that in such face-to-face, South-to-South exchanges between women from Latin America, as in my case, empowerment, advocacy and transformation is a two-way process.

“Recently I ran a HIV and AIDS awareness session with a group of commercial sex workers (CSWs) in a remote rural area. I always imagined that this group of people was misguided and utterly destructive. This view changed when I realised that, far from that, most CSWs are caring. They care about their future. They care about their children and are at pains to explain to their children the true nature of their profession. They also care about protecting their clients from HIV and AIDS. They insist on condom use and are disappointed that in most cases their clients seem indifferent about protected sex. Most of them had been sucked into profession by their love for their families and the need to provide for them.”

Chris Nyamandi, a DW supporting HIV awareness-raising with Progressio's Zimbabwean partner, Batsirai, quoted in [Interact \(autumn 2007\)](#)

Seizing opportunities in Central America to address LGBTI rights

Other groups particularly vulnerable to HIV and inadequate support were people facing prejudice and discrimination because of their sexual orientation and identity. Progressio sought opportunities to promote awareness and engagement on the rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) persons. This was mainly in country programmes where partners were active on the issues in their work on gender and HIV and AIDS, such as Puntos de Encuentro and Flor de Piedra in Central America.

The issues were sensitive. LGBTI people were not only ostracised but faced abuse, threats and violence. An activist from El Salvador interviewed for a forthcoming Progressio report recounted how a campaign for legislative action to guarantee equal rights for transgender people, in the wake of the government's creation of an office on sexual diversity, was followed by a backlash in which 47 gay and trans people were murdered.

In Honduras, Mónica Galeano, a DW specialising in HIV prevention who later in the decade went on to work with [CEM-H](#) and other women's organisations to strengthen their advocacy on the rights of women living with HIV or AIDS, worked with several civil society partners to promote the rights of LGBTI people. They included the LGBTI rights association, [Colectivo Violeta](#), and the Human Rights Research and Promotion Centre ([CIPRODEH](#)). The latter partner disseminated a manual, *El Vuelo de los Gansos* (Flight of the Geese), that Galeano had authored for the organisation on sexual rights and HIV. Its aim was to empower lesbian and gay leaders, organisations and activists and, as the title conveyed, to promote solidarity with and among these communities.

At the end of the decade, Progressio launched a two-year initiative on LGBTI rights and social diversity and discrimination with [CISAS](#) in Nicaragua. Supported by the EU, it worked with sexual diversity leaders to build their advocacy and communication capacity and strategies and to cascade the knowledge and expertise gained within LGBTI organisations. Some 50 trained campaigners replicated the training in Managua, León, Estelí and Matagalpa and carried out public awareness-raising. Their aim was to build support for non-discriminatory laws and reform Nicaragua's family code to recognise LGBTI rights.

Spreading the message, using multiple channels

In working with and through civil society and faith-based organisations to tackle HIV and promote the rights of PLWHA, Progressio, based on joint analysis with partners of the situation in each country, targeted a strategic range of groups occupying a strategic position in the spread or prevention of HIV and highly vulnerable themselves.

Targeting itinerant groups

In Somaliland, for instance, Progressio's youth partner, [HYDA](#), supported by DW communications adviser Eliezer Wangulu, ran UNDP-supported awareness-raising workshops to change the attitudes and behaviour of police, army and prison officers. As a result, these groups agreed to form a joint task force of uninformed services to raise awareness of HIV. Security providers tended to have higher rates of HIV, and the itinerant nature of the military brought its members into contact with civilians, including sex workers, in communities other than their own. In Zimbabwe, Progressio similarly launched

work at this time to target long-distance truck drivers, and in El Salvador made urban bus drivers a target because of aggressive male behaviour within this group towards women.

This span of vulnerable and risky target groups sat alongside Progressio's work with partners to engage an equally diverse range of key groups shaping public discourse and policy views and action on HIV and AIDS. As well as civil society networks, religious bodies and leaders, youth organisations, schools, health professionals and the media, Progressio launched work to secure the support of employer organisations, for example in Zimbabwe. Meanwhile, in Peru, its partnerships extended to a public oversight body and an academic institution. A DW, Jorge Martínez, worked with Peru's Defensoría del Pueblo, the ombudsman's office, to strengthen its monitoring of official policies on HIV and AIDS and helped the institute of health, sexuality and human development of Lima's Cayetano Heredia University to develop community-based training on health and HIV prevention.

National policy engagement and international awareness-raising

The diverse partnerships and target groups in Progressio's work put it in strong position to engage official national bodies on HIV and AIDS, creating potential for people-centred and rights-based approaches to be adopted and scaled up. Meanwhile, as well as promoting the lessons of its work and the voices of partners in international events on HIV and AIDS, Progressio raised awareness of HIV and AIDS crises that had attracted less international attention.

One example was Progressio's 2008 report *HIV and AIDS in Haiti*. It spotlighted, as part of the organisation's response to the ongoing political crisis in the country, the damaging impact the turmoil had had on Haiti's efforts to address the pandemic. The Caribbean nation had the highest incidence of HIV and AIDS in the world outside sub-Saharan Africa. The report, authored by a former BBC journalist and a Haitian public health expert, as well as staff member Annie Street and an Italian DW based in the Dominican Republic, Gianni Dal Mas, argued that the HIV and AIDS crisis could not be tackled without also addressing the endemic poverty and injustice in the country. This was Progressio's stance in every country in which it worked, as this section has depicted.



Photo story display in Progressio's Interact magazine highlighting different views and debates aired at the 2006 International AIDS Conference on the importance of condoms in preventing HIV.

Background image
© Sverre Torfin/Panos

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Pursuing regeneration in an age of uncertainty

'People-powered development' and mobilising young people for global change (2011-2017)



CIIR

PROGRESS!O

5 Pursuing regeneration in an age of uncertainty

'People-powered development' and mobilising young people for global change (2011-2017)

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At the crossroads: achieving further gains, enduring losses

PROGRESSIO MARKED its 75th anniversary by holding [two events](#) in London in late October and early November 2015. The organisation, with its legacy and continued record of achievement as Sword of the Spirit, CIIR and now Progressio, had [much to celebrate](#), as its president, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, elaborated in his [homily](#) to the second event, a choral service held in Temple Church. This was a fitting venue in view of its association with the Magna Carta as an early foundation of democracy, justice and respect for human rights.

Causes for celebration

Progressio's causes for celebration were not just internal but followed events of major relevance to the organisation in the world outside. One had been the 2013 election of Fr Jorge Mario Bergoglio, an Argentine priest who had become Archbishop of Buenos Aires and then a cardinal, as Pope Francis.

A Pope from the developing world

As the first pontiff from the developing world to lead the Catholic Church, Pope Francis proceeded to use his office to express solidarity with the poor and marginalised. Along with his commitment to inter-faith dialogue, he had much in keeping with the Catholic vision that CIIR and Progressio – and the Sword of the Spirit before – had supported and sought to realise over the years (see Box).

PAUL VALLELY

From Liberation theology to Pope Francis: holding the line and fulfilling a mission

CIIR played a significant role in the growth of understanding – among Western aid agencies, and inside the Catholic Church – that the world's poor did not just need to help make their lives a little better. Rather they needed to be empowered to take control of their own destinies and work to change the unjust economic, social and political structures which kept them in poverty. It was a journey from charity to justice.

In the decades from 1970 onwards CIIR had an important prophetic mission to the Catholic Church itself. In many countries church leaders fell in line with the interests of ruling elites in an attempt to protect the institutional position of the Church. In much of the developing world they aligned the Church with the policy of the United States which championed foreign control of wealth, preaching the notion that trickle-down would eventually bring economic benefits to the poor – a notion which Pope Francis now insists is discredited by the facts of history.

By contrast, CIIR supported progressive elements in the Church in grassroots liberation and human rights struggles in Central and Latin America, Southern Africa and Asia. It was a prominent advocate of liberation theology, which refused to accept poverty as the inevitable by-product of progress. It dismissed the notion that the poor should wait for their rewards in heaven.

Rewards on earth

Working for the Kingdom of God meant changing an unfair world rather than simply easing some of the burdens it placed on the poor. CIIR had an important role in keeping the Church honest and true to a Gospel which gave priority to the needs of the marginalised and excluded. CIIR thus had a mission to the Church as well as to the poor, which is why I felt it was such a loss when the word Catholic was dropped when the organisation changed its title to Progressio.

CIIR held to its line in an era in which liberation theology was caricatured as backdoor Marxism. The Church has changed its mind on that now. In 2013, the guardian of Rome's doctrinal orthodoxy, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Gerhard Müller, declared that liberation theology "should be included among the most important currents in 20th century Catholic theology". And Pope Francis welcomed its founding father, Fr Gustavo Gutiérrez, into the Vatican to say Mass with him.

This notion of seeing the world through the eyes of the poor is no longer outlandish. Rather it is the lens through which Pope Francis wants the whole universal church to look at the world. This first pope from the developing world embodies liberation theology in his pointed criticisms of capitalism and consumerism. His call for "a poor Church, for the poor" feels like a fulfilment of the hopes for everything those CIIR pioneers strove for.



Paul Vallely, a former chair of CIIR's board of trustees, is author of the biography Pope Francis – Untying the Knots: the Struggle for the Soul of Catholicism (London: Bloomsbury, 2015)



Let there be peace: mural of Pope Francis in Buenos Aires, capital of his home country, Argentina
© Jon Barnes

Pope Francis' encyclical letter of 2015, *Laudato Si* (Praise Be to You: On Care for Our Common Home), made a passionate call for humanity to change its relationship with both the planet and fellow human beings in the context of climate change and socially and environmentally destructive approaches to economic growth. It resonated strongly with the thematic content and aims of Progressio's current work, as well as the contribution that CIIR had made to their evolution.

The SDGs: advent of a new development agenda

The Pope's call, issued in mid-June 2015, provided a vital moral boost to advocacy across the world that led governments, under the auspices of the UNFCCC, eventually to reach the December 2015 Paris climate change agreement. It promised to keep the global average temperature to well under a 2°C rise on pre-industrial levels and to seek to limit it to 1.5°C. In support of the encyclical, Progressio had disseminated an accessible popular guide to the text, [*The Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor*](#), and went on to work with the organisation's members to [urge the UK to support Pope Francis' call](#) for governments to throw their weight behind the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) approved at the UN in September of that year.

Whatever the debates over the specific strengths and weaknesses of the SDGs and the level of ambition of the UN's Agenda 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development they were intended to deliver, the discursive thrust of the new framework, like *Laudato Si*, similarly had echoes of Progressio's world view and development approach.

Agenda 2030, with its advocacy of integrated positive action in relation to people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership through the SDGs, was one that the organisation's early pioneers would have probably welcomed overall, despite its inevitable gaps, ambiguities and underlying unresolved tensions (see Box). In 2012, as Progressio stepped up its efforts to influence the post-2015 framework, the organisation had [celebrated the life and mourned the loss of former CIIR secretary general Mildred Nevile MBE](#) and her predecessor, [Margaret Feeny](#) MBE, who also died that year.

Shades of progress: the resonance of the new Sustainable Development Goals

In comparison with the eight MDGs expiring in 2015, the 17 SDGs had a more rights-based feel, invoked stronger commitment on reducing poverty and inequality and were firmer and broader in covering gender and discrimination issues. They also grappled with the nature, purpose and benefits and rewards of economic growth, highlighted the need for sustainable production and consumption, advocated citizen participation and transparent and accountable governance, and paid attention to conflict and peace challenges. The 17 SDGs, moreover, were interdependent – mutually supportive progress was needed across all goals – and they were universal, meaning that richer countries, not just mainly poorer countries, were expected to achieve and support their delivery.

The promise of progress in an uncertain world

In turn, the 2030 Agenda, entitled Transforming Our World, stated that countries shared 'common, but differentiated' responsibilities for achieving the SDGs, thus implying that gaps in countries' levels of wealth, power and economic development, as well as their unequal role in causing climate change, needed to be taken into account. Since the early CIIR days, if not before during its incarnation as the Sword of the Spirit, the organisation had argued that statecraft needed to be centred on pursuit of fairer international relations enabling development progress based on social justice, human rights and empowerment of poorer citizens.

Though ultimately the result of the inevitable compromises involved in political negotiation having to deal with competing policy agendas – over economic development policy issues, the sustainability of economic growth, the role of corporate business and the wider private sector, development finance, and the degree of ambition in tackling inequality, to name a few – the SDGs had benefited from stronger consultations across the world in comparison with the MDGs. They signalled, in principle if not necessarily in practice, more comprehensive and ambitious global intent on the challenges of sustainable development. As such, they provided a new focus for civil society advocacy – but in an increasingly uncertain world.

Reflecting on a long contribution

Progressio may not have been a leading civil society force in organising the specific advocacy at this time influencing governments and the UN on the incubation and introduction of the SDGs. The goals were the result of the efforts of multiple actors and processes that gained momentum from the later 2000s as the MDGs' expiry loomed. Nonetheless, Progressio, as well as engaging with the process through the [Beyond 2015 campaign](#) and the world-wide Action 2015 network, made its own important contributions to overall debate and action on the post-2015 development framework. An example was its 2012 [submission to the IDC](#) of the UK's House of Commons.

Alongside [mobilising members](#) and its International Citizen Service volunteers to support wider civil society action on the post-2015 framework (see later section), Progressio provided [contextual commentary](#) on its concerns at key moments in the process that led to the SDGs. One such moment was the [preparation](#) and [publication](#) of the UN's 2013 high-level panel (HLP) report outlining possible new goals. A particular concern was the [need for poor people's own views to be heard](#) – an issue that Progressio sought to address by [consulting partners](#) in Zimbabwe, Somaliland, Haiti and El Salvador and submitting findings to UN consultations.

Progressio added a distinct voice and played a more assertive role on the specific issues on which it had partner-informed proposals to promote and the legitimacy to act. As covered more fully in this chapter, this was the case with gender justice and faith and particularly [water rights](#). Progressio, through its 'Waterproof development' campaign targeting the 2012 Rio+20 sustainable development summit and its post-2015 outcomes, made water the centrepiece of its efforts to influence the new sustainable development agenda.

Progressio's contribution to the overall thrust of the SDGs, moreover, ought to be considered from a historical rather than contemporary perspective, taking into account the phases of work described in this publication. The organisation had played its own humble yet significant part over the years in helping to catalyse the accumulated pool of thought and action that created the conditions in which the SDGs' content, conceptual promise and potential benefits eventually came about.

Facing a tough climate

The advent of the 2030 Agenda, however, collided with events and trends that threatened SDG progress in the global South and international support in the global North. For instance, alongside mounting geo-political tensions as the promise of the Arab Spring unfolding from late 2010 gave way to spiralling conflict and humanitarian crises – [repeatedly hitting Progressio's own country programme in Yemen hard](#) – the reverberations of the 2008 international financial crisis continued to be strongly felt.

Defending the UK's aid commitment and rising pressure for 'results'

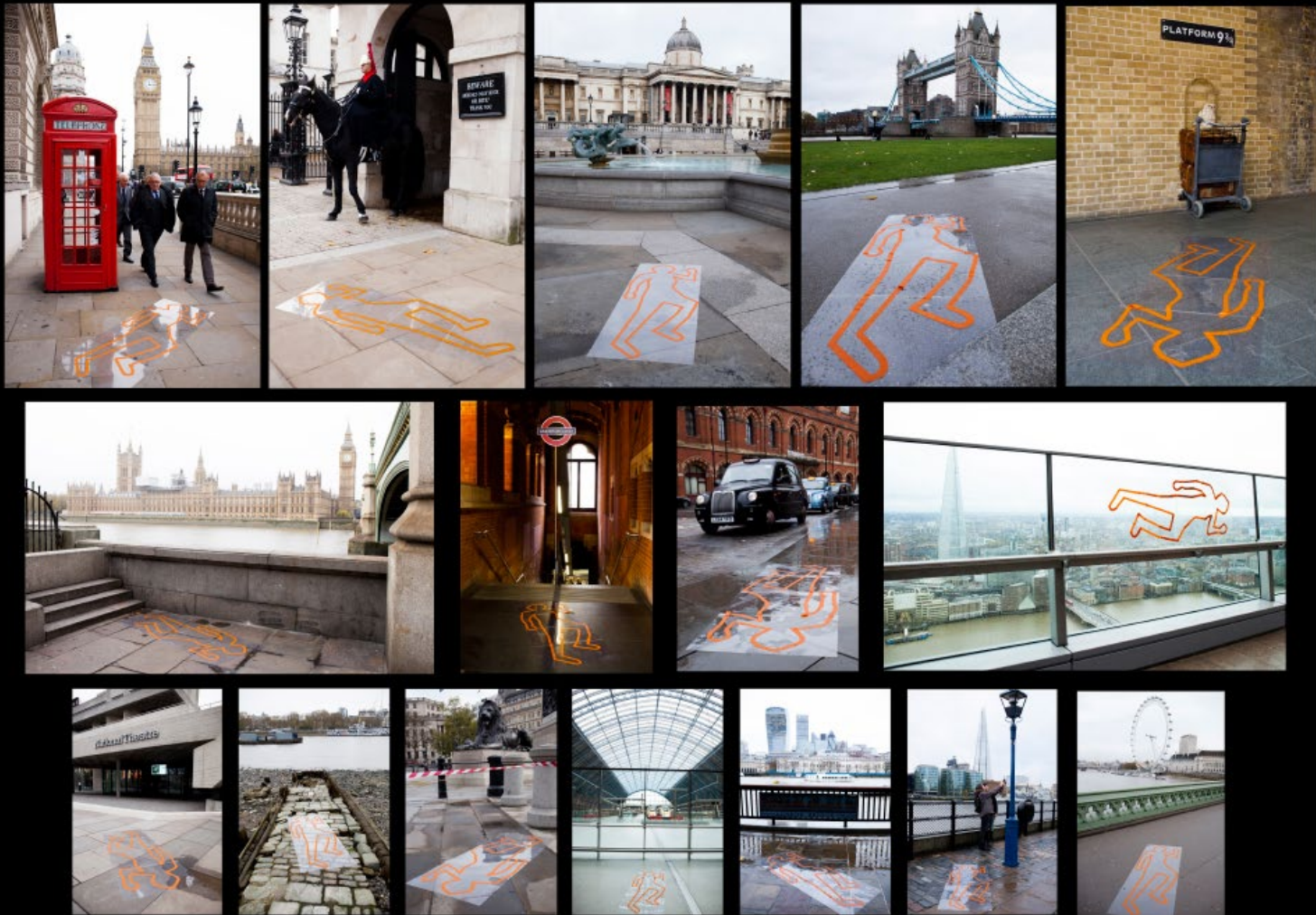
The knock-on effects of the international financial crisis in the traditional rich donor countries were felt in Progressio's UK home. Public and political support for the UK's contribution to international development, amid the ongoing domestic difficulties and social costs of tackling the economic downturn and recovery, faced growing challenges and political attacks.

In a widely welcomed move, the new Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government elected in 2010 upheld the outgoing Labour administration's pledge to meet the UN target of spending 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) annually on international aid by 2013. Then, in late 2014, it enshrined in law the 0.7 commitment, making the UK the first G7 leading rich nation to do so. However, such progress, which public pressure – including by Progressio campaigners – had helped to achieve, faced further backlashes from right-wing political forces and media. Following the 2015 elections, which returned Prime Minister David Cameron to power to lead a Conservative government, they pushed for parliament to overturn the UK's ring-fencing of the 0.7 aid commitment. An NGO lobbying campaign, [again supported by Progressio members](#), successfully pushed for its protection in 2016.

Notwithstanding the increasingly toxic contestation of the UK's aid budget from 2010, moves to increase spending on aid, though involving small amounts in terms of the country's GNI, had steadily been accompanied by rising scrutiny of how the money was spent and with what impact. To fend off often ill-informed and politically driven assertions that aid was an unnecessary 'waste' and took resources away from addressing problems at home, official discourse stressed the need for NGOs, as intermediaries in aid delivery, to prove '[value for money](#)' by demonstrating 'results'.

#16DaysOfActivism PROGRESSIO 75

1940-2015



A Campaign to End Violence Against Women

1 in 3 women suffer physical or sexual violence worldwide.

Take action by asking your MP to make eliminating all forms of violence against women a priority.

**bit.ly/evaw16
#orangetheworld
#16days**



With the advent of the SDGs, which showed greater ambition for tackling gender inequality and discrimination, Progressio lent its weight to initiatives tackling violence against women and girls. Pictured above is a Progressio campaign stunt in which eye-catching images were placed in iconic locations in London to draw public attention to the issue. The stunt featured across the media, including *The Guardian*.

Complex change, judging progress: Progressio and the 'results agenda'

Though necessary and ostensibly legitimate in terms of public accountability, a [major concern for Progressio](#) and others was that this emphasis on results, if not handled in reasonable and realistic ways, would underplay the need for core investment in the indispensable organisational infrastructure needed for smaller organisations such as itself to survive and develop in order to optimise work with civil society and communities in the South. Progressio was also concerned that a so-called 'results agenda' would favour larger-scale organisations with lower transaction costs as well as ventures addressing more tangible issues on which linear, quicker gains could be more easily shown.

In contrast, Progressio was a smaller medium-sized NGO. Its grassroots approach, moreover, as well as focusing on the pressing capacity needs of often resource-poor partner organisations, involved efforts to tackle complex problems – such as those affecting participation and governance – in fraught political environments. Such settings by their very nature entailed inevitable risks, dangers and setbacks and thus required proper commitment and resources.

For Progressio, moreover, achieving 'results' was not just a technical matter of adopting 'what-works' best practice, but also meant addressing the structural political, social, economic and cultural barriers – national and international – hindering progress in sustainable development. This wider endeavour, a perennial consideration in CIIR and Progressio thought and action, was not straightforward or short-term. Achieving gender change in fragile and conflicted-affected countries was one topical example of the challenges involved in Progressio's work during this period.

A common issue of debate within the overall development community by now was whether official demands for evidence of development 'results' was overly primed by the need to convince vocally sceptical political, media and public audiences at home of the value of aid rather than based on more honest and meaningful recognition of the tricky steps and intermediate achievements needed to make development progress.

Time to better capture and communicate achievements

Having invested in the RICA system, the bedrock for [logical framework reporting to DfID on progress under its PPA](#), Progressio was in a stronger position to demonstrate the effectiveness of its work. As noted in Chapter 4, RICA involved more systematic collection of information on the ultimate benefits of partner organisations' work for their social constituencies and target groups in projects supported by Progressio's DWs or the focus of its advocacy initiatives. During this period, Progressio also strengthened efforts to gather greater direct feedback from final social beneficiaries, for example through the use of focus groups in project evaluations. It also undertook a drive to build up a pool of 'stories of change' case studies as part of its donor reporting.

Awareness of development 'complexity' among official aid practitioners meant donor expectations were often more flexible in practice. All the same, in a feverish political climate in the UK, growing risks existed that Progressio's role in facilitating the necessary pre-conditions for change to occur – helping partners to sharpen their advocacy and communication skills, adopt more sustainable food production methods, or strengthen their fundraising strategies and organisational management practices, for example – might not be properly understood and recognised as signs of progress.

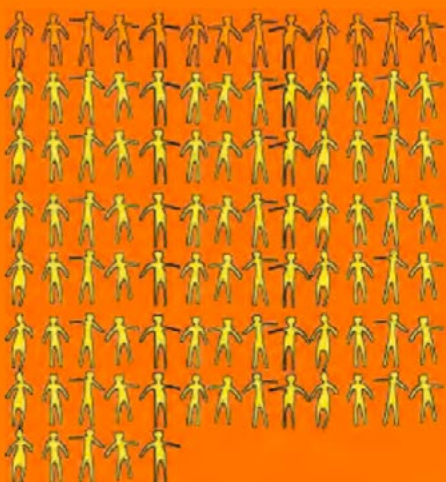
Progressio's 2012 mid-term PPA review

Indeed, in 2012, an [independent progress review](#) (IPR) conducted by the IDL Group recommended that Progressio should articulate more robustly the value of its own specific capacity-building contribution to partners' progress, overcoming the organisation's traditional reticence to highlight its own institutional success. It suggested that Progressio, based on its rich programme experience, had ample evidence to argue that the full potential of donor investment in civil society initiatives would not be realised if effective capacity was not supported and put in place as a prerequisite for their progress.

The IPR review, though an individual exercise Progressio had a say in organising and guiding with its selected team of assessors, was part of a sector-wide DfID assessment of its overall PPA agreements with NGOs. The wider review involved generic terms of reference set by the ministry and an overall IPR process designed by its contractor.

In following up the review, Progressio, through the RICA system and its use on the ground with partners, stepped up efforts to capture and articulate better the catalytic importance of its capacity-building support. From 2013, its [annual reviews](#), for instance, carried information not just on the numbers of people, as recorded by RICA, to have indirectly benefited from partnerships but also on the intermediate process followed to reach them through DWs, policy interventions and, in a new development, the role of young volunteers involved in its International Citizen Service programme.

Making change happen



5,506

people took a campaign action or
went to an event



166,291

people visited our website – that's
more than 13,000 every month



96

development workers

- 13 from the Global North
- 83 from the Global South
- 31 nationalities
- 64 men
- 32 women



459

young adult ICS volunteers

- 243 UK volunteers
- 216 national volunteers
- 284 young women
- 175 young men

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15,364



people in partner
organisations or
communities received
training



3,124

Progressio's work on **sustainable environment**
has directly benefited 3,124 people who have
been trained in sustainable farming, resource
management and how to generate more income
for themselves and their families.



5,012

Progressio's work building **participation and effective
governance** has directly benefited 5,012 people. This
includes those within partner organisations who have
been supported or received specialised training, and
people from communities who participated in training
workshops.

And many millions of people have indirectly benefited from our work.
That's because the people we have trained have gone on to...

- Train others to help their local communities
- Challenge unfair political systems that hold people back
- Encourage their peers to have a say in decision making
- Work with our policy team and campaigners to give people power
over their own lives



7,228

Progressio's work on **HIV
and AIDS** has directly
benefited 7,228 people
through prevention, support,
awareness raising and the
reduction of stigma.



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DWs, of course, remained a key feature of Progressio's work. A '[1-to-6,000' graphic in the 2016 annual review](#) depicted the ripple-and-cascade effects of a single DW professional as they worked with one or several partners (for example in a joint project or networking initiative); facilitated stronger counterpart expertise and new organisational approaches, structures and initiatives; and supported the training of trainers to champion replication of the positive results with and through other multipliers. In this way, positive outcomes and impact could be achieved benefiting wider numbers of people in communities and other target groups and audiences. In 2016, Progressio reported that DWs had directly benefited 9,134 people (just under half of them women) and an estimated 750,000 people indirectly over the past year.

This stronger articulation and communication of Progressio's approach was needed to address the apparent gap between the Progressio IPR research team's very positive, if at times constructively critical, appreciation of the organisation's work and the medium-rank score it was ultimately awarded in [DfID's performance assessment](#). The latter was based on the conclusions reached by the ministry's overall PPA review contractor on interpreting the Progressio IPR team's report.

Progressio and adoption of 'theory of change' methodologies

Progressio's efforts to strengthen its planning and assessment of change also reflected a shift within the NGO and donor community to adopting the 'theory of change' (ToC) methodologies now firmly in vogue yet prompting considerable debate. Some saw ToCs as a serious attempt to grapple far more thoroughly with the complex contextual factors and forces disrupting or enhancing the intended progress and success of development interventions; others, meanwhile, felt they were a tokenistic repackaging of the traditional dilemmas of log-frames, whose linear input-output-outcome-impact chains had to be set against the structural barriers to project progress often conveniently parked in their 'risks and assumptions' columns.

At this time, Progressio shared more widely its learning on measuring and assessing results and impact with other NGOs as part of joint efforts to minimise inefficiencies of organisations individually grappling with the challenges of strengthening the measurement and assessment of results and impact. The organisation did so as a member of the development effectiveness working group of the [BOND](#) network of British development NGOs and was also active in its PPA learning groups, for example on empowerment and accountability.

The UK-Progressio partnership: welcome continuation, mounting uncertainties

As seen above, the new political circumstances in the UK from 2010 signalled changing official views and intentions on practical arrangements for supporting development NGOs. During 2010, Progressio had successfully applied in a competitive process to DfID for another three-year PPA, which began at the start of the UK's new financial year in April 2011. In an uncertain climate, this was a major achievement for Christine Allen, the then executive director, as well as Progressio staff in the global North and South. It reflected continued official recognition of Progressio's work.

PPA renewal, PPA questions

The annual size of Progressio's PPA grant on this occasion, however, was a third lower than the £3 million the organisation had applied for. Rapidly in medium-term question from early 2012, moreover, was whether and on what terms DfID would maintain its overall PPA scheme providing strategic core funding for successful grantee NGOs such as Progressio. Indeed, DfID's IPR review held in the second half of 2012 was intended not just to examine the performance of individual NGOs such as Progressio but to assess the effectiveness – and therefore appropriateness – of the PPA mechanism as a whole.

Nonetheless, renewal of Progressio's PPA in 2011, before these wider donor considerations of the overall PPA mechanism's future gained pace in the wake of the transition from one UK government to another, was both crucial and welcome. It provided strategic core funding for the organisation's plans to build on the recent achievements described in Chapter 4.

At the same time, DfID's additional funding for Progressio's work in Latin America, part of its one-off scheme to support INGOs working with civil society in the region, had ended in 2011, and the level of funding under the new three-year PPA, or from other sources, could not fill the gap. With the new PPA also centred on poorer world regions and fragile and conflict-affected countries seen as a greater priority by DfID, Progressio was obliged to scale back further and adjust the nature of its work in Latin America, as outlined shortly.

Martin McEnery, Progressio's chairperson from 2008, speaking at the organisation's 2013 AGM, flanked left by Progressio's new chief executive officer, Mark Lister, and right by Progressio treasurer, Philip King. The increasingly difficult UK environment in which the organisation was now working was reflected by political attacks on aid.



Progressio ICS volunteers (black and yellow shirts) joining an NGO gathering outside parliament to defend the UK's 0.7 aid commitment.



New opportunities: Progressio joins the International Citizen Service programme

The situation was a challenging one for Progressio's new leader, [Mark Lister](#), an experienced charity senior manager and former CIIR fundraiser of the early 1990s, who took up the post of chief executive in October 2012, as well as for the board, chaired since 2008 by Martin McEnery.

But it also saw the emergence of new opportunities. An important development at the time of Progressio's 2011 renewal of its PPA was the organisation's parallel success in joining the [International Citizen Service](#) (ICS) programme. The new scheme, launched by the new UK coalition government, involved sending young adult volunteers to work with local peers in the global South on short-term placements to support sustainable development initiatives (see Box).

Nurturing a new generation of development change-makers through ICS

The International Citizen Service initiative, managed overall by [VSO](#) in partnership with like-minded UK development organisations running their individual ICS programmes as members of a consortium, involved short 10-week placements (later extended to 12 weeks in Progressio's case) in which 18- to 25-year-old volunteers from the UK were paired with local counterparts (national volunteers) in economically poorer focus countries.

Its aim was to tackle poverty, boost the UK and local volunteers' personal development and leadership skills through cross-cultural learning and exchange, and promote active citizenship as a vital means of supporting sustainable development, with volunteer teams working on issues most relevant to the local context. Volunteers, both from the UK and their national counterparts in the global South, were also expected to sustain their interest and commitment at the end of the placements through 'actions at home', sharing lessons and expertise, raising awareness and mobilising support for sustainable development locally, nationally and internationally.

From initial pilot to five-year involvement

Progressio was one of a handful of UK agencies to join the ICS programme during its 2011/12 pilot year. It placed 130 UK volunteers (86 female and 44 male) in Peru, El Salvador, Malawi and Zimbabwe where they worked in teams with national volunteers and supported 17 partner organisations. The success of the pilot scheme led to ICS funding being extended for another three years when [El Salvador](#), [Honduras](#), [Nicaragua](#), [Malawi](#) and [Zimbabwe](#) became the established focus countries of [Progressio's ICS programme](#), which went on to be further renewed for another period from 2014/15.

Several hundred UK volunteers took part in Progressio's ICS programme each year, sharing their experiences through country blogs on Progressio's website and through its dedicated [Facebook](#) page, both of which carried stories, videos and [animations](#) to record insights on the community impact being pursued or achieved. Over the five years to 2015/16, Progressio involved some 2,800 UK and national volunteers in its ICS programme.

Outgoing leader Christine Allen, in seeing through her 11-year contribution to the organisation as executive director before becoming head of policy and public affairs at Christian Aid, had played an important role in leading Progressio's bid to take part in the overall ICS initiative and in setting up its own scheme.

Progressio's ICS programme, as well as adding a new strand to the organisation's country programmes in Southern Africa by mobilising the interest, energy and commitment of younger people, cushioned to some extent the retrenchment and adjustment of its work in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Scaling up and scaling back in Latin America and the Caribbean

The 2010 closure of the country programme in Ecuador described in Chapter 4 was now quickly followed by gradual retrenchment in [Peru](#) as Progressio phased out the placement of DWs as its traditionally main mode of work in the country. The phasing out of DW programming gradually took place in all of Progressio's country programmes in the Latin America and Caribbean region, albeit with impressive final DW efforts to scale up the impact of this work and take it further ambitious new directions.

A fitting finale in Peru

The transition over 2011-13 in Peru was cushioned by a [Progressio joint programme agreement for Christian Aid](#) to oversee the successful completion of remaining project initiatives involving Progressio DWs financed by the agency. They included an initiative to

boost the climate change advocacy of the Ecology, Technology and Culture in the Andes Association ([ETC-ANDES](#)), supported by Honduran journalist, [Alberto Vásquez](#), who worked with the Cusco regional government to develop a communications plan.

Another initiative involved DW support for a water management initiative with [Grupo GEA](#) (Environmental Management Group), a non-profit social enterprise dedicated to ensuring environmentally sustainable livelihoods for Peru's urban poor. Dutch expert [Sonya Bleeker](#), having completed her gender, natural resource management and rural development DW placement with [IDEAS](#) in Cajamarca (see Chapter 4), went on to help GEA promote the participation of 80 local communities in water conservation and environmental protection schemes in areas covering Lima's Rímac, Chillón and Lurín river basins (see Box). The issues dealt with by such schemes, and the benefits of the water councils they promoted, held major importance for communities (see Quote).

"Here in Huamantanga, as in other parts of Peru, water is getting less and less each year... For us having water means having food and a little bit of income. But for the big companies such as mines and hydroelectric power plants, water means a lot of money, and because they have more power and money, the government allows them to use the water we need so badly. The creation of the water users' councils is a positive initiative. At least we can now have a dialogue, and we will have a vote in the decisions that are made."

Manual Cuadros Jiménez, member of the Huamantanga council, Lima province, quoted in Progressio Update 2012, issue 1

Towards a new water culture in Lima: a steady flow of results

Peruvian civil society action on water, for which Progressio provided DW support over the years, had led to a new law with provisions for the establishment of water users' councils, but many of the bodies created so far had neglected small-scale users. This representation gap was one of the problems this new initiative with GEA was intended to overcome. Sonya Bleeker helped GEA to create a water users' platform for Lima's watersheds and supported its development of a water management plan, linking this work to the group's wider aim of promoting a new water culture for the capital.

Her efforts included helping to strengthen the newly created multi-stakeholder [AquaFondo](#) water financing and conservation initiative that GEA had helped to spawn. This envisaged downstream urban domestic and industrial water users investing in upstream communities, enabling the latter to better protect clean, regular supplies and secure fairer access to water themselves. The Municipality of Lima, for example, for the first time, had sponsored an Environmental Fund – with contributions from companies and industries polluting the river Rímac – to pay for community services promoting the sustainable management of the river.

This support for GEA was a fitting finale for CIIR's and Progressio's work involving the placement of DWs in Peru. It provided an illustrative glimpse of the organisation's legacy in the country. Indeed, GEA had come a long way since CIIR's overseas programme, ICD, had embarked on partnership with the organisation from the early 1990s.

During the 1990s, GEA set up, supported and eventually merged into the group its OACA and Ecolab operations. Starting with scant financial resources and equipment, these initiatives had included piloting environmental health promotion and water and soil testing with poor communities in the rapidly urbanising Lurín valley on the outskirts of Lima. CIIR, spotting the strategic potential of such work, had placed Anna Zucchetti, an Italian DW, to support OACA and then GEA for most of the decade. Under her direction from 1997, GEA steadily emerged as a recognised and trusted leader on environmental sustainability and community development in Peru during the 2000s.

Working with local leaders and communities, central government, businesses and environmentalists, for example, GEA was at the forefront of developing and promoting sustainable development plans to save the Lurín valley from damagingly chaotic urban development. Its work was recognised at government levels as a possible blueprint for replication in other Lima outskirts and Peruvian cities. CIIR's intense early support and accompaniment along with Progressio's later support for the organisation were valued features of this process (see Box on following page).



Italian DW Anna Zuchetti with colleagues from OACA and Ecolab in the 1990s.

top left: testing domestic water supplies in San Juan de Miraflores, Lima.

top right: inaugurating a water tank, installed by OACA in Picapiedra, Lurin



bottom right : running a workshop in Ecolab.

bottom left: Anna being interviewed in 2011 on her work as President of Lima's park services, Serpar

@ Annie Bungeroth



ANNA ZUCCHETTI

A lasting companion in advancing Peru's sustainable urban environment

Anna Zuchetti, an Italian biologist and environmental technology expert, was as a DW in CIIR's ICD country programme in Peru for seven years, initially with the Institute for Development and the Environment (IDMA) and then with OACA and GEA. From 1997 to 2010, she was GEA's project director and executive director before working as environment manager and president of parks services for the Metropolitan Municipality of Lima from 2010 to 2014. She was Dean of the Faculty of Environmental Sciences at the Universidad Científica del Sur in 2015-16 and an adviser to Peru's vice-minister of the environment in 2016-2017.

I landed in Peru over 28 years ago and it was CIIR's overseas programme, ICD, which brought me here. I was a young post-graduate student who had just resigned from doing a doctorate because I wanted to support people in the developing world. The decision was not an easy one but my instincts were stronger than rational judgment: they told me I didn't want to become a scholar but to be out there in the battlefield working to help change the world.

Although I initially came to Peru to help set up an environmental analysis laboratory as part of an agro-ecological development programme, my DW assignment and subsequent placements turned into a long-term commitment to environmental sustainability and social change in the country. It became a journey in which CIIR and then Progressio accompanied me and my Peruvian colleagues on a diverse path of personal, professional and institutional development.

A permanent exploration

Our work was focused on the urban agenda, but we ran diverse projects on a growing range of issues. They ranged from working to tackle the problems of drinking water and sanitation infrastructure during the outbreak of the cholera epidemic of 1991, carrying out urban environmental risk assessments and monitoring the quality of the urban environment, all the way to supporting urban agriculture and researching and promoting strategies for sustainable urban development. The work involved a permanent exploration of how to address the rising challenges of contemporary urbanisation based on a deep concern for practical applications and empowering social impacts.

We founded our NGO, started a private company to finance it in the 1990s, worked with academia and, later on, 'became government' as recognition of our accumulated experience over the 2000s saw us later join the Lima Metropolitan Municipality and the new Ministry of Environment team. Apart from positive direct impacts on urban communities' lives and environmental policies, the collaborative path we developed together enabled the professional and human growth of a large number of young Peruvians. They, like myself, found in the work with CIIR and Progressio a deep sense of purpose.

If I had to use one word to describe the organisation, it would be 'companion'. It was always an understanding partner in our endeavours, providing reflection, guidance, support and a beautiful group of friends and colleagues. Thanks to CIIR and Progressio for so many unforgettable years.

María Yolanda Rojas Ávila is 35 years old. She lives with her husband, Germán Santos Gómez Cuadros, and their three children, Eduardo (8 years old, pictured), Wilson (5), and Silvia Rosalina (3). They live in the district of Antioquia, in the watershed of the Lurín River near Lima, Peru. Yolanda is active in her community as the president of the local committee of the governmental social assistance programme Vaso de Leche (Glass of Milk). She has lived in Antioquia all her life.



"I use water basically for two things. For my household I need water for domestic tasks such as washing and cooking, and for personal hygiene. I also give water to the animals I have around my home. Each month we pay a small fee for our drinking water system, it works alright, the only problem is that the water is not yet drinkable, so we have to boil it before drinking it. But at least almost every household is connected now."

"Besides this, my husband and I use water for irrigating our land. The local irrigation committee also charges a fee for that. However, in this area, farmers use irrigation water very inefficiently and every time we have less water available. Sometimes this causes conflicts between neighbours."

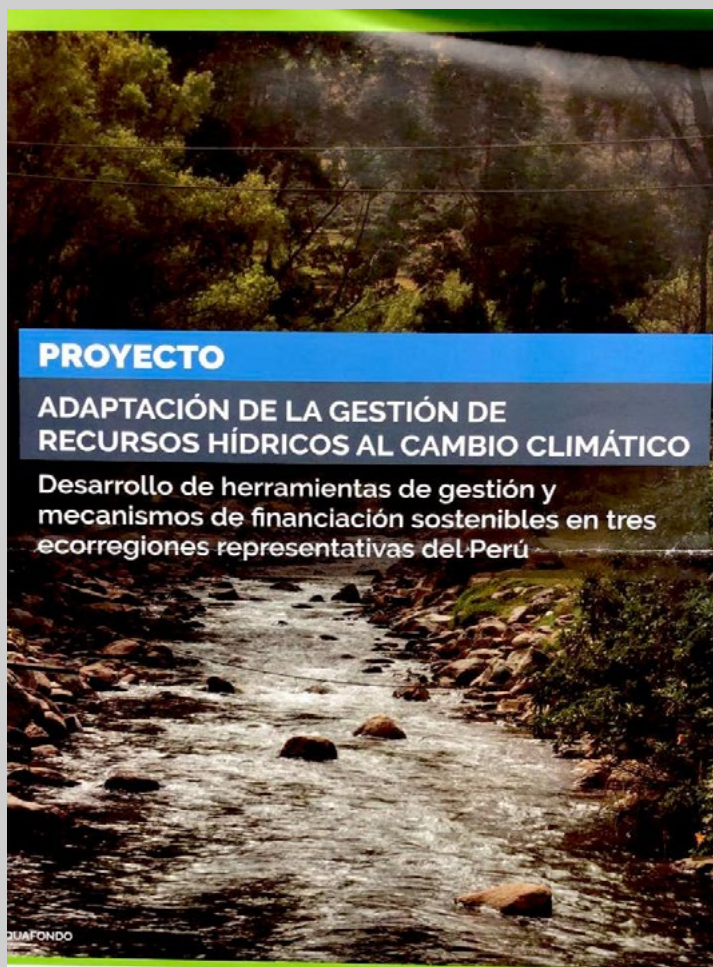
"To me, water means life. Without water the people, animals and crops cannot live. If we didn't have water for irrigation, we would depend on the rainy season and only have one harvest per year, which would mean less income for my family."

"The kind of world I would like to leave for my grandchildren is a world where everybody has access to good education and where everybody can get a decent income. In my community we live very close to Lima, where there are a lot of rich and middle class families, but although we are only a few hours away, we are completely ignored, especially by the State. Only some NGOs work with us to improve our lives."

"I'm taking some practical steps to make sure my grandchildren inherit a better world. Through my work in Vaso de Leche I help the poorest families to receive better nutrition. I also try to participate in activities such as the Consejo de Cuenca (the water users' organisation at watershed level). This organisation gives small water users an equal voice in the management of our watershed, because until now it is the big companies and the State who make all the decisions, and we are not even told about what they decide."

"My hopes for the future are for a good future for my children, in a healthy environment, I hope we will have enough water in the future. This is something that keeps us all worried because we hear about climate change and we know that there is a lot of pollution of our water as well, caused by big companies but also by other farmers. The problem is that we don't know how to use our water in a healthy way."

"World leaders meeting in June should really listen to all the poor people in the world and not ignore us, because I think everybody in the world should have the same chance to have a good and decent life."



PROYECTO

ADAPTACIÓN DE LA GESTIÓN DE RECURSOS HÍDRICOS AL CAMBIO CLIMÁTICO

Desarrollo de herramientas de gestión y mecanismos de financiación sostenibles en tres ecorregiones representativas del Perú



Proyecto:
Recuperación y mejoramiento de infraestructura ancestral de Recarga hídrica artificial en la Comunidad Campesina de San Pedro de Casta / FONDAM - BACKUS

30

Personas capacitadas

20

Hombres

10

Mujeres

2

talleres de capacitación

Operación y mantenimiento de infraestructura ancestral
Monitoreo de la infraestructura ancestral

Población beneficiaria

1195 personas

Área beneficiada directamente

1.3 Km (área de la amuna)

Área revegetada

0.8 has (microcuenca)

Cantidad de agua recargada

1 000 000 m³ has (aproximadamente)

Mayor información del Proyecto



Vídeo Institucional del proyecto

<https://goo.gl/GBtLTD>

The Nature Conservancy Peru

aquaFondo
INVERSIÓN EN AGUA PARA LIMA

Proyecto financiado por el
Ministerio Público
de la Nación
a través de una resolución del Parlamento
de la República Federal de Alemania



The work with GEA, among other projects, exemplified how CIIR and Progressio's Peru programme had evolved and the contribution it had made to the organisation as a whole. Since its formal establishment in 1977, the Peru programme, as well as sharing a common interest with Ecuador in supporting alternative media and communications for development, had built on its early concentration on primary health care promotion to develop a strong focus on rural and urban environmental issues. Indeed, its launch of an environmental education programme in the mid-1990s, drawing on the OACA-GEA experience, was a precursor for the launch of similar CIIR and Progressio initiatives in other countries. Furthermore, it helped to set the scene for the organisation to make work on sustainable environment taking a rights-based social justice approach a thematic priority.

The Peru programme, like others, had also reflected the country loyalty and partner commitment constituting a hallmark of CIIR and Progressio's endeavours over the years. As Chapter 2 observed, CIIR had sustained its presence in Peru during the violent and repressive years of the 1980-92 armed conflict when many INGOs left the country because of the serious security dangers.

CIIR's staying power put the organisation in a strong and respected position to take forward the multiple partnerships described in previous chapters, as well as help support UK-based solidarity of the kind still provided today by the [Peru Support Group](#). Channel 4's March 2014 devotion of its popular '[Food Unwrapped](#)' programme to Peru's all-year asparagus production hinted at the lasting impact of Progressio's work with [CEPES](#) on the water security and ethical trade issues at stake.

From DWs to ICS: boosting the old, pursuing the new in Central America

In addition to the Andes, Progressio's phasing out of DWs also became necessary in Central America from the early years of the new decade, with Progressio's regional and country staff and remaining DWs in country programmes working hard to pull together and drive forward the results of existing work.

In El Salvador, for instance, Progressio's EU-supported 'gender strategies for HIV prevention' project with CBC, CONTRASIDA, Flor de Piedra and the Youth Development Foundation culminated in the 2012 [launch](#) with the Ministry of Health and UNAIDS of a report. It publicised the findings and recommendations arising from their work to promote women's rights and different masculinity as central to tackling HIV and AIDS. DWs such as [Noelia Ruiz](#) and [Héctor Núñez González](#), in reflecting on the project, said the government and institutions such as the judiciary were now paying greater attention to gender discrimination and gender-based violence as major factors in relation to HIV.

Also in El Salvador, Progressio pursued further gains in its partnerships linking work on citizen participation in local government with natural resource management. Bolivian DW María Martínez Mita, for example, worked with [PADECOMSM](#) and FUMA to [drive forward environmental citizenship](#) through awareness-raising events and competitions. The aim was to strengthen the commitment of local communities, institutions and decision-makers on issues such as refuse collection and recycling.

In [Nicaragua](#), DWs helped partners train community leaders in four indigenous territories on local development planning. Meanwhile, Progressio also worked to set up of Progressio Latina as a social enterprise to support from Honduras sustainable development initiatives in Central America.

Despite the difficult losses entailed by DW phase-out, the ICS scheme provided an important means for Progressio to retain a presence in Central America and gave a new form of continuity to its work there. While Peru gained a place in the initial Progressio ICS pilot in 2011/12, enabling Progressio to sustain its advocacy of positive [action on water issues](#) in the country, it was Progressio's programmes in Central America thereafter that took regional advantage of ICS as Progressio's successful participation in the overall scheme was successfully renewed.

The Dominican Republic and Haiti: one last push

At this stage, the only countries of Progressio's longstanding regional programme in Latin America and the Caribbean in which the organisation continued to support partners through DWs were the [Dominican Republic and Haiti](#). The countries were now part of a Hispaniola programme managed by Nicolo Schiaparelli, an Italian former DW in Peru. His team provided programme support from Santo Domingo where Progressio now shared an office with Christian Aid. The arrangement was part of a [collaboration agreement](#) in which Christian Aid was also helping to fund the contribution of Progressio DWs to the sustainable environment and climate change initiatives the agency was likewise involved in. The Hispaniola programme, with its priority focus on work straddling the Dominican-Haitian border and in the context of Haiti's ongoing critical situation, was relevant to Progressio's

intensified concerns during this period – and those of DfID as its main donor – with conflict and fragility. This factor helped to prolong the Hispaniola programme's life.

Even in early 2014, it was the Hispaniola programme where Progressio had the largest number of DWs in place (12 of Progressio's total of 52 DWs in all country programmes at that time). It too, however, was brought to a close in 2016 amid Progressio's continuing financial constraints and the trend of Latin America and the Caribbean being considered a lower official international aid priority. The donor retreat proceeded, despite the region, with its vibrant social movements, continuing to be a rich arena of civil society experience in struggles to tackle poverty and achieve development progress through social justice and political change.

Indeed, Progressio's eventual closure of its last programme in the region still based on the traditional deployment of DWs on multi-year placements was far from unproductive. The Hispaniola programme, as outlined later below, enjoyed success in tapping into the increasingly decentralised country funding mechanisms, such as those run by the EU, as well as UN bodies. As a result it was able to drive forward further achievements in promoting participatory local governance and sustainable livelihoods in the border region. Progressio, in tandem, continued to play an influential advocacy role in urging greater and better international action, including by the UK, to support the efforts of Haitian civil society to tackle the country's structural problems exacerbated by the 2010 earthquake.

Such contributions were in keeping with the positive role that the organisation had played since piloting work with partners in the Dominican Republic in the late 1970s and eventually establishing a full country programme in 1989 with strong interest in supporting Haiti.

Closing work and leaving a legacy in Timor-Leste: a significant moment

In 2013, Progressio decided that it would also end its country programme in [Timor-Leste](#) in mid-2014. This was a momentous decision in view of the organisation's decades of solidarity with the national liberation struggle, its sustained accompaniment of the country on independence through international policy work on peace, reconciliation and justice, and its recent in-country DW support for local capacity-building.

The move took place amid the growing difficulty of funding the programme. Aid agencies were steadily withdrawing from the country, despite its conflict legacy, the high levels of ongoing social violence noted in Chapter 4, and the gap between its new found national wealth and the living standards of much of its population. Timor-Leste had now attained lower-middle income status, with growing revenues from offshore oil and gas reserves accounting for the bulk of the state budget.

Yet, for all these outstanding challenges and the recent political crises, Timor-Leste was taking charge of its own affairs. An emblematic sign was its pioneering international role in helping to establish the G7+ grouping of fragile states in 2010. The initiative involved a 'country-owned' global support mechanism, the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, to promote and monitor international support for G7+ countries to tackle conflict and development challenges. Timor-Leste had also joined the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and became EITI-compliant in 2010. This move provided a lever for state-civil society engagement on the transparent use of natural resource wealth to support greater investment in local communities and their development.

By the time of the country programme's closure, some 40 DWs had nurtured the expertise of partner organisations since 2000. During this final period the [remaining team of professionals](#) made further significant contributions to Timor-Leste's development process and partners' efforts to improve people's lives.

As well as scaling up its support for citizens' participation in local governance and the promotion of women's rights (see Box), the last element of Progressio's legacy, as covered in fuller detail later in this chapter, involved seeing through the work launched at the end of the 2000s to establish and develop institutions better able to tackle HIV and AIDS. This important contribution mirrored the advances seen in other Progressio country programmes.

Extending local civil society advocacy and building a platform for women's rights

Progressio continued its partnership with the [FONGTIL](#) civil society forum to extend the successful development and piloting of civil society monitoring of local spending in Ermera described in Chapter 4 to other districts across the country. A Ugandan DW, [Armstrong Asiimir Nkahabita](#), a specialist in decentralisation and citizen engagement with experience of working in conflict zones in his home country and Papua New Guinea, helped to coach and mentor 13 district liaison officers so that they would be able to facilitate the replication of local monitoring expertise among FONGTIL members in each district.

This work helped to provide a platform for Progressio DWs to sustain their support for local advocacy to boost women's rights, including in the light of the 2010 law against domestic violence now requiring promotion and enforcement. They included [Tobias Lugolobi](#), another Ugandan with relevant home and international experience, who worked in Oecusse district, and [Victor Waneno Owuor](#), a participatory planning specialist from Kenya. His work with the Community Development Centre in Baucau district included organising workshops on human rights, gender equality and [combating domestic violence](#) with local rights groups, the police and village chiefs as well as supporting the development of [local women's leadership skills](#).

Meanwhile, Progressio continued its partnership with the [REDE FETO](#) by recruiting a gender specialist from the Philippines, [Vilma Horca](#), to support the women's network's advocacy on female access to education, early marriage and violence against women and girls.

Challenging times: thematic priorities and programme shifts

During this final chapter of the organisation's long life, Progressio sustained work on the thematic priorities it had addressed during the 2006-10 period. Building on the gains, it sought in particular to bolster its work on [women's rights and gender justice](#). Along with the continued push to ensure a gender focus was mainstreamed in all work in line with the organisation's 2012 [gender review](#), Progressio vowed to make women's rights and gender justice a distinct thematic work priority in its own right as part of new strategy announced from 2015/16.

Violence against women and girls

This emphasis on gender justice had been steadily evolving as previous pages show. Its importance was highlighted by work on women's rights in countries such as El Salvador with one of the highest rates of gender-related murders in the world. It was also a logical extension of Progressio's strengths on HIV and AIDS, which made addressing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender discrimination integral features of its interventions. Their frequent targeting of young people now also made for productive opportunities to involve ICS volunteers on gender justice and HIV, particularly in Malawi and Zimbabwe.

The reinforced emphasis on women's rights and gender justice resonated too with the stronger attention now being paid by the development community to [gender-based violence](#), in particular violence against women and girls (VAWG). DfID, for example, was increasingly prioritising support for initiatives tackling this issue. Progressio, using its experience of engaging multiple religious actors and working on the ground, was again able to bring a faith dimension to policy discussions on gender and other development issues.

State fragility and governance

Meanwhile, Progressio's reshaped set of focus countries centred on so-called '[fragile states](#)' led the organisation to redouble its concerns with the impact of conflict and weak governance on the situation of women, with the work showing strong intent to address the gender barriers in society hindering their greater participation and representation in decision-making. In contrast with the 2006-10 period when investment between the three themes of participation and effective governance, sustainable environment and HIV and AIDS had been roughly even, Progressio's work now tilted towards a stronger emphasis on the first.

Resilience, environmental protection and sustainable livelihoods

Progressio continued to promote environmental sustainability based on natural resource management benefiting the livelihoods of the poor as a key theme. This was shown by its continued array of in-country work on agro-ecology and water and the implementation of international policy and campaign initiatives such as that targeting the Rio+20 sustainable development summit in 2012.

Progressio's final 2015-18 strategy sought to reframe its work on sustainable natural resource management and livelihoods around the concept of resilience. The term had gained additional currency amid not just the clear threats of climate change causing and compounding the vulnerability of poor people but also the need to recognise and support the strengths of communities.

For Progressio, however, resilience was not merely a matter of helping communities to cope with vulnerability; it also meant empowering people as rights-holders to resist the policies and practices causing adversity in the first place. Natural resource extraction, as well as driving climate change, continued to be a major source of environmental damage and social injustice. Environmental and human rights defenders were facing ever-increasing attacks in many countries, as underscored by [Global Witness](#), which had helped to support some of Progressio's recent work on timber extraction.

In this context, one of Progressio's final efforts to engage with economic justice issues during this period promoted a [gender-focused policy approach to business and human rights](#). Responsible business conduct on human rights was crucial for global progress on sustainable development yet remained an under-recognised and under-supported feature of delivering the SDGs.

Steps for progress: HIV and gender

From scaling up positive HIV action to a new drive to tackle underlying gender problems

One of Progressio's first acts during this period was to draw together and promote the lessons of its country-based work in different regions, as described in Chapter 4, to engage faith-based organisations as major actors in the battle against HIV and AIDS and the various forms of discrimination and stigmatisation involved. It did so by publishing and disseminating a 2011 report, [Prayer Alone Is Not Enough](#), which provided a strong platform for a new push on HIV and AIDS and the faith-based approach it had taken.

Prayer alone is not enough on HIV

Based on interviews gathered in close collaboration with Progressio partners in Zimbabwe, Yemen and El Salvador – all strongly religious societies – *Prayer Alone Is Not Enough* provided a much needed channel for people affected by HIV or AIDS, and those working alongside PLWHA, to tell and share their own stories from a [faith perspective](#).

The involvement of countries, partners and individuals with diverse religious backgrounds gave the report an implicit inter-faith dimension. One of the contributors, for example, was Stephen Batanda, a Ugandan DW supporting Yemen's Abu Musa Al Ashary association, an Islamic NGO. He was an Anglican Christian who had lost family members to HIV and AIDS himself.

The report was the result of sensitively organised participatory research launched in 2010. The interviewees' consent was sought and confidentiality concerns respected and the participants were actively involved in validating the content of the information collected. The very process of dialogue had its own significant value for participants and interviewers, as report author Jim Matarazzo noted in a [reflection](#).

People's stories and powerful messages

Indeed, the report was powerful and challenging. While serving as an opportunity for partners and change-makers supported by Progressio to share their experiences and insights on positive faith-based action, the stories of people living with HIV or AIDS told too of gaps, neglect and even harmful action on the part of religious groups and churches. The problems isolated and undermined the valuable efforts of individual faith and church leaders, pastors and members.

The underlying message of the stories was that the role of churches and faith communities could not be confined to important spiritual support, let alone moralising prescription of solutions. Rather, they needed to come to terms with the realities of people's daily lives as they related to sex and also tackle the injustices affecting PLWHA and their loved ones. The



Prayer alone is not enough

People's stories of HIV and faith

impact of discrimination and stigma was also exacerbated by poverty, which cut people off from access to information, health care and psycho-social support and disrupted homes and relationships.

With Progressio and its partners working with groups particularly vulnerable to discrimination, stigma, social disapproval and rejection, the testimonies yielded insights on complex and difficult issues. They included those relating to female sex workers, men who have sex with men and transgender people as well as former gang members who had been helped by Progressio partners to tackle the negative masculinity that damaged others and themselves. These were sensitive subjects for many in religious hierarchies. The stories encouraged faith leaders and communities to recognise their human face.

As well as consolidating existing programme lessons, the work involved in *Prayer Alone Is Not Enough* helped Progressio to contribute with legitimacy to relevant UK-based policy discussions on the role of [faith](#) in supporting international development (see Box). Furthermore, it added to the impetus of sustained efforts to scale up the impact of in-country initiatives on HIV and AIDS with faith-based and secular partners.

Tackling taboos and sensitivities in Yemen and Zimbabwe

In Yemen, Progressio supported its existing HIV prevention partners involved in *Prayer Alone is not Enough* to launch an initiative to take forward a follow-up phase of work with the financial backing of the EU over 2010-14. This was the '[Low Prevalence, High Vulnerability](#)' project. It brought together the Al-Tadhamon solidarity for development association and the Interaction in Development Foundation (supported by [Wondimu Regaa Guyassa](#), an Ethiopian DW with experience of HIV prevention in his home country) as well as the Abu Musa Al Ashary association and the women's rights group WASD. The latter were supported by Nepali DW [Prachanda Man Shresta](#).

That's the spirit: helping to shape DfID's approach to faith and development

Progressio, with its commitment to working with people of all faiths and none and its close relations with secular and faith-based partners in the global South, was in a strong position to contribute to a year-long DfID consultation on its [Faith Partnership Principles](#). Launched in mid-2012, the principles promoted effective approaches on working with faith groups to fight global poverty.

Progressio was an active member of the working group set up to help explore and develop the principles, along with representatives of Christian-based development organisations such as Christian Aid, CAFOD, Tearfund and World Vision, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, the Church of England, and Jewish, Muslim and Sikh organisations. Progressio was also invited to chair a launch session with Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and UK Secretary of State for International Development Andrew Mitchell. The DfID minister later wrote to thank Progressio for its work in supporting the consultation.

Progressio, as well as providing its own comments on the draft principles based on the lessons of its work with faith-based partners in the South and dialogue with interested parties in the development community in the UK, coordinated input on behalf of the UK Consortium on AIDS and International Development as a member of its faith working group.

Working with principles

Work on the principles provided an opportunity for Progressio to share valuable insights from its own work and to make the case for the role of faith in development to be better understood and recognised, taking into account its major potential and problematic features. The principles noted that faith groups were often important providers of humanitarian assistance and services in developing countries, particularly states affected by conflict and weak governance, and also a channel for poor people's voices to be heard. They also recognised that religious leaders and institutions were often the most trusted within society. Their influence over the beliefs and behaviour of followers made them a critical force.

Progressio's involvement in DfID's consultation was but one example of the organisation's continued drive on faith and development during this period. Its rootedness in Catholic Social Teaching, combined with its independence from any official religious affiliation, gave it both freedom and legitimacy and lent distinctiveness to its contribution. This included acting as a dialogue facilitator and bridge-builder between different civil society and faith actors on the role of faith in development. In the case of the UK, such pluralistic qualities were valued, among others, by Lambeth Palace. It drew on Progressio as a trusted source to brief church leaders in the House of Lords on issues such as poverty reduction, food and hunger and the challenges of political change and social justice in Zimbabwe.

Progressio's contribution on faith and development at this time, as highlighted in this chapter, was driven largely by its relevant programme experience on HIV and AIDS. This was now giving way to an even stronger focus on engaging faith-based actors on sexual and reproductive health and rights and pursuit of gender justice across social, political and economic spheres. This made for fluid links and synergies between Progressio's core programme themes.



Prachanda Shresta, a Progressio DW from Nepal, pictured (photo bottom right) working with a member of Yemen's Abu Musa Al Ashary Association and a sheik. His work to strengthen the work of partners for HIV prevention included promoting rights-based and gender-focused approaches with faith leaders. He later went on (photo top left) to help women's rights organisations run a 'pink sash' initiative in Hodeidah combating discrimination and violence against women.



Progressio took similar steps in Zimbabwe where its work to bolster the faith-based response of the multi-church NFBCZ, including the vital need to tackle gender inequality, was making progress. With the support and accompaniment of the DW, Philemon Handinahama, the body had encouraged its members to support far more actively the role of women, both in society and in church structures, in tackling the gender discrimination and abuses associated with HIV and AIDS.

Taking on board difficult issues

As a result, women in Zimbabwean communities were becoming more assertive and seeking help and advice on the problems arising from harmful male attitudes and behaviour, an issue that the NFBCZ was also now taking on board [with the support of the DW](#): another echo of how Progressio's Central America-pioneered concern with tackling problematic masculinity was being replicated elsewhere.

Philemon Handinahama [went on to provide targeted support](#) for one of NFBCZ's members, the Union for the Development of Apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe and Africa (UDACIZA). He worked with UNICEF to help UDACIZA, an umbrella body seeking to strengthen the learning and action of its members through dialogue with other churches, to develop a strategic plan. It put the organisation in a stronger position to conduct its work and attract the support of potential partners.

Through the support of Progressio DWs, partners in Yemen and Zimbabwe made further progress in engaging faith leaders and communities on issues that were culturally taboo and religiously sensitive. In Yemen, for example, the Abu Musa Al Ashary association began raising awareness of the HIV risks and gender-based harms of female genital mutilation. For its part, the Aden-based WASD was stepping up efforts to tackle HIV transmission affecting men who have sex with men as well as sex workers. The latter were typically stigmatised for their involvement in poverty-driven sexual transactions whose existence was denied. Vulnerable and risky-practice male groups such as fishermen were targeted.

Starting new programmes to step up gains on HIV prevention

The further promotion of Progressio's faith-based approach dovetailed well with the wider progress being made in its overall pool of work on HIV and AIDS.

Stepping ahead in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, for example, Progressio helped partners launch new cycles of HIV prevention initiatives during the decade with the support of Comic Relief. The first was the 2011-14 'Hear our Voices!' project, which brought together four organisations with critical sectoral roles to play in reaching key stakeholders and beneficiary groups. An ICT specialist, [Kuziva Zimunya](#), supported the partners' development and use of databases and websites to boost their documentation and communication.

Change is a journey: tackling HIV problems in the transport sector

With targeting and supporting groups particularly vulnerable to contracting or spreading the HIV virus a key aim of Progressio's approach, the 'Hear our Voices' project stepped up work during this period with the National Employment Council for the Transport Operating Industry (NECTOI). Its intention was to better target and support truck drivers, building on the earlier DW support of Dr Nyikadzino Mahachi to pilot such efforts. The drivers' vulnerability and impact were accentuated by the long distances they travelled, both in the country and across regional borders. During journeys they came into contact with sex workers as another at-risk group, as [publicised by the media](#) in 2017 using Progressio research.

The project involved information-sharing and awareness-raising among truck drivers on HIV prevention as well as the promotion of practical support such as the setting up of roadside clinics. However, as noted by [Walter Otis Tapfumaneyi](#), Progressio's DW working to strengthen the outreach and communications work of both NECTOI and ZAPSO, the HIV and AIDS prevention organisation, as well as the network ZAN, stronger trucker awareness needed to be matched by better work conditions. A problem was the long hours drivers worked and spent away from home.

Prisons: reducing risks and supporting reintegration

Another participant in the joint project, underscoring Progressio's commitment to supporting partners seeking to support at-risk marginalised groups facing the sharpest stigmatisation, was the Zimbabwe Association of Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of the Offender. ZACRO had been supported since the late 2000s by a Progressio DW, Teclah Ponde, an experienced HIV and AIDS worker. She had helped the partner to establish



Top: Progressio DW Teclah Ponde, an experienced HIV and AIDS worker, speaking with a former prison inmate released back to his community. Progressio DWs also supported partners working with other groups at risk of contracting and spreading the HIV virus such as truck drivers.

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support groups among prisoners and increase the awareness and knowledge of prison officers on the issue.

As well as supporting both groups to strengthen information-sharing within prisons, Teclah Ponde now worked with ZACRO to strengthen its advocacy for national policies to avoid the double punishment of prisoners as a result of their HIV status and to increase support for people on release. The crisis in Zimbabwe had led to an alarming deterioration of the prison system, which harmed those within it and ultimately society outside. Women released from prison found it even harder than men to be accepted and reintegrated. She helped ZACRO to pilot nutrition, cookery and vegetable gardening classes so prisoners could gain skills to better support their families on return. According to an evaluation, the percentage of prisoners reporting positive HIV-prevention practices increased from 58 per cent in 2011 to 75 per cent by mid-2014.

The progress made by 'Hear our Voices' led to support for a follow-up project, 'Amplify the Voices of People Affected by HIV in Zimbabwe' aimed at further extending existing gains. It included taking forward peer education and replication, making mobile voluntary counselling and treatment services available to informal sector workers, extending workplace wellness days and HIV policies and commitments to a larger number of employers. In the case of ZACRO, it involved replicating the training and livelihoods projects for prisoners.

HIV, young people and child and disability rights

Also planned, as part of Progressio's continued partnership with the [ZNCWC](#), the body supporting the child rights sector, was a handbook on child-focused HIV and AIDS programming. A demonstration of Progressio-supported ZNCWC advocacy, and of its work on common issues with other partners in the 'voices' projects, was its [2017 launch](#) with Progressio of a report on young women involved in sex work along two transport corridors in Zimbabwe. The event urged the government to tackle the issues leading young women into the trade. They included the lack of alternative livelihood opportunities and poverty, which meant they could not afford the fees to stay in the education system. The problems were relevant to Progressio's earlier support for gender-sensitive budgeting and access to quality education (see Chapter 4).

During this period, Progressio also embarked on a separate HIV initiative to support effective approaches on disability rights. This was an issue that had been close to its heart from the very start of its post-independence country programme, as marked by CIIR's 1990 publication *Steps Ahead*. Progressio recruited a DW, Bothwell Makumbe, to work with THAMASO, the tuberculosis, HIV and AIDS, and malaria support organisation, and the Disability HIV and AIDS Trust ([DHAT](#)). He helped the partners to develop and promote information materials in accessible formats to reach sight- and hearing-impaired people and to strengthen their advocacy on HIV and AIDS and the SRHR and gender issues involved. Another DW, [Farai Mukuta](#), went on to provide further support for DHAT as well as the Deaf Zimbabwe Trust.

Striding forward in Somaliland: the regional roll-out of services

Progressio was starting new cycles of HIV and AIDS work in other focus countries, including Somaliland. As reviewed in Chapter 4, Progressio had been a catalyst in nurturing the emergence of institutions addressing HIV and AIDS. It drove forward further progress at this time.

For instance, Progressio, with the backing of UNICEF and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, launched with partners a [new initiative from 2012 to scale up nationally the success](#) of the integrated prevention, treatment, care and support services (IPTCS) centre it had helped to set up and run successfully in Hargeisa.

Gradual results of a long contribution

This new IPTCS programme phase built on the support, among others, of [Edward Musinguji](#), a Ugandan DW with experience of HIV and gender advocacy in his home country and Nigeria. It was carried out in partnership with the Ministry of Health, the national AIDS commission SOLNAC, the Talowadag civil society coalition, Gabiley and Erigavo hospitals and maternal and child health centres. By 2015, the partners had rolled out IPTCS facilities in five regions, and local medical, nursing and volunteer community support leaders were taking on greater responsibility for future training on HIV care and prevention and for public outreach to promote service use.

This long body of work, having steadily taken shape and achieved progress over a decade,

represented an important contribution to helping Somaliland keep the impact of HIV and AIDS low in comparison with the epidemics witnessed in many other African countries.

Leaving stronger HIV and AIDS organisations in place in Timor-Leste

With the prioritisation of work on peace and justice and women's participation in an independent Timor-Leste, Progressio's support for partners to prevent HIV prevalence from rising in the country only began towards the end of the 2000s. Yet by the time of Progressio's 2014 closure of its Timor-Leste programme, it could bequeath a positive legacy of work.

As in Somaliland and Yemen, HIV prevalence in Timor-Leste, less than 1 per cent, was low. Yet new cases were being discovered at an alarming rate, particularly among women. Moreover, although health infrastructure was being scaled up, medical approaches overlooked the stigmatisation, hostility and ostracisation endured by PLWHA. They faced a battle to receive support and protection and have their rights recognised. Indeed, many young HIV-positive people were being denied access to study and some families forced to move district to escape threats. Meanwhile, those belonging to groups already the target of prejudice and discrimination, such as sex workers and LGBTI people, suffered verbal and physical abuse. The health ministry had a programme of free anti-retroviral treatment, but relatively few people knew of its existence.

Spurring the development and impact of civil society networks

One significant achievement during this period was Progressio's role in helping to consolidate the transformation of [Estrela+](#) from a small support group by people living with HIV or AIDS into an influential national membership association of PLWHA. With Progressio's support, it had become the main point of contact for promoting recognition and respect of their rights.

Progressio's support for Estrela+ started in 2010, the year after its creation. [Fi Oakes](#), a DW with a professional background on HIV in Asia and long experience of supporting drug users and sex workers in the UK, joined the organisation to help develop its organisational capacity and overall work to combat stigma and discrimination. She also provided complementary support for the [Fundasaun Timor Hari'i](#) (FTM) which Progressio had supported since 2008. One of the first DWs to support FTM was [Dennis Obel](#) who helped to spearhead its seminal work.

FTM, originally set up to address the traumatic impact of the repression and violence of the 1999 political crisis on children and young people, had evolved to become one of the first civil society organisations in the country to tackle HIV and AIDS and to focus on the situation of sex workers, gays and other men who have sex with men.

As part of her advice and support on targeting and involving people from at-risk and vulnerable groups, Fi Oakes worked with Estrela+ to nurture the formation of peer educators among sex workers and also men who have sex with men.

This reduced high-risk practices and increased condom use. She also helped the association to strengthen its influencing of government. This included the monitoring of its national plan on HIV and AIDS and lobbying for the expansion of treatment, the greater availability of condoms and stronger official commitment to raising public awareness and knowledge of HIV prevention. Just as important were the changes Fi Oakes perceived in the people she was working to support (see Quote).

"My inspiration comes from little things like when I see someone transform from a shy person [into someone] later leading a group discussion. When I complement them, they say 'Thank you, I learned that from you.' But also when I hear 'No, I disagree with you, I think we should do something different,' I know they have learned to stand up for their rights."

Development worker Fi Oakes, quoted in Progressio's 2011 Annual Review





Pictured top are members of Timorese partner Estrela+, which Progressio DWs had helped to quickly become an influential national body supporting the rights of people living with HIV and AIDS. Through partner-informed reports giving voice to affected groups, Progressio re-emphasised that problems such as HIV and violence against girls and young women could only be tackled through changed gender roles and relations.

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1940-2015



The Price of Womanhood

Girls' and young women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Zimbabwe

Official recognition and strategies

As a result of such efforts, the Ministry of Health invited Estrela+ to run a routine module on 'living with HIV and stigma and discrimination' in its training of counsellors. International organisations in the country also began to invite the association to meetings. Estrela+, in turn, secured a seat on the National AIDS Commission as well as the country coordination mechanism for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which came to recognise both FTM and Estrela+ as legitimate bodies to receive funding. This placed both partners in a stronger position to sustain their HIV prevention outreach, support and advocacy.

This was no small progress in a short period and Progressio further sought to enhance its impact in the country. It placed a DW for first time with the National AIDS Commission, which by now had been transformed from a civil society initiative into a recognised official body – an essential people-centred step in state-building. The new partnership created the potential for dialogue and joint action between civil society and government. With the help of the new DW, [Freddie Mawanda](#), a Ugandan professional with experience of working with such bodies in Nigeria and Papua New Guinea, the National AIDS Commission introduced its first ever strategy on prevention and care.

From HIV lessons to focusing on sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender justice

As indicated by the direction of work described above and Progressio's longstanding strengths on the issues in Central America, Progressio was focusing more and more on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and gender discrimination and inequality. These were the prisms through which it considered HIV prevention efforts ought to be addressed, including in work with faith-based organisations. SRHR and gender justice became a focus of numerous initiatives in their own right during this final period of Progressio's life, as shown by the brief examples below from country programmes in Zimbabwe and Yemen.

Zimbabwe: the price of womanhood

Drawing on the issues raised in its partnership with UDACIZA, Progressio carried out participatory research in 2015 on SRHR and gender roles with young women and girls, as well as men and boys, belonging to different churches in Zimbabwe. It focused in particular on SRHR issues within Apostolic and Zionist churches. The work led to publication and promotion of a 2016 report, [The Price of Womanhood](#), in which interviewees spoke on their own terms about the issues, along the lines of *Prayer Alone Is Not Enough*.

The report, developed by Progressio policy and advocacy officer, Fatima Haase, in collaboration with [Fiona Mwashita](#), the Harare-based sub-regional manager for country programmes in Southern Africa, examined the SRHR and gender inequality dimensions of issues such as early pregnancy and the impact of the cultural tradition of *lobola*. This involved a marriage payment to a bride's family, tying the social worth and status of girls and young women to marriage. The report dealt with the gender complexities of promoting the rights of girls and women. It noted that it was 'respected' women themselves who were reproducing gender-conservative social norms, including expectations of marriage.

Progressio used the findings and lessons of its programme research and experience on HIV and AIDS, SRHR and gender justice, including the views and voices of partners, to shape the content of briefings produced in 2014-2016 to influence international policy discussions on tackling gender discrimination and violence against women and girls (see Box later in the chapter).

Yemen: tackling the abusive impact of conservative gender norms

The challenges were also palpable in Yemen where Progressio DWs attached to the Abu Musa Al-Ashari association provided technical support on advocacy for its partners involved in a project to protect the rights of female inmates and juvenile offenders.

Women prisoners faced serious forms of abuse, including sexual harassment and violence, and – as in the ZACRO project in Zimbabwe – the double punishment of family rejection and stigmatisation by society. Their very detention and imprisonment could involve multiple

injustices, as reflected by [one case taken up by Abu Musa](#) in which a young victim of sexual abuse had been wrongly accused of adultery, further abused repeatedly by police and then sent to jail as punishment for her 'crimes'.

It was violations of this kind in the criminal, justice and prison systems that Progressio also started to address with partners as part of its work on participation and governance. One advocacy campaign by Abu Musa persuaded a local council to hand over management of some prisons to NGOs.

Steps for progress: participation in decision-making

Action for better governance and challenging the barriers to women's rights

Progressio strived to scale up the gains of existing programme initiatives on governance and participation during the final period of the organisation's life. By now its country programmes were largely focused on so-called 'fragile and conflict-affected states' where the challenges were typically acute.

Still, alongside looming major setbacks in Yemen, Progressio was able to promote important progress against the odds in other difficult settings such as Somaliland and Zimbabwe. Meanwhile, the organisation's work on participatory local government continued to go from strength to strength in the Dominican Republic, with efforts now being intensified to replicate such success in neighbouring Haiti.

Somaliland: forward path and 'swerves in the road'

Progressio sustained its longstanding commitment to nurturing democratisation and greater citizen participation in decision-making during this period. It combined further accompaniment of efforts to strengthen Somaliland's electoral process with continued support for civil society's ability to influence the territory's still evolving political institutions. The aim was to strengthen the social justice foundations on which democracy ought to be based.

For Progressio, the task was about more than elections, even though elections were an indispensable channel for people's representation. Indeed, the work again raised major gender justice challenges posing barriers to women's participation and Progressio promoted new initiatives to tackle the issues involved.

Reinforcing civil society support to deepen democracy

Over 2010-14, as part of a 'civic dialogue, human rights and active citizenship' [initiative](#) to follow up the progress in civil society organisation described in Chapter 4, Progressio invested in new efforts to consolidate and enhance the institutional solidity and organisational performance of its Somaliland partners. Again, the focus was on promoting youth and women's rights and inclusive governance as the basis for lasting peace. It recruited a team of DWs to reinforce the strengthening of [SONYO's](#) strategic planning systems, [NAGAAD's](#) leadership skills in view of its continued growth as a network running four regional offices, and [GAVO's](#) project management.

The DWs respectively embedded in the partner organisations included [Kule Abubekar Asuman](#), a specialist from Uganda with wider African experience on rights promotion; [Joanna McMinn](#), who brought considerable organisational development expertise from her past work as director of National Women's Council of Ireland; and [John Aturinde](#), another professional from Uganda with a strong international background of civil society capacity-building. NAGAAD was in addition supported by [Cissy Nalusiba](#). Her experience of working at both civil society and government levels on women's empowerment in her home country Uganda was of keen relevance to NAGAAD's combination of civic education and lobbying for changes in Somaliland's evolving political system.

Seeing the results of political engagement

This ongoing support enabled further gains to be made. SONYO's success in spearheading government approval of a national youth policy, for instance, had led to the launch of a youth development fund. It also put the various partner organisations in a stronger position

to mobilise and promote participation in Somaliland's second-ever 2012 local elections – as in the 2010 presidential contest, they saw [wide participation of women and youth](#) – and prepare for its third presidential contest eventually held in 2017.

Somaliland's new rounds of voting provided further encouraging signs that the self-declared independent country was institutionalising a system of elections. The very holding of continued polls was an achievement in itself that Progressio had helped to support for almost 15 years, through its organisation of international monitoring and observer missions with UCL and [Somaliland Focus](#) at the behest of Somaliland's [NEC](#) (see Chapter 4). Progressio, moreover, could take credit for helping to promote and improve the transparency and fairness of the electoral process through the partnership. The work showed new evidence of progress at this time, despite problems and challenges (see Box).

Registering continued progress: Somaliland moves to rectify election problems

Somaliland took an important step forward to boost the transparency and fairness of its elections when it became the first African country to introduce a biometric voter registration system using iris recognition software in the run-up to the presidential election finally held in November 2017. The contest had been repeatedly postponed from its scheduled date of 2015 because of technical and political challenges compounded by severe drought displacing thousands of people.

Multiple voter registration had led to tensions and significant concerns over fraudulent practices during the 2012 local elections, as pointed out in Progressio's second report of its fourth international election observer mission, [Swerves in the Road](#). It made rectification of the problem a key recommendation and added to the wider impetus for change.

The absence of reliable voter register had almost derailed the 2005 House of Representatives election and then been a source of controversy in the run-up to the 2010 presidential election when different clans were suspected of encouraging their members to register multiple times to increase their votes and political influence. The advent of a new registration system thus promised to remove a significant obstacle to Somaliland's cautious transition to a more robust representative democracy based on credible and trusted electoral arrangements.

Sustained support

At the request of the NEC, Progressio sustained its support, organising [two trips](#) to Somaliland as part of another international mission in 2016 to monitor preparations for the presidential poll. The mission, supported financially by the UK's FCO, concluded in its [report](#), authored by UCL's Michael Walls and Progressio's policy and advocacy officer Marie-Luise Schueller, that introduction of the new system had been largely peaceful, well organised and effectively managed, while leaving pending the still sensitive challenges of updating and verifying data in the future.

This mission – the fifth in a process of accompaniment that had its roots in CIIR's early contribution to peace-building through its ICD programme in the 1990s – was the last that Progressio itself would help to coordinate. Its partners, UCL and Somaliland Focus (UK), nevertheless [went on to observe the 2017 presidential election](#) vote after Progressio had closed its doors earlier in the year. Their [re-port](#) concluded that the contest had largely been peaceful and fair, while lamenting post-poll outbreaks of violence over alleged electoral malpractice. It urged renewed progress, in the run-up to 2019 parliamentary elections, towards politics based on universal citizen suffrage rather than customary structures.

Women's political representation: gaining ground, reflecting limits

NAGAAD's continued civic education from 2010, supported by Progressio, also created the conditions for signs of progress on women's political representation when Somaliland held its local elections in 2012. Joint mobilisation and advocacy by NAGAAD, SONYO and GAVO saw 140 female candidates (out of 2,368) stand for office – still a low number, but a remarkable increase on the five of 2002. Ten women district councillors were elected, as against two previously. Representation of youth in local councils, meanwhile, building on the pressure for change described in Chapter 4, rose 40 per cent. Launching its observer mission report later in London, Progressio and UCL held a panel discussion and [photo exhibition](#) to assess the state of play.

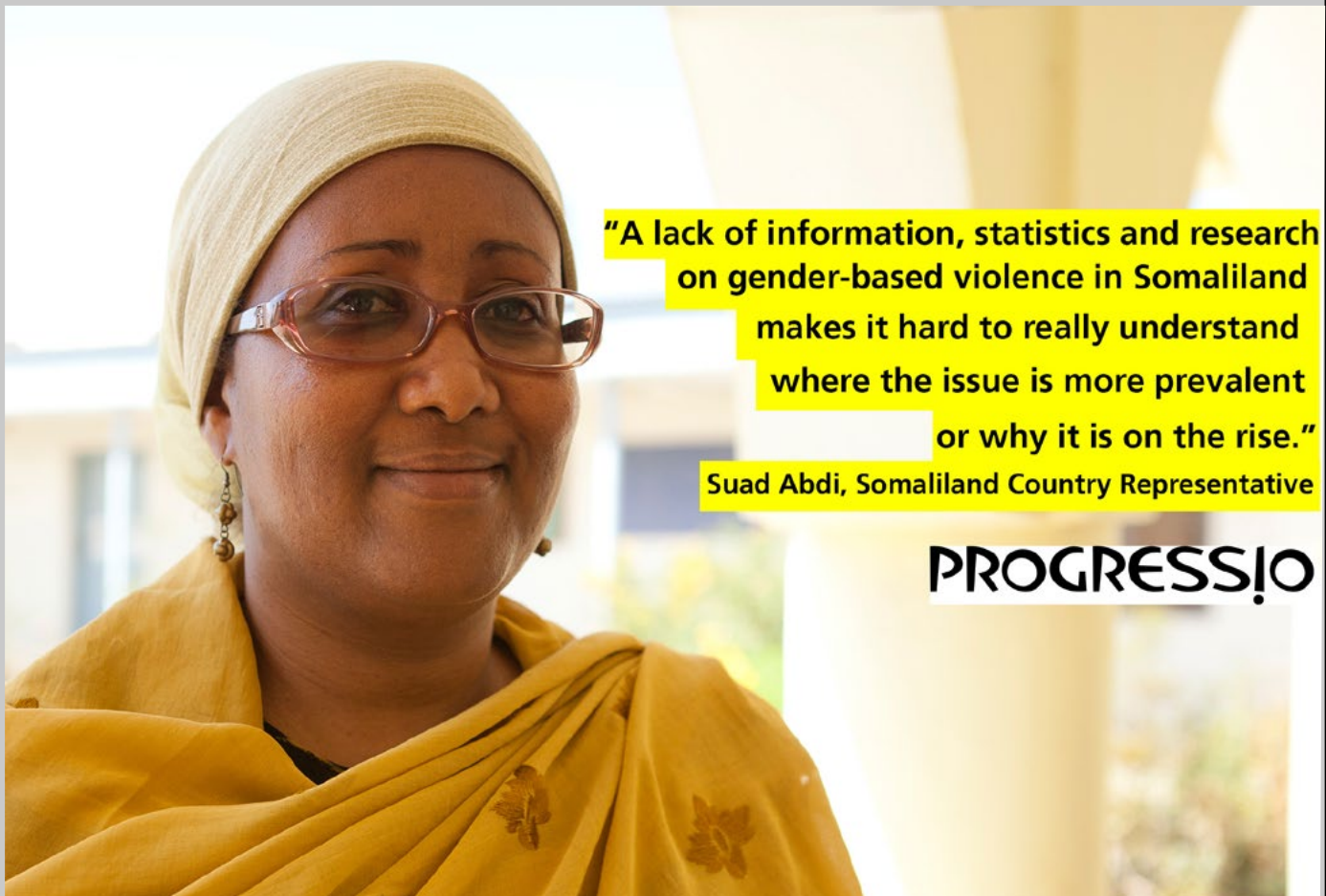
The challenge of traditional loyalties

This progress, as Progressio observed in [staying on to observe the 2012 local election count](#), was undoubtedly significant when judged against the baseline of the late 1990s when Somaliland's new political institutions and processes started to emerge. However, as recognised by Progressio's new country representative [Suad Abdi Ibrahim](#), one of NAGAAD's original founders, women's ability to win a stronger presence within the political system – let alone achieve influence on behalf of women as a social constituency – still



Mark of progress: polling day official dips a woman's finger in ink to show she has voted in Somaliland's 2012 local elections supported and monitored by Progressio. © Kate Stanworth

While promoting the increased political representation of women, Progressio was aware that the ingrained problems of gender inequality in society called into question the foundations of Somaliland's political settlement. Work to highlight and address this underlying challenge became a priority in the final phase of Progressio's work.



"A lack of information, statistics and research on gender-based violence in Somaliland makes it hard to really understand where the issue is more prevalent or why it is on the rise."

Suad Abdi, Somaliland Country Representative

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faced the complex structural constraints posed by clan-based loyalties revolving around men. The latter continued to exert strong influence over society. This affected public recognition of the status of female political candidates and influenced the party allegiances and voting preferences of women themselves. Only one of the country's 184 MPs was a woman.

With women vocal policy advocates and active members of society, yet still struggling to achieve significant breakthroughs in the political arena, Progressio moved to deepen its examination of the structural socio-cultural and political barriers facing women's rights and gender change. It [embarked on joint research](#) with UCL, which analysed the underlying reasons for the so-called 'glass ceiling' and the prospects for future progress. Among the issues considered were education, the women's quota, women's imprisonment, gender-based violence and how elders might be encouraged to challenge harmful traditional practices against women.

The research led to the March 2017 publication of [Political Settlement in Somaliland: A Gendered Perspective](#), with Progressio's Marie-Luise Schueller one of the co-authors. Its findings were discussed at a SOAS-chaired [panel event](#) hosted by UCL and addressed by NAGAAD's director, Nafisa Yusuf.

Challenging gender-based violence

In what was also to be one of the organisation's last publications, Progressio also issued a companion report in early 2017, [Nobody Likes Women except God](#). This examined specifically the causes and effects of gender-based violence in Somaliland as one of the sharpest manifestations of the fault lines threatening progress towards a more inclusive political settlement. The pervasive nature of the problem ran counter to views of Somaliland as a haven of peace in comparison with the rest of Somalia. The study also reflected, in institutional terms, the cross-over between Progressio's work on participatory governance and its new focus of SRHR and gender justice also linked to work on HIV prevention.

Using research to build an effective coalition

Assembled by [Kailee Jordan](#), a Canadian DW with extensive experience of addressing GBV in Eastern Africa, the report was the culmination of action research she had helped to design, support and implement with partners over the previous two years. The participatory research was at the heart of a new Progressio-supported advocacy [initiative](#), backed by Amplify Change, to build and empower a united civil society coalition of 12 civil society organisations to tackle GBV. The coalition included the Women Rehabilitation and Development Association ([WORDA](#)) as well as existing partners NAGAAD, SONYO and GAVO among others.

As a result of their pressure for action, a sexual offences bill had been presented to parliament but [legislators were stalling](#) in 2016 and many were reluctant to acknowledge the existence or scale of violence against women. This was despite reports and available official data indicating that rape, in particular, was rising sharply. The value of the research, and eventual dissemination of the final report, was that it provided a stronger pool of evidence for the coalition to counter policy-maker scepticism and denial and build pressure for legislative action with public backing. Indeed, the coalition held national and local community dialogues to discuss and promote the findings in Hargeisa as well as the central Togdheer and populous northwest Maroodi Jeex regions where information and insights had been gathered.

Engaging with the realities of traditional power

One of the main, sensitive, issues raised during the research was the pros and cons of how customary law was applied to GBV by traditional and religious leaders. The research indicated that their views needed to be taken into account in any process promoting change based on effective standards of justice. Such leaders had de facto influence on community power structures and dispensed justice in the absence of a strong, independent formal judicial system.

Indeed, the research process had actively involved traditional and religious leaders. This had helped to facilitate not only their interest and commitment – leaders from research sites attended dialogue events – but also the openness of communities to discussing sensitive topics. Revealed were male informants' frequent concerns about the lack of opportunities for their views and concerns to be heard. As in other countries, Progressio's work brought to the fore the importance of addressing the relationship between negative or positive masculinity and violence against women and girls.

Fast forward to 2018: welcome developments, problematic gaps on GBV

As this publication was being written in the wake of Progressio's mid-2017 closure, it was reported in early 2018 that parliament's lower house had approved a sexual offences bill. This outlawed rape, sexual assault and sex trafficking as well as child marriage. While welcoming the move, NAGAAD and others said the legislation did not deal with domestic violence and female genital mutilation (FGM).

Shortly after, however, it was reported that religious leaders had issued an edict to tackle FGM, which provided additional encouragement for the government to introduce supporting legislation on this issue. Still, human rights and civil society organisations argued that the edict and proposed law only criminalised two of three forms of FGM and excluded the main practice of partial or total removal of the clitoris. They alleged religious leaders had conflated cultural practices with Islam and that their backing of a partial approach in effect provided religious legitimacy to continued FGM. According to UNICEF, 98 per cent of women aged 15 to 49 have undergone FGM in Somaliland, one of the highest rates in the world.

From hope to crisis in Yemen: building for change, facing convulsions

Closing the gap between the challenges of boosting women's representation in public life and the socio-cultural realities affecting their standing and rights in society was similarly now a key focus of Progressio's work in [Yemen](#). The challenge had been highlighted as early as 2002 in Marta Colburn's 2002 book for CIIR's ICD programme, [The Republic of Yemen: Development Challenges in the 21st Century](#). It noted the stark contrast between Yemeni women's formal political status – at the time Yemen had the only permanent elected parliament in the Arab world and Yemeni women were the first women in the Arabian Peninsula to have the right to vote – and females' unequal access to education, work and professional opportunities.

As seen in previous chapters, CIIR had used its successful support for PHC and maternal and child health as a platform for women's empowerment. Since the turn of the century, moreover, its growing work on HIV prevention and participatory governance in the country had put Progressio in an increasingly strong position to promote women's rights and gender justice as a cross-cutting concern and an explicit aim in itself.

The challenge was still a huge one. The interaction of poverty and social norms, as in the case of Zimbabwe alluded to earlier, meant girls and young women were sold into early marriage, often damaging their wider life chances. Even with the strengthening of domestic development efforts and the wider contribution of the international development community of which Progressio continued to be part, Yemen still ranked last in the Global Gender Gap index in 2013.

Championing women: the public impact of a pink sash

Amid the [hopes](#) and [uncertainties](#) of political and social change arising from the February 2012 elections after President Ali Abdullah Saleh's fall, and despite the onset of a [food and water crisis](#) that saw an organisational appeal to members and supporters in the UK, Progressio managed to drive forward a new initiative on women's rights. Backed by the [FCO and the British embassy](#), this was the 'Combating Discrimination against Women in Hodeidah' project. The initiative, undertaken with lead partner NGO, Half of Society, and other groups working on women's rights, also involved members of the local civil society forum Progressio had helped to nurture in previous years.

The initiative was supported by Progressio DWs with an accumulated body of experience of supporting civil society in the country. They included Kenyan [Joseph Aloo](#) and Nepalis [Prachanda Shrestha](#) and Radhika Shrestha who now transferred their professional attention to the new project. It involved helping the partners to organise street-based civic education by 'women champions' in several districts of Hodeidah. The women, distinguished by their wearing of pink sashes, went out to targeted areas to discuss and raise awareness of violence against women and girls and challenge gender discrimination. Their aim was to encourage more women, particularly the poorest and most marginalised, to stand up for their rights and get involved in such public outreach themselves.

Changing perceptions through bold and daring acts

These were bold and daring acts, their very impact stemming from their contrast with norms largely premised on women being 'good' wives, mothers or sisters rather than playing public roles. Changing such views and perceptions was seen as a vital step in challenging the barriers to women's greater participation in society and politics, and the partners were making progress (see Quote).

"As women champions, we've urged girls and women to seek education and start learning – indeed this is what has been achieved, by opening literacy centres in the poorest areas. And we've contacted 'big shots' in the country, like the ministry of human rights and the ministry of local administration – we've achieved many things by communicating with the local council and businesses."

"I've been following these steps. First educate women and men about women's rights. Second, research the issues where women suffer from discrimination. Third, raise the issues. Discuss them with women and men, Imams, the Sheik of the neighbourhood, local administration in the district, in workshops and in open talk.... I've been able to get the voice of rural women to decision-makers and let many people know about the issues of violence and discrimination that women are struggling with. I feel like I've achieved a lot."

Interviews with Yemeni women champions, Progressio magazine, 2014, issue 1

The FCO's backing of the project enabled the partners supported by Progressio to triple the number of women champions involved in the initiative and increase the scale of their outreach. One woman champion alone collected 3,000 signatures for a petition calling for proposed legislation against early marriage to be approved and made part of a new draft constitution brokered in the national dialogue supported by the UN. There were also signs of support within the national dialogue process for a 30 per cent quota for women's political representation.

This momentum led Progressio, adopting a trajectory similar to that in Somaliland, to partner the Reach out Foundation in launching a follow-up initiative to tackle GBV in the wider Hodeidah governorate with the financial support of the EU. The so-called 'Honour, Power and Expectation' (HOPE) project, which planned to engage stakeholders ranging from faith and traditional leaders to the media, was aimed at tackling FGM through changes in societal attitudes. FGM particularly affected women along coastal areas such as Hodeidah where rates in some locations could soar as high as 97 per cent, several times above the national average.

Pushing for responsive local-national governance

These initiatives, in covering a wide range of issues affecting women's rights and gender justice, had the common aim of removing the barriers to female participation in public life. As such they dovetailed with Progressio's other work on governance in the country concerned with the position of other less represented groups. They included youth as a key disaffected group demanding change in Yemen as elsewhere amid the events of the Arab Spring.

Drawing on its recent promotion of inclusive local decision-making in Aden and Hodeidah described in Chapter 4, Progressio sought to drive forward, in partnership with Oxfam, an initiative to extend this work it to locations in the Taiz and Hadramout governorates.

On this occasion, however, given the lessons of the previous phase on the power relations of decentralisation, the project, alongside its wider geographical scope, emphasised strengthening the capacity and coordination of civil society networks at both local and national levels.

The aim was not only to boost citizens' involvement in designing and monitoring local development plans but also to put all actors, including local district and governorate councils themselves, in a stronger position to hold national authorities to account. This included a push for the Transitional Plan for Stabilisation and Development, introduced with the backing of donors in the wake of the 2012 political transition that brought President Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi to power, to respond more effectively to the pressing needs of the population. Of value was a manual on participatory community planning which Progressio had helped to develop as a result of its previous phase of work with partners and which had been endorsed by the Ministry of Local Administration.

Civil war and outside intervention: responding to devastating setbacks

Such follow-up initiatives on gender justice and governance, however, were increasingly disrupted by the deepening of Yemen's political crisis. It descended into civil war and one of the world's worst humanitarian crises as Houthi rebels overthrew the new government in September 2014 and a coalition led by Saudi Arabia intervened in an attempt to restore it. The coalition unleashed a sustained bombing campaign from March 2015, supported by the UK, the United States and France, and imposed a blockade that deprived civilians of food imports and aid. The UN reported that 80 per cent of the population needed humanitarian assistance and protection at the end of 2017, with many facing starvation.

The conflict involved an [intricate web](#) of local causes, straddling multiple grievances on the part of different actors in the country's north and south. It was further complicated by assuming proxy geo-political dimensions as Western-armed ally Saudi Arabia invoked Iranian backing of the Houthis as justification for its devastating intervention. The damaging fallout was redolent of the punitive sanctions taken by Saudi Arabia against a newly unified Yemen at the start of the 1990s for its refusal to back the Western powers during their prosecution of the first Gulf War with Iraq (see Chapter 3). Other repressive Western allies in the coalition, such as the United Arab Emirates, had their own regional and geo-political ambitions in intervening in Yemen.

Calling for justice and standing by partners

With major violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed by all sides, Progressio signed a [joint appeal to the UN Human Rights Council](#) in 2015 to create an international commission of inquiry to undertake an independent investigation. Progressio also asked its members to urge the UK government to take positive action to help end the crisis. Among the abuses was Houthi kidnap of a staff member from Progressio partner, the Abu Musa Al Ashary association.

The conflict accentuated the problems and heightened the dangers faced by poorer and more vulnerable groups, including women and girls internally displaced by fighting, and threatened [devastating setbacks](#) to development. In response, Progressio stood by its [partners](#) and the communities they supported as best it could, with non-Yemeni DWs evacuated during 2015 providing distance support from their home countries. Aware that priority emergency humanitarian response work would need to be followed by longer-term development efforts, Progressio resolved to resume DW work from Hodeidah in January 2016, using its projects there to help deal with the effects of the war and address its underlying rifts.

As an additional complement to its joint project with Oxfam on inclusive local-national governance funded by the Swedish International Development Agency, for example, Progressio launched a new partnership with the Abu Musa Al Ashary association, to develop and strengthen the capacity of youth councils and multi-stakeholder forums in Hodeidah governorate. This was used to bring youths from different backgrounds and Muslim faiths together to promote peace-building. In doing so, it involved links with work on women's rights and GBV.

End of a long Yemen partnership

With no let-up in the conflict and airstrikes, and amid the repeated failure of peace deals within the UN as the conflict parties' positions remained firmly entrenched, however, the dangerous security situation meant that Progressio's grassroots work in the country was largely put on hold from 2015. The suspension became permanent in 2017 as Progressio's overall closure brought to a final end its on-the-ground accompaniment of the Yemeni people's struggles for development since 1973.

Phenomenal women, unbreakable strength: Progressio's campaign for gender justice in 'fragile states'

With the challenges of gender inequality, peace, participation and transparent and accountable governance figuring in discussions on the post-2015 agenda, Progressio launched a drive from 2013 to highlight the role of women in challenging injustice and claiming their rights in countries affected by weak governance and conflict. An all-female panel discussed the subject at an event held on 11 September alongside Progressio's 2013 AGM.

A female lens on conflict and governance

The [event](#), 'Fragile States, Phenomenal Women', was chaired by associate editor of *The Guardian*, Madeleine Bunting, and saw Abeer al Absi, Progressio's country representative in Yemen, and Fiona Mwashita, the sub-regional manager for Southern Africa, share grassroots insights on the challenges involved. Strategies for positive action on women's rights, as well linking campaigns for women's stronger political representation and influence with wider efforts to change ingrained cultural attitudes on gender, meant capitalising on women's resilience in tackling the instability and injustices of the difficult political environments they were organising in.

In 2014, Progressio went on to [launch](#) its 'Unbreakable' campaign urging policy-makers to remove the barriers to women's social and political participation in so-called 'fragile states' at a London event addressed by Suad Abdi, Progressio's country representative in Somaliland. The campaign, while drawing attention to women as major victims of conflict, including as targets of sexual violence, stressed their crucial importance as a force for societal cohesion and peace-building.

In getting the campaign underway, Progressio, as well as promoting a [briefing](#) to inform the UN's ongoing negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, began an active process of targeting the UK government and UN's Commission on the Status of Women to support its positions internationally. This included production and dissemination of a specific briefing for the 58th session of the CSW in March 2014, [Women and Fragile States: Why Women's Voices Must Be Heard](#). Progressio shared it with the UK's Secretary of State for International Development, Justine Greening, and organised an MP letter writing campaign to encourage her to advocate and support Progressio's positions at the New York gathering.

Faith actors and UN action

In addition to lobbying for positive UK action at the CSW meeting, working with allies such as the UK Gender and Development Network (GADN) and the National Association of Women's Organisations (NAWO), Progressio organised a [side event](#), 'What's Faith Got to Do with It?', to raise awareness one of the key issues it had raised in the briefings: the challenges and opportunities for faith leaders and communities to strengthen their support for gender justice.

As noted by the side event, addressed by Progressio's Abeer al Absi from Yemen, social norms and cultural values on gender, particularly in countries affected by conflict and weak governance, might be as much shaped by religious strictures and customary law as they were by states. International policy action on how the absence or problematic nature of state action in fragile political settings led to problems such as violence against women and girls needed to take into account and help address the wider drivers of gender discrimination and denial of their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Tackling challenges such as VAWG from this wider standpoint became an increasingly central part of Progressio's continued advocacy to influence the CSW, which included holding a further side event on faith, SRHR and gender justice at the body's 60th session in 2016. To build pressure, including UK government support, for positive CSW outcomes, Progressio, as well as submitting [another policy briefing to the UN](#), produced a [toolkit briefing for MPs](#) on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the international human rights treaty specifically promoting equality between women and men and obliging states to monitor and report on progress.

The toolkit urged MPs to press the official UK delegation to promote CSW referencing and uptake of CEDAW. It called in particular for support of two CEDAW articles respectively advocating the need for states to ensure policies, laws and regulation tackled discrimination against women and to take action to change the social and cultural norms shaping gender stereotypes and prejudiced attitudes and behaviour in relation to women and men. Progressio, while underscoring the positive role that faith leaders and communities could play in promoting gender justice, stressed that religious beliefs could not be used to justify practices involving VAWG. It advocated the setting up of a research hub to gather information on harmful and supportive practices on SRHR and family planning.

Gender justice: closing the gap between words and action

Progressio's efforts, with their distinctive faith dimension, took place in a more buoyant high-level policy environment in support of SRHR, with SDGs 3 and 5 on health and gender equality containing targets pledging fulfilment of SRHR and achievement of universal access to SRHR services by 2030. Yet the gap between promises and the action needed to keep them remained wide, as Progressio noted in a [commentary on the 2016 CSW discussions](#). Another paper, [Bridge the Gap!](#), targeted the 2016 International Conference on Family Planning on the need to tackle social and religious norms and cultural beliefs in supporting the achievement of SRHR and gender justice.

In the run-up to governments' approval of the SDGs in September 2015, Progressio had sought to galvanise awareness of the links between the influence of faith actors, SRHR and gender justice within the wider UN system through submissions and presentations to the WHO and the UNFPA. One event led to faith leaders issuing a call for world leaders to support action on SRHR. Such activities were complemented by Progressio's continued public campaigning in the UK on gender and the SDGs, including the organisation of [visual stunts](#), use of [street activism](#) and the production of [video clips](#) to back parliamentary pressure on the UK government to boost its international support for action to tackle VAWG.

Over the years Yemen had not attracted the same prominence in the international development and human rights community as other CIIR and Progressio focus countries in Latin America, Southern Africa and Asia, but it was no less significant for the organisation. Now intermittently in the UK news largely as a 'tragic' humanitarian emergency, Yemen's development process had shown itself to be similarly vulnerable to the interplay of local political tensions with the interests of outside powers.

During this final period, Progressio, drawing on the insights of its work on the ground with partners, made Yemen, along with its other conflict-affected focus countries, part of a cumulative policy drive to bring the development, human rights and gender justice challenges to UK and wider international attention. This included using CIIR's consultative status with the UN's Economic and Social Council to target UN bodies and processes as countries worked to finalise the post-2015 development agenda and eventually adopted the SDGs for pursuit from the start of 2016 (see Box above).

Action for better governance in Southern Africa

Zimbabwe: building on small but important local gains for people

Zimbabwe was another case where conflict and fragility stood in the way of development results. Continued national uncertainty and tensions surrounded planned elections in 2013. Still, the 'Action for Better Governance' (ABG) initiative that Progressio had launched at the start of the decade with the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe made headway locally.

Increasing the number and impact of parish advocacy committees

The CCJPZ, supported by DWs such as Arkmore Kori, Christopher Mweembe and Elliot Vengesa, built on its successful piloting of more transparent and accountable interaction between communities and local leaders in Chinhoyi in Mashonaland West province (see Chapter 4) to extend its replication to Gweru and Masvingo dioceses. As a result of this new phase in Progressio's ABG initiative with partners, which was now also supported by the Ford Foundation, the number of established parish advocacy committees climbed to 10 in 2013 and to 30 by the middle of the decade.

The work of the committees, as an [evaluation](#) for the donor observed, brought important local gains for communities. It often tackled problems of access to water, which largely fell on women and younger people, and to sanitation.

In Chivamba, for example, the parish committee's work with communities persuaded the Zimbabwe Water Authority to provide a supply from a nearby dam which had hitherto served the needs of a sugar plantation 150 kilometres away. In Mkoba, after trained residents engaged local leaders, burst sewer pipes were repaired without long delays and the local council invested in better machinery. In Shurugwi, leaders agreed to build public toilets and prioritise the cleaning of older facilities.

In Chachacha, communities got the local authority to secure funding from the District Development Fund to mend out-of-order boreholes. They also persuaded local police to publicise a phone hotline whose greater use brought pressure for action against corruption – just one example of the other governance issues that the ABG project helped to address. Pressure led Gweru city council to introduce measures to improve refuse collection, for instance.

Sustaining progress and laying foundations for greater ambition

Such efforts by the ABG project, of course, could not tackle the structural governance problems affecting Zimbabwe. But nor could they be reasonably expected to do so. Still, as argued by [Arkmore Kori](#), the practical gains were not only of immediate local importance for communities but also had wider value. They built the courage and confidence of people, particularly [women](#), in their own capacity and right to expect and promote change (see Quote below). Change inevitably started with small, but no less significant, steps and results at a personal and community level. This was particularly so in a difficult political climate, one affected not just by conflict and violence but also a culture of top-down politics and the exchange of handouts for political support.

“Before, no one would dare question a councillor, MP or even the chief on why development is not taking place in their area. Following the workshops we have had with CCJPZ, we are now equipped to deal with issues of bad governance in our area. Any leader who loses focus on what the people want risks being removed.”

A village chief quoted in the evaluation of the ABG project

Moreover, as the evaluation noted, the ABG project displayed strengths in seeking to tackle longer-term challenges. One was its emphasis on interaction with local leaders rather than simply mobilising citizen demand, which meant taking into account their political constraints and gaps in expertise. The project took place in areas where opposition MDC councillors dominated local authorities at this time, with one study highlighting their young age and inexperience in political office. ABG, therefore, while focused on civil society, sought to engage local leaders constructively and raise their capacity.

Another perceived strength of the project was its apparent creation of spaces for continued interaction and pressure. Parish advocacy committees benefited from sustained capacity support and accompaniment by DWs rather than isolated one-off trainings. As well as bringing short-term benefits for communities, Progressio support meant that the CCJPZ and its community partners strengthened evidence-gathering for advocacy and invested in better documentation of advocacy learning as initiatives were carried out.

Indeed, an ABG advocacy manual was developed and this played an important role, both during the project and in terms of its potential for supporting continued advocacy once the new ABG phase ended. Though the CCJPZ had previously enjoyed close links with the communities, they had lacked the expertise now in place to undertake well planned advocacy with them. Parish committees also attracted increasingly diverse members, which created potential for addressing the challenge of promoting better governance beyond work led and made possible under the moral authority and protective cover of the Church.

Linking the local with wider national and international policy action

The project, for all its local focus, managed to have wider political dimensions too. As well as media advocacy to link local issues with national developments, CCJPZ shared project evidence with the heads of Zimbabwe’s other Christian denominations in national forums aimed at dealing with the country’s governance problems.

ABG partners also used the information to encourage bodies and forums such as SADC and the Catholic Church’s inter-regional meeting of the Bishops of Southern Africa ([IMBISA](#)) to support regional lobbying for Zimbabwe to hold peaceful elections in 2013.

Such efforts complemented Progressio’s own international advocacy in the UK and the EU. In 2011, for example, Progressio had coordinated a briefing for Lambeth Palace, drawing on partner and peer agency perspectives, ahead of the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, to Zimbabwe. In 2013, Progressio, as chair of [ZEN](#), analysed the country’s prospects in the article [Zimbabwe between the Referendum and the Elections](#).

Malawi: helping to keep democratic participation on track

In [Malawi](#), Progressio, building on its earlier support for 2009 election monitoring, continued its partnership with the country’s [CCPJ](#). As part of a [project](#) supported by the UN Democracy Fund, it recruited a Zimbabwean DW, [Tafadzwa Roberta Muropa](#), a governance specialist, to support CCJP’s efforts to prevent political violence and intolerance in Malawi’s first simultaneous local, parliamentary and presidential elections held in May 2014.

The political climate in the run-up to the elections was tense, prompting concerns over the solidity of Malawi’s democratisation and quality of governance. Political manoeuvres to prevent Vice-president Joyce Banda, a women’s rights activist, from becoming Malawi’s first female president on death of the incumbent, in line with the constitution, had led to a political crisis in 2012. This was then followed in September 2013 by the ‘Cashgate’ corruption affair. The scandal, whose causes did not necessarily or exclusively originate in President Joyce Banda’s short time in office, erupted after an accountant and civil servants were found hiding large sums of money and the Ministry of Finance’s budget director was shot dead.

Progressio's DW helped the CCJP to support the capacity of members of the Malawi Electoral Commission to promote peaceful politics, engage youth and women's organisations, run community sensitisation events, and mobilise the commitment of the country's different churches and faith leaders.

Dominican Republic and Haiti: extending the channels for people's say on local decisions and development

As well as continuing its support for the successful scaling up participatory municipal budgeting in the Dominican Republic (see Chapter 4), Progressio drove forward efforts during this period to extend the benefits of its work on local government in the Dominican-Haitian border region. The aim of such work on governance was to help consolidate a Hispaniola programme with [partners](#) in the aftermath of Haiti's 2010 earthquake, albeit with most DWs continuing to be based in the [Dominican Republic](#) rather than [Haiti](#), due to Progressio's long and established trajectory in the former country.

Progressio dovetailed this work on decentralisation and citizens' participation in local government with its efforts, described later, to extend and deepen its support for small farmers and communities on both sides of the border involved in sustainable agriculture. An important aspect of its work with local governments was to secure public policy support for people's livelihoods.

This [overall body of work](#) in the Hispaniola programme was already achieving important results by mid-2012, as evidenced by the field research findings and insights annexed in the [IPR review report on Progressio's overall performance](#). It made further significant progress before the Hispaniola programme's eventual closure in 2016, with Progressio's in-country DW support for partners matched by UK-based international advocacy, particularly in relation to the critical situation of Haiti.

Backing the effective implementation of participatory municipal budgeting across the DR

Having contributed to the emergence and incipient application of Law 176-07 making participatory municipal budgeting (PMB) mandatory throughout the Dominican Republic over the previous decade, Progressio continued supporting partners to strengthen and institutionalise its effective implementation across a larger number of Dominican municipalities during this final period of the organisation's life.

As noted in Chapter 4, Progressio had become a trusted partner of [FEDOMU](#) and close collaboration with the local government body continued between 2011 and 2015. One immediate venture was 2011 joint publication, and 2012 [public launch](#) with the World Bank, of a popular version of the gender auditing and policy integration guide issued earlier with the UNFPA's help. Welcomed as an important new tool by the Dominican vice-minister for women, the shorter version, developed with the advice of DWs Gloria Doñate and Percy Álvarez and Progressio partner [Fundación Solidaridad](#), made the guide's content more accessible to community-based CSOs. The latter's knowledge and commitment was now also being promoted through a diploma award scheme for locally-chosen civil society leaders, with courses including Progressio-supported modules on PMB.

New projects to widen and strengthen PMB uptake

Together, FEDOMU and Progressio made full use of such resources and tools as they took forward several important new initiatives. One was the EU-funded Building Citizenship initiative launched by FEDOMU in 2012. Progressio's Guatemalan DW, [Bolívar Sánchez](#), drawing on his many years' experience of civil society strengthening in his home country and with Progressio in the Dominican Republic, helped to support the training and sustained mentoring of 80 grassroots organisations and officials from 23 local councils. They came from the central western Elías Piña and south-western Independencia [provinces](#) on the border with Haiti. Some 366 community leaders were supported to become trainers of trainers.

This push was then matched in 2013 by launch of another EU-supported project led by FEDOMU, 'active citizenship and transparent local governance'. This was aimed at strengthening the PMB capacity and commitment of 40 Dominican municipalities (out of a national total of 162). Intense support was provided to help a target group of 10 municipalities develop local development plans based on the active contribution of citizens.



Cover of the overall gender auditing guide that DWs helped to develop with partner Fundación Solidaridad and turn into a shorter popular version for use by civil society. Its aim was to ensure that tackling gender inequality would be at the core of moves to increase the level and pro-poor effectiveness of public spending by Dominican municipalities.

With their greater national scope, the projects enabled Progressio both to deepen its work in Elías Piña and to promote further its contribution to strengthening PMB in municipalities in the south, southeast and north of the country. In Santo Domingo, for instance, work with Ciudad Alternativa (Alternative City), a civil society partner, supported by a Bolivian DW, Miriam Orellana, saw signs of continued progress in communities' influencing, as shown by the [growing confidence and organisation of women](#) in the Cuesta Linda neighbourhood. Bolívar Sánchez, meanwhile, was able to replicate training in Las Matas de Farfán town in the San Juan province east of Elías Piña.

This work with FEDOMU and civil society partners dovetailed well with separate, yet related, aspects of Progressio's governance work in the country. Given the contextual policy links between decentralisation, PMB and the overall challenge in the country of making public financial management more responsive to pro-poor development, Progressio, for example, made a specific, but nonetheless significant, contribution to a nation-wide civil society campaign over 2010-13 for an official target on education spending to be met. Its success was a major victory for civil society and the Dominican people as a whole (see Box).

Education spending: building critical evidence and support for civil society's 'yellow umbrella' campaign

In 2013, the government of President Danilo Medina elected the previous year implemented a campaign promise to increase public spending on education to 4 per cent of GDP in line with a 1997 law. The move doubled the Dominican Republic's level of education spending, hitherto one of the lowest in Latin America, strengthening the chances for poor families and young people to improve their lives. The government also proceeded to launch a drive against illiteracy.

This major step forward followed three years of campaigning by the Coalition for Education with Dignity ([CED](#)) bringing together 200 civil society organisations in a 'yellow umbrella' movement. Progressio DWs had provided important support for CED's advocacy through their placements with the Centro Bonó, the Jesuit social justice organisation.

Examining facts and figures

[Mariana Barrenese](#), an Argentine expert on public finance bringing major experience from her work as a government adviser and university academic in her home country, played an important role in strengthening the coalition's ability to examine critically the government's national budget and spending priorities. She also helped it to develop evidence-based proposals on why and how the 4 per cent pledge could be met and highlight the social and financial costs of failing to do so. The DW's work, through her placement with the Centro Bonó-affiliated Juan Montalvo Centre for Social Studies, involved mentoring CED leaders and advocates on their policy research and recommendations as well as running workshops on public finance and the budget cycle. This promoted well informed grassroots pressure by coalition members and supporters.

Mariana Barrenese's support provided a strong technical foundation for the CED to campaign at political and public levels around the 2012 elections. It put the CED in a stronger position to lobby the technical teams of the presidential candidates and helped the Centro Bonó to generate the accurate information it needed to produce effective public campaigning materials. These ranged from short briefings to illustrated pamphlets and cartoons.

Getting the messages across

The Centro Bonó's efforts to popularise key issues and messages of the CED were also supported by Progressio DW Juan Carlos González Díaz, a media specialist from Venezuela, who helped to produce short documentary video clips. One, commenting on a parliamentary session on education, generated several thousand hits on YouTube and led to mainstream media coverage. The momentum built up by the campaign through work of this kind led to televised debates on education spending with presidential candidates before the 2012 elections.

During her placement, Mariana Barrenese also worked with the Centro Bonó to help develop the expertise of its fellow members of the Foro Ciudadano (Citizen Forum) civil society network on tax justice policy issues, given the importance of raising public finance for education and other public services and reducing the need for international aid.

As in other countries, Progressio also built into such governance work a focus on gender justice and women's rights, targeting younger people in particular. For example, with the support of the UNFPA, Progressio undertook two phases of work from 2012 on masculinity in schools, churches, security bodies and government institutions. A Progressio DW from Peru, Percy Álvarez, helped the MOVIDA network to promote the formation of [local committees](#) and empower youth leaders to raise awareness, mobilise communities and engage local authorities on violence against women in Santiago province and all of the five provinces bordering Haiti. This included engaging men incarcerated for violence against their partners on masculinity.

Promoting governance for development in the border regions

As part of the shift in priorities towards the border region to foster better relations and cooperation between the Dominican Republic and Haiti, however, it was work in the central western Elías Piña province which increasingly became a focal point for many of Progressio's efforts from 2010.

Promoting stronger planning across Elías Piña province

One of the key developments arising from Progressio's response to Haiti's 2010 earthquake was a partnership with the town council of Comendador, the provincial capital. This included the emergence of a productive working relationship with the town's mayor. A leader from the conservative Social Christian Reformist Party, he was a vocal advocate of stronger central support for Elías Piña as one of the poorest Dominican provinces and open to promoting new approaches to local politics nationally. He also advocated better relations with Haiti and greater cooperation with his local Haitian counterparts across the border, motivated by concerns over cross-border migration flows driven by poverty and instability in Haiti and accentuated by the 2010 earthquake.

Progressio's spotting of this new political opportunity was redolent of the late 1990s. As noted in Chapter 3, CIIR's ICD country representative had first launched work on PMB having forged links with a local leader in Villa González displaying new political thinking and commitment.

One DW to develop this relationship with the Comendador town hall was Diana Torres, a local planning and citizens' participation specialist who had recently supported Progressio's work on inclusive education in Peru with EDUCA. Attached to the mayor's office, this Colombian DW worked from 2011 to develop a technical unit to strengthen inter-municipal planning systems. Through her daily support of the process – she considered such accompaniment a key strength of Progressio's approach and its DWs (see Box below) – Diana Torres was able to build on the gains of Progressio's participation in FEDOMU's 'building citizenship' and 'active citizenship and transparent local governance' initiatives described above.

The two FEDOMU-led projects, in developing PMB expertise with public officials and civil society, had led to multi-stakeholder economic and social councils being set up in the participating Dominican municipalities in order to strengthen local development planning, and such a body, with Progressio's support, had been created in Comendador. The challenge now was also to improve coordination between municipalities across Elías Piña province as a whole, overcoming the tendency of individual town halls and mayors to plan separately according to their own political interests. To bolster its existing contribution through Diana Torres' work with the inter-municipal technical unit, Progressio placed another DW, Leonel Salgado, a Cuban professional, to work with the Association of Municipalities of Elías Piña (MAMDEPI).

Launching livelihoods initiatives in Elías Piña province

Progressio's support for more inclusive local governance across Elías Piña involved a productive cross-over with work on livelihoods and resilience. With the additional backing of the Big Lottery Fund, Progressio placed another DW, Rocío Loyola from Peru, with the Comendador town hall to provide help and advice on livelihoods as it worked to extend and deepen its participatory approach to local development across the province.

Indeed, the Comendador town council set up a marketing office to enable Dominican agricultural producers (as well as their Haitian counterparts on the other side of the border) to come together and strengthen sales of their produce. It also launched a companion initiative with handicraft producers and traders, who took advantage of facilities now being provided to display artefacts and host events to promote traditional culture among communities and tourists. These were important steps forward in a province that was culturally rich but economically poor. As [noted](#) by Progressio, such small entrepreneurs and informal traders had tended to operate in isolation before. The new project sought to develop their skills, boost the quality of their production, and gain a stronger foothold in the market through their stronger organisation and coordination.

DIANA TORRES

Progressio and DW accompaniment: working with a difference, making a difference



Diana Ximena Torres, a Colombian DW, worked as a Progressio capacity-building adviser on citizen participation in Peru with the education NGO EDUCA from 2008 to 2011 before working as a local development specialist to support Progressio's partnership with the Comendador municipality in the Dominican Republic in 2011-14. Between 2014 and 2016 she was a programme officer specialising in monitoring and evaluation.

Progressio's Hispaniola programme in the Dominican Republic and Haiti became recognised for its contributions to local acquisition of knowledge and skills, the creation of alliances, collective work and the pursuit of stakeholder consensus enabling people's lives to be improved. At the heart of its approach were DWs whose personal outlook, principles and ways of working were crucial to the struggle for change.

The organisation's DWs – known in the Dominican Republic as elsewhere in Latin America as *cooperantes* – managed to merge themselves, as if by camouflage, into the lives of communities and organisations, driving forward development processes together with the people with whom they forged horizontal relationships based on dialogue and respect. Progressio enabled DWs to place their high levels of technical expertise and experience at the service of others. With Progressio, I lived intensely the key features of the organisation's work that in my view made it different and special.

Living joint experiences

Living joint experiences with the individuals and social groups that a DW accompanied in partner organisations and communities was one of the most relevant aspects of his or her work. It enabled DWs to broaden their understanding of the people involved in project initiatives, leading to activities and processes that truly matched their needs, interests and dreams. This way of working broke the mould in terms of how communities and partners experienced international support, with DWs' on-the-ground immersion in their daily reality facilitating the exchange of knowledge and expertise. It was in those settings that the most transformative ideas and changes were born and took shape. It was a two-way process in which each side learnt new ways of being and doing.

Progressio has left in its wake many learning experiences, encouraging narratives of hope and transformed lives. Both in terms of methodology, approach and results, its specific efforts on governance, environmental protection, food security and health made a difference. In the Dominican Republic, in particular, it became a reference point for good practices and has left deep marks on development efforts there.

Leaving deep impressions and opening new worlds

The organisation also made a deep impression on me as someone who decided to become a DW in order to improve other people's lives. For me, such international cooperation, offering a chance to share my professional experience and knowledge, was an ideal mechanism for challenging injustice and working for a fairer society. It was Progressio that opened doors for me to experience new worlds.

It was a journey in which I faced an environment full of conflict, violated rights and oppressive interests and agendas, but also one full of people's struggles, hopes and dreams. In each setting, I felt my presence as a DW had deep meaning, involving as it did the task of accompanying and showing solidarity with social causes, sharing and proposing tools to build collective momentum in support of change.

It was an experience in which I was transforming myself at the same time. In sharing knowledge and expertise, helping partners and communities to identify their priorities and in developing tools jointly with them, I was always forced to be aware of myself and challenge my own views and actions, to work with respect in response to their aspirations of change.

Border solidarity: supporting municipal drives for bi-national cooperation

Support for these initiatives in Comendador, as well as building momentum for inclusive local development across Elías Piña province itself, dovetailed with a wider Progressio strategy to promote stronger collaboration and planning between local governments in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. This was aimed at taking forward a wider pool of bi-national initiatives, with civil society participation, similar to those described above.

From 2013, Progressio, with funding from the UNDP's Articulation of Territorial Networks initiative providing capacity-building support on local governance and development (ART-GOLD), tasked two DWs attached to the Comendador town hall and MAMDEPI, Spaniard Javier Igeño and Cuban Leonel Salgado, to support a cross-border inter-municipal committee (CIT). CIT brought together the six municipalities of Elías Piña province with six local administrations from the central plateau region of Haiti.

After the earthquake: building on a local bi-national push

This bi-national push, driven forward from Elías Piña by the four DWs based in Comendador, built on an earlier Progressio phase supported by ART-GOLD. After Haiti's 2010 earthquake, Germán Luebert, a Chilean DW previously involved in strengthening environmental advocacy in Ecuador, and Peruvian DW Percy Álvarez, had both worked with civil society to promote and influence the direction of a CIT structure further north

in Dajabón province. The DWs supported events to facilitate dialogue between local Dominican leaders and their official counterparts in Haiti's northeast.

The need for dialogue – and crucial civil society input – on the common development challenges that border leaders faced after Haiti's earthquake had been similarly reflected in the border town Jimaní in the southerly Independencia province. In the wake of earthquake, a DW, Vita Randazzo, supported the efforts of the Jesuit Service for Refugees and Migrants ([JSRM](#)) to address the emergency and provide longer-term responses to the challenges raised by the crisis. They included the need for stronger investment in local development and livelihoods. This meant taking advantage of [bi-national markets](#), for example, with their potential for generating both income and social cohesion and for fairer approaches to migration and citizenship. JSRM estimated at the time that at least three of every 10 residents in Jimaní were people of Haitian descent.

Communication and culture for fairer Dominican-Haitian relations

To help mobilise local and national Dominican support for stronger and fairer economic ties – Progressio's partners pushed for traders from Haiti to be granted equal market space and for border market facilities and conditions to be improved – Progressio supported the [media and communications work](#) of partners.

Progressio's [CJM](#)-linked partner Solidaridad Fronteriza (Border Solidarity), for example, presented a media programme bearing the same name on a Dajabón cable television station. It carried news and insights from initiatives supporting local development and bi-national cooperation, including its 2011-13 'Food for a Better Future' initiative with Progressio described later.

In addition, given the power of dance and music and their deeply rooted multicultural resonance, Progressio placed a Spanish DW, Paloma Martínez, to strengthen the ability of the Foundation for Cultural Exchange between Caribbean People ([FUNCAR-Centro Puente](#)) to promote bilateral understanding. The partner [used the channels to empower women](#) traders and domestic workers from Dajabón and neighbouring town Ouanaminthe (Wanamant) in Haiti.

Such communication initiatives in the border region dovetailed well with those forming part of Progressio's continued work with partners on the rights of the estimated 1 million people of Haitian descent living in the Dominican Republic. The issue remained a major concern in Progressio's [policy work](#) and programming (see Box).

People of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic: final acts of a longstanding commitment

In 2013, Progressio, with the backing of Christian Aid, launched a new communications initiative with the Centro Bonó think tank and [MUDHA](#) in which another Spanish DW, Ana Paola Van Dalen, helped the two partners to raise national awareness and keep up pressure on Dominican Haitians' rights and their battle for recognition and citizenship.

The project's importance was demonstrated in September that year when the Supreme Court ruled that children of Haitian immigrants could not qualify for Dominican citizenship even though they had been born in the country. The move threatened widespread family disruption and several hundred thousand people of Haitian descent with statelessness. Juan Carlos González Díaz, the media specialist from Venezuela, had supported the Centro Bonó's communications work on Dominican-Haitian issues earlier in the decade.

Over the years, the rights and living standards of multicultural communities living in *bateyes* – settlements originally set up to host temporary migrant workers from Haiti servicing the sugar industry – had been a focus of work, and Progressio embarked on a final partnership in the early part of the decade. Haitians, Dominican-Haitians and Dominicans living in *bateyes* remained among the most deprived people in the Dominican Republic.

An Argentine DW, Paola Bacalini, helped a centre run by the Scalabrinian Congregation of the Saint Carlos Borromeo Sisters ([ASCALA](#)), a Catholic migrant rights organisation, to [improve the nutrition and income of batey communities](#) in the east of the country. She helped communities to take up organic food production along the lines of the sustainable agriculture activities being promoted by Progressio in the northern border regions (see later section). Progressio helped ASCALA to set up an agro-ecology field school.

Building support for a new approach to development in Haiti

One reason for local actors in the Dominican Republic and Haiti pushing for stronger bi-national cooperation and acting to take such a process forward themselves in the aftermath of the earthquake was the glacial progress being made by the revived Bilateral Mixed



Commission involving the two countries. The CMB's lack of impetus affected far poorer and less stable Haiti in particular.

As well as the damaging impact of the earthquake on the capacity of the Haitian government, a major factor preventing the Haitian state from playing a more active and representative role in the CMB and impairing the effectiveness of its overall response to the disaster was the historical concentration of political, economic, social and administrative power in Port-au-Prince, the capital. Despite pressure for change, it had historically favoured local elites and the interests of outside powers rather than the mass of the people, who were [under-represented](#) in reconstruction efforts.

The problem was highlighted by a 2012 report published by Progressio with other members of the Haiti Advocacy Platform for Ireland and the UK (HAPI-UK), [Thinking Local in Haiti: Civil Society Perspectives on Decentralisation](#). Based on consultation with Haitian civil society partners, it argued that decision-making, power and resources should be decentralised to put Haiti on the path to fairer and more inclusive development, and that post-earthquake action was a vital opportunity to do so.

The adverse dynamics of the problem had been put into sharp relief by the disaster itself. While local communities outside Port-au-Prince felt neglected, those displaced from the capital were inclined to return because of the lack of local support. This placed further strain on the stretched capacity of the city to cope. Two years after the 2010 earthquake some 500,000 people were still living in tents or temporary shelter.

Mobilising policy support for Haiti in the UK

Progressio played an important international advocacy role at this time, advocating the need for inclusive approaches to reconstruction and development in Haiti, including through stronger and fairer bilateral relations with the Dominican Republic.

As well as actively supporting the relaunch and work plans of HAPI-UK in early 2011, it helped to establish the [All-Party Parliamentary Group \(APPG\) on Haiti](#) later that year and then run its secretariat on behalf the group's chair, [Lord Griffiths](#). Progressio also engaged the APPG on the Dominican Republic and, in partnership with HAPI-UK, worked to consolidate a multi-stakeholder roundtable on Haiti and the Dominican Republic. This provided a bi-annual forum for diplomats, MPs, the FCO and DfID, NGOs, business groups, churches and academics to discuss effective Hispaniola-wide strategies, with Progressio using its island-wide lessons to inform proceedings.

This lobbying and networking enabled Progressio to play a productive role in briefing UK parliamentary and business [delegations](#) to the two countries. It also helped to strengthen UK lobbying in Brussels for effective EU support for reconstruction and development in Haiti. Progressio represented HAPI-UK in meetings with its EU-wide counterpart, [Coordination Europe-Haiti](#).

An important breakthrough occurred in mid-2012 when the [UK government announced](#) that it would open an embassy in Haiti, followed by a reciprocal announcement by Haiti that it would open a diplomatic mission in London. The latter came during a visit to the UK by the Haitian prime minister at the time of the London 2012 Olympics. While these positive developments had multiple causes, Progressio's lobbying in the UK, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, nurturing commitment and dialogue among different actors, contributed to the circumstances in which they came about.

Creating pressure for aid accountability on the ground

This UK-based influencing was matched by Progressio's role in supporting civil society partners on the ground in Haiti through DWs working on governance and post-reconstruction issues. This provided additional insights for international policy work and gave it stronger legitimacy.

With the financial support of CAFOD, for example, [Esther Schneider](#), a German DW specialising in public policy, helped to consolidate the research and information work of Centre for Research, Reflection, Training and Social Action ([CERFAS](#)), which had been monitoring policy on post-earthquake reconstruction and development since its creation in 2011. As management and delivery of international aid was concentrated in Port-au-Prince, and with the international humanitarian response facing allegations of poor coordination and weak responsiveness to people's needs and rights, CERFAS' work analysed the approach of the international agencies as well as the role of the Haitian government. The latter's difficulties and diminished capacity, along with a deficit in civil society participation, meant outside agencies' power increased, raising questions on the local ownership and accountability of the relief effort.

2011 launch of the UK's All-Party Parliamentary Group on Haiti chaired by Leslie Griffiths, a Labour life peer in the House of Lords (front centre), flanked (right) by Progressio policy and advocacy officer Lizzette Robleto-González.



Michèle Pierre-Louis (right), who served as Haiti's prime minister in 2008-09, addressing a meeting of the APPG.



Esther Schneider, in addition to organising events to raise awareness of aid standards and principles such as those set out in the OECD's Paris declaration on aid effectiveness, helped CERFAS to develop an international cooperation observatory with effective research methods and a functioning database. As a result, the observatory was able to produce a news and analysis bulletin translated into different languages and disseminate regular information to the media. The organisation's work [attracted interest and recognition](#) and its scope of activities increased. She also facilitated joint working between Haitian and international CSOs on key themes such as post-earthquake rehousing.

To bolster its international advocacy, Progressio hosted a [talk in London by the CERFAS director](#), a Jesuit priest, in 2013. During his UK visit, in which he was also received by Progressio supporters in Wigan, he [raised in the media](#) the pressing challenges still facing the Haitian people and the need for better coordination between international humanitarian agencies and under-resourced and under-supported local CSOs. To help sustain international commitment on Haiti, Progressio supported another UK parliamentary delegation to the country in mid-2014.

Steps for progress: environmental sustainability and livelihoods

Protecting people's resilience and access to vital natural resources

This section describes the continued achievements of Progressio's DW capacity-building with partners working for a sustainable environment based on social justice. As described in Chapter 4, Progressio's linking of its support for agro-ecology with protection of natural resources vital for the livelihoods and resilience of poor people such as water, forests and land, had gone from strength to strength.

Progressio sought to scale up the value of such work in the final period of the organisation's life. It demonstrated evidence of growing progress and results. This was despite Progressio's falling DW presence in Latin America and the Caribbean – long since a major source of rich programme experience on this strategic theme – and Yemen's spiralling political crisis which inevitably made sustainable advances extremely difficult there.

As in the 2000s, it was Progressio's work for sustainable environment that provided grassroots insights for its international advocacy and campaigning during this period. Again the focus was on water rights and food security in the context of climate change and resource depletion.

The future we need: 'waterproofing' policies for a new development agenda

Though a universal set of sustainable development goals was eventually introduced in 2016, a significant feature of discussions underway from the start of the decade on a post-2015 development framework to replace the MDGs had been whether and how the often siloed policy agendas on international development and the environment should converge.

As the [post-2015 discussions](#) began to gather pace, Progressio, drawing on the expanded range and strengths of its work described in previous chapters, carved out a distinct niche for itself in advocating the need to tackle environmental sustainability from a people-centred and rights-based perspective rather than a narrow conservationist one. It centred on promoting water rights and water security as a central requirement of any new global agenda on sustainable development. In pursuit of this aim, Progressio organised a 'Waterproof Development' advocacy campaign. Its main initial target was the UN's June 2012 [Conference on Sustainable Development](#) held in Rio de Janeiro.

The Rio summit: water rights and promoting a green and fair economy

One of the main topics of Rio conference – held in the Brazilian city 20 years after the original 'Earth Summit' had set in motion landmark policy processes and initiatives such as the UNFCCC climate change talks and Agenda 21 action plans on the environment –

was transition to a so-called 'green economy'. Progressio, as set out in its December 2011 Rio+20 briefing paper, [Water in a Green and Fair Economy](#), argued that pursuit of global survival should be founded on tackling the poverty and injustice affecting poor communities. They were the people most affected by environmental degradation driven by inappropriate policies and business models. Needed was an approach geared to 'human flourishing' and social equity in which poor people had greater control over decisions and management of natural resources and eco-systems.

Progressio's advocacy of a green and fair economy in relation to Rio provided an opportunity for the organisation to pull together key recommendations from its recent campaigns on illegal logging and virtual water and climate change (see Chapter 4), as reflected by comments on a Rio+20 [draft document](#) and a pre-summit [briefing for MPs](#). The latter called for supportive UK government action domestically and internationally. This meant policy commitment across all official departments and institutions to ensure a coherent approach was taken, including by business, to the interdependent sustainability challenges posed by agriculture, food consumption, forestry, energy, transport and urbanisation. Each required synergies with protecting water resources and water rights.

Livelihoods and widening the water agenda

A salient angle of Progressio's campaign around Rio, given its long track record on agro-ecology, was to advocate policy action linking the protection of water resources with the crucial need for food security strategies providing effective support for the livelihoods and rights of small-scale farmers. They were often at a disadvantage in competition with agribusiness over increasingly scarce water and also among the poorest groups globally, despite producing healthy food for a third of the world's population and their role in fighting climate change through sustainable production methods.

Worldwide, agriculture accounted for 70 per cent of fresh water extracted for human use, as observed by another Progressio briefing, [Our Planet and Its People](#), in which environmental educator Dr Michael Edwards reviewed the scientific evidence on the threats to a sustainable future on the eve of the Rio+20 summit. The briefing noted with alarm a 'perfect storm' as demands for food, water and energy in a world experiencing intensifying ecological stress, climate change and loss of biodiversity combined dangerously with the tensions arising from growing inequalities between rich and poor people.

Even situations of water abundance could be highly damaging. Progressio pointed out that supposedly 'clean' sources of energy were not in themselves necessarily sustainable. It knew from partners in Honduras, for example, that hydropower projects were causing a 'dirty war' of repression against environmental and human rights defenders struggling to protect rural communities from displacement and the diversion of the water and land they needed for their livelihoods. The harassment and violent attacks against Honduran civil society activists gained international attention in 2016 with the high-profile case of murdered indigenous rights leader Berta Cáceres.

Progressio's focus on water and productive livelihoods provided a complementary counterpoint to approaches often tending to frame water challenges mainly around citizen access to affordable clean and safe water and sanitation as consumers. Aid donors had neglected investment in water and sanitation. Yet a narrow focus on this problem risked detracting from the need to support inclusive, participatory water management at a wider systemic level. Indeed, the nature and purpose of economic growth, and existing approaches to economic management, were again being called into question amid debate and action on the concept of sustainable development (see Quote).

"Water rights and over-use of ground water, especially in the agricultural sector, are fundamental issues along with supplying clean and safe drinking water to cities and villages... this leads to a contradiction at the heart of all donors' work on water here in Yemen: expanding water use and supply for all sectors while wanting to conserve water at the same time... any change in water management will affect one or more sectors, so multiple sectors must be reformed to comprehensively address the water issue."

Derek Kim, Progressio DW working in Yemen, quoted in [Progressio magazine, 2012, issue 2](#)



Meanwhile, women's significant yet under-recognised and under-supported role in small-scale farming and as water managers for household consumption and community production meant female empowerment was at the heart of Progressio's Rio+20 demands for participatory approaches to water governance and management. This reflected its commitment to women's rights and gender justice as a strategic priority for the organisation's contribution to sustainable development.

Mobilising support for positive action by the UK

In promoting an integrated, people-centred and gendered approach to food, water and energy, and the need for sustainable development goals incorporating such an agenda at Rio, Progressio made one of its strongest – and final – major campaign pushes to combine member and supporter mobilisation with partner voice in advocating policy change.

Before the June summit, Progressio invited parishes across the UK to send in postcards expressing their hopes and aspirations for a sustainable future. The move sought to make good its stance that people-centred international development and social justice was not just a task to be supported abroad but also required citizen action at home (see Quote). More than 1,000 supporters sent in 'The future I want' postcards which Progressio handed in to the Liberal Democrat Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg before his departure for Rio as joint leader of the UK delegation to the summit.

"I want to know when I look back in years to come that I have done my part to make a future to be proud of, one where I took part in the worldwide community to help others."

Louise Richards, Crosby parish, UK

To add further pressure, Progressio organised a photo initiative in which 462 campaigners sent in images depicting their support for the content of a campaign letter reiterating the organisation's advocacy recommendations for Rio. While some undertook the action via Progressio's website, others organised a specific event to do so. They included 50 people at Stoneygate Baptist Church in Leicester, led by Progressio supporters Elizabeth Burleigh and Annette Brindle.

Progressio handed in the letter to the Conservative Secretary of State for the Environment and Rural Affairs, Caroline Spelman, and organised a photo display at a May 2012 joint event with CAFOD, Christian Aid and Tearfund in which she answered audience questions as joint leader of the forthcoming UK delegation. She was a speaker on a panel, chaired by Richard Black, the BBC News environment correspondent, which also included Rt Rev Peter Price, the Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells, and Nanette Antequisa, a member of the Beyond 2015 advisory group, from the Philippines.

Such campaign action was complemented by wider Progressio awareness-raising on Rio through the media. It included an article on waterproofing development carried by *Outreach* magazine published by the Stakeholder Forum, an international organisation promoting the accountability of policies on sustainable development, and a series of podcasts and interviews on ProgressioRadio hosted by the Audioboom platform.

Rio action: partner voice at the policy table

This advance action helped Progressio to continue lobbying and awareness-raising at the summit itself. A Progressio team, as well as engaging the official UK delegation and national delegations from countries such as Yemen and Peru where DWs worked with partners, promoted its positions in civil society events and meetings with policy-makers.

The Progressio team included water rights specialist Derek Kim, a DW working to support partners' advocacy and communication on the issue in Yemen. His representation of Progressio included participation in a civil society meeting with UN secretary-general, Ban Ki-moon. During the conference, Kim shared insights and promoted proposals gathered by Progressio in pre-summit consultations with rural and urban partners. In the case of Yemen, Derek Kim drew on his work to encourage the country's water authority to adopt a bottom-up approach to water governance based on the maximum involvement of local communities and institutions in decision-making and on water management systems protecting vital eco-systems (see later section below).

Grassroots voice similarly characterised the additional communication materials that Progressio produced to target Rio and sustain campaign momentum after the summit. These were aimed at explaining water and sustainable development issues accessibly for specialist and non-specialist audiences and promoting Progressio's positions on them. They included an ['essential guide'](#) on water and development and an [animation](#) produced with funding from the Vodaphone World of Difference programme. Their inclusion of voices of people benefiting from Progressio-supported partner organisations in Honduras, El Salvador, Peru and Zimbabwe brought to life the water challenges on the ground and demonstrated how alternative approaches to water use and governance were making a difference to people's lives in practice.

After the event: taking stock, following up gains

It would appear that Progressio's pressure helped to achieve some degree of influence on the UK's position at Rio. [Official speeches](#) showed signs of shifts towards Progressio's stance and a [post-summit letter](#) from Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg expressed his support for food, energy and water being recognised as essential to poverty eradication and environmental sustainability and being integrated coherently in the post-2015 sustainable development negotiations in the UN.

In its [response](#) to Rio's outcome text and overall [reflections](#) on the summit, Progressio welcomed the event's recognition that mutually supportive action was needed to tackle poverty, environmental degradation and climate change, and that water was central to sustainable development. At the same time, it bemoaned the summit's neglect of implementation plans. The absence of target actions and deadlines begged questions on governments' commitment and accountability for progress. Of crucial concern to Progressio was the summit's failure to recognise the need for participatory approaches to water governance and management, including the meaningful involvement of poor communities, in particular women.

Nevertheless, Progressio's 'waterproofing' campaign appeared to contribute positively to global demands for a more ambitious and inclusive water agenda. Despite uncertainties over its future nature and course, a process to develop a universal set of sustainable development goals was launched in the wake of Rio, and Progressio kept up its pressure for a specific goal on water. It set out the vital elements it should contain in an October 2013 [policy briefing](#) and [made the case at that month's water summit in Budapest](#). When the SDGs were finally approved at the UN in 2015, they did show some signs of movement in the direction Progressio had advocated, albeit of an incomplete and implicit nature (see Box).

Progressio, alongside other civil society organisations and in coordination with its partners, had at least lent positive weight to global efforts to 'plug the hole' on water, in line with its traditional inclination to support wider movements for change. No single actor, after all, was going to accomplish the task by itself.

Building pressure on water: fast forward to 2015

In contrast with the MDGs in which expected progress on access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation was folded into a target under MDG 7 on environmental sustainability, water issues were now the subject of a specific goal in their own right in the form of SDG 6. SDG 6, moreover, though appearing slanted towards the importance of water, sanitation and health (WASH) rather than also to water as a crucial livelihoods issue, did contain potentially relevant targets. They invoked the need to integrate the management of water resources, reduce water scarcity and improve water and sanitation management by supporting and strengthening the participation of local communities.

SDG 6 did not explicitly acknowledge women's crucial role in water management. SDG 5, however – a far more ambitious goal on tackling gender inequality in comparison with its MDG predecessor – did contain targets implicitly relevant to water such as ensuring women's effective participation in decision-making and the need for women to have equal rights to economic resources, including natural resources. Likewise, a target under SDG 2 on ending hunger, achieving food security and promoting sustainable agriculture, while failing to explicitly recognise water rights, pledged to improve small-scale farmers' productivity and income through 'secure and equal access to land [and] other productive resources and inputs'.

As with other SDGs, ambiguities remained due to the compromises of political negotiation. All the same, the new 2030 framework on sustainable development presented opportunities for Progressio's civil society partners to push in practice for action to deal with such gaps and inconsistencies. They could advocate positive connections within and between the goals and their respective targets in relation to food security, water, women's rights, sustainable production and consumption and climate change.

From Rio to the 2013 G8 summit: banking on investment, investing in people?

Progressio's contribution to advocacy on water, as well as striving to influence the specific content and approach of the emerging post-2015 agenda on sustainable development itself, meant engaging with the policy architecture surrounding the putative framework. The former could advance or hinder the latter's positive implementation and enrichment in practice.

Indeed, after Rio, Progressio rapidly resumed its focus on the water security and rights problems raised by large-scale commercial farming. The work took place amid an intensified drive by governments, official aid donors and large business groups and bodies to increase private investment in agriculture in the global South.

Land rights: bringing water issues to the surface

Pursuit of access to water was both a cause and effect of so-called 'land grabs'. Land had become a focus of civil society campaigning across the world since the mid-2000s because of the food security, land rights, conflict and human rights problems involved in land acquisition for large-scale agricultural projects. The ventures were often largely focused on export crops, including for biofuels, rather than for domestic food production and food security.

Debate and action on land acquisition and land rights, however, had sometimes tended to overlook the water angle. Guarantees for access to water could lie below the surface of land deals and contracts reached by local elites with powerful national and foreign investors without the knowledge and meaningful consultation and consent of local communities. Like land, people's access to water often depended on customary rather than formal legal rights, making communities vulnerable to the questionable claims of forces with greater power and often corrupt influence.

Furthermore, as shown by Progressio's work with Peruvian partner CEPES on asparagus exports described in Chapter 4, the expansion of agribusiness, in the absence of effective public interest regulation, business due diligence and the effective application of safeguards by international bodies providing project finance such as the World Bank's IFC, often intensified use of water rather than its conservation and sustainable management.

Engaging the World Bank: water is not a private business

In 2013, Progressio drew on its recent grassroots work to urge the World Bank to tackle such problems – including their impact on women as major food producers and water gatherers – in the bank's 'Benchmarking Business in Agriculture' initiative. Launched in 2012, [the BBA](#) involved plans for an indicator on water as part of the international finance body's work to set benchmarks for policies geared to agricultural growth. In the case of Africa, said a 2013 World Bank report, agriculture had the potential to become a US\$1 trillion industry by 2030, more than tripling its 2010 level.

The Bank's work on the BBA, while invoking the importance of security of land tenure, stressed facilitating land markets and trading and removing regulatory barriers to investment. It took place in an environment where the business-led World Economic Forum was involved in several initiatives to boost private investment in world agriculture. They included the G8's New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition aid initiative with African partner governments launched with the AU in 2012.

These initiatives were prompting diverse NGO and civil society criticisms and reactions. Some dismissed them outright as inappropriate ventures skewed to the damaging interests of agribusiness. Others called for their systematic reform or technical improvement to ensure they involved far stronger empowerment and rewards for the poorest and most disadvantaged farmers and not just benefits for better-off producers better able to take immediate advantage of commercially oriented supply chains. Many questioned the assumed trickle-down benefits of the initiatives whose rationale and design had involved very little consultation of small producers.

[Progressio's briefing on the BBA](#), by policy officer Lis Wallace, a member of the team at Rio+20, called for the World Bank's recommendations on agriculture to be 'waterproofed' as a crucial element of ensuring that the needs and rights of small-scale farmers were protected. It noted that other relevant safeguards being introduced – such as the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests developed by the global Committee on World Food Security – did not cover water resources.

Progressio's engagement of the World Bank on the BBA during 2013 enabled it to dovetail the continuation of its 'waterproofing development' initiative with the organisation's active involvement in that year's '[Enough Food for Everyone IF](#)' NGO campaign in the UK on global hunger (see Box). IF targeted the mid-June G8 summit to be hosted and chaired by the British government in the remote location of Lough Earne.

Progressio supports the 2013 'Enough Food for Everyone IF' campaign targeting the UK-hosted G8

Organised by a diverse coalition of more than 100 NGOs, the aim of IF – eight years after the [Make Poverty History](#) campaign for higher and better aid, trade justice and elimination of poor country debt – was now to urge the UK to use its influence within the group of leading rich nations to support positive action to tackle the systemic causes of the world hunger crisis. The crisis had been brought into sharper relief by the effects of the recent food price rises.

With official plans for the summit including a specific meeting on food and hunger, NGOs involved in IF urged the G8 to increase official public aid for agriculture to boost the livelihoods of small-scale farmers and protect their rights. It also called for action to address underlying causes of hunger such as 'land grabs', tax dodging and the lack of transparency and accountability surrounding business investment in agriculture. The IF campaign thus provided Progressio with an important opportunity to promote its views and recommendations on water and land.

Mobilising support and local action

Progressio did so as a member of IF's leadership team and several of the campaign's working groups, including those working on public engagement and [mobilising the support of religious leaders](#), as well as through its [support for IF events and activities](#). Members of Progressio's campaign team toured the UK to brief supporters on the aims of the IF campaign and support their lobbying of MPs at key moments during 2013 in the run-up to the summit. The team also produced accessible materials to enhance the promotion of local action such as a '[water diet challenge](#)' raising awareness of the links between food production and water consumption.

Progressio's involvement in IF, as described later, also included the contribution of ICS volunteers returning from overseas placements where they had witnessed food and hunger problems first hand. They also helped to support Progressio's follow-up action on water and small-scale farmers after the G8 summit.

The future we need: helping to promote sustainable development in practice

Progressio's policy campaigning was one of the highlights of its thematic work on people-centred environmental sustainability during this final period of the organisation's life. Yet this should not take away from its valuable efforts to make a holistic approach to sustainable development – tackling the poverty and injustice affecting poor communities – a reality in practice on the ground.

Dominican Republic and Haiti: food for a better future in the border region

By 2011, Progressio was supporting a total of 63 farmers' associations and cooperatives in the Dominican Republic and over 300 farming families across the border in Haiti. Many were involved in its '[Food for a Better Future](#)' project launched that year as part of the cross-border work being conducted by the Hispaniola programme.

The project was a good example of Progressio's work with partners combining pursuit of better livelihoods and community development with effective natural resource management. The work, in turn, contributed to the battle against climate change involving deforestation as a major factor.

Supporting progress with farmers in Dajabón

On the Dominican side of the border, the project involved providing practical advice and support for the work of Solidaridad Fronteriza (Border Solidarity, SF) based in Dajabón province whose economy was predominantly agricultural while involving rapidly expanding trade with Haiti. Since 2005, the Jesuit partner had been supporting small-scale farmer associations to come together in networks to tackle collectively the common problems they faced. Besides insufficient government support for agricultural production and marketing in

this more remote and traditionally neglected region, they included the damaging effects of slash-and-burn agriculture, soil degradation and the loss of forest cover, as well as water shortages and more frequent droughts as a result of climate change.

SF's efforts in the province included the rural areas surrounding the Restauración municipality, reliant on forestry and timber production, where one success had been formation of the Union of Forest Producer Associations (UNAPROBOSQUE) bringing together 12 local farmer groups. SF's work with the network's 400 members had been leading to increased reforestation and land recovery. It had set up pilot plots and demonstration model small-holder agro-forestry farms growing trees among crops and producing food in environmentally sustainable ways.

In joining the initiative in 2011, Progressio placed two DWs to support SF's work, [Bernardo López](#), a Colombian agro-forestry specialist, and [Karina Cuba](#), a Peruvian expert on food and nutrition security. Their combination of skills reflected the fact that SF, as well as planning to strengthen UNAPROBOSQUE's adoption of sustainable agriculture and scale up production and marketing to boost farmer income and local food security, now involved helping families to set up family vegetable gardens and rear chickens and hens as a source of protein-rich meat and eggs.

Combined training on food production and consumption was aimed at increasing the domestic supply of nutritious food for a better diet, improving community health and earning extra money through the sale of surpluses. Promoting community solidarity was an important feature of the Progressio-SF partnership. Support for poultry-rearing, for instance, involved a livestock-pass-on system in which beneficiaries were required to donate some of the offsprings to other, non-family members of the communities.

Supporting the ingredients of long-term success

Progressio's support for SF's project, with the financial backing of Christian Aid and the Big Lottery Fund, was already making strong progress by mid-2012, as reported in the [field research in the Dominican Republic and Haiti during Progressio's IPR review](#). By the end of the initiative in early 2014, it could show further important results.

Bernardo López's [technical support and advice](#), as well as helping to increase the volume and quality of home-based food production in communities, enabled farmers to strengthen the diversity and environmental sustainability of their output as the SF programme expanded with the support of other project supporters and donors. Over three years, the number of model agro-forestry farms had increased from 10 to 110, and their continued production of citrus fruits was now combined with the integration of crops such as yucca, bananas, kidney beans and peanuts as well as coffee, cocoa and avocados. The latter created cash-crop opportunities for further [income generation](#) as efforts were made to secure official support and business partnerships enabling the beneficial inclusion of farmers in agricultural value chains.

With unclear property rights and precarious land tenure another problem for UNAPROBOSQUE and its members, Bernardo López, on top of advising on improved crop production and storage, supported SF's work with the farmers to demarcate land and develop business plans. The aim was to win official support for the agro-forestry farms as a recognised cooperative community making a positive contribution to sustainable development in the area. The DW, in order to back this objective, and to gather further information on how communities could strengthen their production and marketing in the next stages of their plans, [supported an impact assessment](#) of SF and UNAPROBOSQUE's work since 2005 with GIZ, the German international development agency.

This lesson-learning complemented the findings of other research on agricultural production, soil and water quality and overall food security in Restauración and other locations in Dajabón province (as well as across the border in Haiti), and the evidence was used to inform [plans to strengthen the advocacy](#) already underway to urge local authorities and national government to step up effective support for the initiative. The advocacy was supported by SF's media and communications work, including its own television programme and videos, which raised public awareness and support for the work and empowered the communities involved.

From healthier communities to stronger women's leadership

Highlighted in advocacy was the growing role of women in leading the project's community benefits, in particular through mothers' centres and neighbourhood committees. Indeed, [with the support of Progressio's Karina Cuba](#), women, as well as gaining confidence in their own ability to drive forward family gardens, poultry units and other livestock activities, increased their knowledge of nutrition and food safety issues and acquired skills to become effective promoters of better diet, food hygiene and health in their communities. Some

70 per cent of promoters said their families' food production had increased and almost all reported marked improvements in diet.

As a result of this progress, the food, nutrition and health promoters were ready, by the end of 2013, to train other groups and organisations to replicate elsewhere the knowledge and expertise they had acquired. In sustaining this momentum, they used SF training modules that Karina Cuba had helped to develop and put in place. As well as Restauración, the locations had come to include an increasing number of areas around Dajabón, Partido, Loma de Cabrera and Cruz Cabrera.

As noted by Karina Cuba, women's participation in the project, while taking shape through organisations traditionally associated with 'female' care in the family and community, took women's roles in directions that favoured their wider empowerment as community leaders of local development (see Quote). Indeed, Progressio's follow-up support for SF involved helping mothers centres to come together to launch their own economic development projects. [In Loma de Cabrera](#) an Italian DW, Eduardo Spinelli, provided financial management training to help the union of mothers' centres to set up a savings and credit cooperative for 'women entrepreneurs of the border'. [One of the small businesses it helped to launch](#) produced handmade household goods.

"The women who took part have increased their self-confidence, which enables them to develop in other areas such as production, dialogue and participation in community decision-making. What is more, their physical and emotional health and their social relationships have also improved. This drives them to take on new challenges such as starting a business, starting or continuing their studies or taking on a leadership role in their community."

Peruvian DW, Karina Cuba, quoted in the 2013/14 annual report of Progressio's Hispaniola programme

Working for sustainable livelihoods in Haiti's north east

Across the border, the 'Food for a Better Future' project saw Progressio support the twin efforts of SF's Jesuit sister organisation in Haiti, Solidarité Fwontalye (Border Solidarity, SFw) to promote agro-forestry and family-based food production and livestock-rearing with peasant, community and women's organisations in rural areas of Ouanaminthe district facing Dajabón province. Progressio's contribution was a complementary part of a wider EU-financed initiative in which SFw and its Italian NGO partner, the Lay Latin America Movement, were supporting members of the Mouvement Peyizan Papay (Peasant Movement of Papay, MPP) to promote food security.

Progressio's work took place in the Gens de Nantes and Lamine areas near the towns of Ouanaminthe and Capotille. An agro-forestry specialist, [Gabriel Petit-Homme](#), helped SFw to strengthen the prospects for the [farmers](#) and communities to improve their livelihoods and protect the environment, despite the even more challenging circumstances of this remote and extremely poor region of Haiti. Its local economy, including agriculture, was under-supported by national government and relied heavily on trade with Dajabón rather than local markets. SFw, moreover, was itself under-resourced and Progressio, to boost fundraising for its work, placed a French DW, Sandra Dupuy, to help the partner strengthen its capacity for project development and management.

During his [three years](#) as a DW supporting SFw's work, Gabriel Petit-Homme, as well as providing technical support for communities to create family vegetable gardens and undertake [goat-breeding](#) as a source of nutritious food and additional income, provided business and financial management advice for the successful setting up of a locally-run [cassava processing plant](#) in Gens de Nantes. It produced bread for local consumption and wider sale. In Lamine he similarly advised on the building of a water storage system to support crop irrigation and also [flood walls](#) to deal with the growing frequency of drought and floods caused by climate change.

Meanwhile, to support the development of agro-forestry, the DW trained communities on methods to recover land and preserve soil and water through the planting of fruit trees and

helped them form agro-forestry brigades to promote their replication. This took advantage of the Haitian tradition of *konbite* involving the reciprocal exchange of free labour. Despite [setbacks](#) in some activities, Progressio's overall work with SFw made progress in bringing [benefits](#) for communities.

Looking ahead: positive potential, mining threats

With its common approaches and close partner relationships, the 'Food for a Better Future' project involved an integrated body of work in the Dominican-Haitian border. Progressio worked to strengthen bi-national practice and learning through exchange visits and team meetings that enabled DWs to share experiences and coordinate plans. The work offered insights on the potential of community-led sustainable development and the need for it to be recognised and properly supported in official Dominican-Haitian planning.

On both sides of the border, however, the positive results on sustainable agriculture being achieved with partners and communities faced the looming prospect of increased mining activity. It posed dangers in terms of contaminated water and land, business land acquisition, community displacement and social conflict.

Such problems were already palpable elsewhere in the Dominican Republic as the government expanded mining rapidly as a major economic growth sector from 2009. Moves to grant companies exploration concessions in Restauración thus inevitably stoked concern among local partners and civil society organisations. Meanwhile, in Haiti, with little public involvement, official discussions were underway with the World Bank and investors to step up mineral exploration, including for [gold](#) in the north east. As communities shared the same river and water sources in the northern Dominican-Haitian border region, local agriculture faced common risks.

The decision to phase out the Hispaniola programme by early 2016 prevented Progressio from exploring with Dominican and Haitian partners how to address the governance and social and environmental problems of natural resource extraction that had frequently been and remained a concern in other country programmes. Still, the issues they raised remained live ones for Progressio's international policy work and kindled the organisation's final forays in the UK and internationally on the human rights obligations of companies. The value of [Progressio's contribution, focusing on women's rights](#) in the context of its growing strategic emphasis on weak governance and conflict affecting partners and communities in its country programmes, appears to have lasted after Progressio ceased operation in 2017 (see Box).



Progressio development worker Karina Cuba embraces a woman from the Loma del Guano community in Dajabón.

Corporate accountability: making women's rights core business

A Progressio [policy submission](#) with ActionAid UK in 2015 urged the British government to put gender equality and women's rights at the heart of its national action plan (NAP) on implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The UNGPs, endorsed by the UN's Human Rights Council in 2011, laid out officially agreed expectations of state and business practice to prevent, mitigate and account for business-related abuses and provide remedy for victims.

Urging the UK to 'engender' its national action plan on business and human rights

In 2013, the UK, under the auspices of the FCO, had been one of the first countries to introduce a NAP. The plan, however, largely overlooked the two-way impact of business conduct and gender discrimination, despite the stated commitment of the FCO and DfID to promoting women's rights internationally.

The Progressio-ActionAid paper, presented on behalf of the UK's Gender and Development Network ([GADN](#)) and endorsed by the UK's corporate accountability civil society coalition [CORE](#), detailed how women were particularly affected by business-related human rights problems, for instance in global supply chains and extractive industry projects, and the greater barriers they faced in accessing remedy.

The paper urged the government, during its review of the NAP, to ensure that trade and investment and its growing use of aid to promote the role of the private sector in international development were consistent with fulfilment of women's human rights. Later reworks of the paper [encouraged other countries](#) to tackle gender in their respective NAPs and targeted the 2016 [inquiry](#) on the UK's business and human rights performance held by parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights.

Engendering 'due diligence' on human rights and conflict

Beyond the UK, gender discrimination and inequality were somewhat neglected in wider international policy debate and action on business and human rights. Progressio acted to help tackle this gap.

Progressio's Marie-Louise Schueller worked with the University of Essex's human rights centre to design [research](#) on how governments and companies could exercise in practice human rights 'due diligence' ensuring business respect for women's human rights. Little specific guidance existed on this issue, despite the centrality of 'due diligence' in the UNGPs and their recognition of women as a 'vulnerable group'.

Published in 2017 after Progressio ceased operation, the research findings were used by CORE and [Womankind Worldwide](#) to produce a briefing, [Land Intensive Corporate Activity: The Impact on Women's Rights](#), on tackling rising gender-related human rights abuses arising from extractive industry and agribusiness projects in the global South. A panel discussion was held at the UN's November 2017 annual global forum on business and human rights to raise awareness of its recommendations for action.

Urging member support for action on conflict minerals

Progressio also encouraged the organisation's members and supporters to join its advocacy on due diligence in relation to corporate accountability problems high on the policy agenda. In 2016, it organised a [petition to support the campaign of its fellow members in the CIDSE alliance](#) of Catholic development and global justice agencies for strong and effective EU action to prevent its member states importing 'conflict minerals'. CIDSE, backed by 150 bishops from around the world, had called on the EU's decision-making bodies to make good a 2015 European parliament vote in favour of mandatory regulations. These would require companies to perform 'due diligence' checks to ensure their supply chains did not contain such minerals in their raw form or in products.

Progressio's policy efforts were able to draw on joint work with partners such as the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association. ZELA was concerned with the role of agribusiness and extractive industry projects such as diamond mining in forcing people off their land and causing conflict as well as their limited livelihood benefits for women. With [ZELA](#), Progressio made a [2014 submission](#) to the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights and produced a [paper to target a 2015 AU conference on the extractives](#). They advocated the need for women to enjoy meaningful participation in decisions on projects in land-intensive business sectors, to have access to proper compensation for lost land, and to be made a greater priority as economic actors in approaches to project benefit-sharing.

Working to close the 'governance gaps'

From 2015 Progressio also asked its members and supporters to press the UK government to support UN plans, promoted by a diverse group of states from the global South and backed by an international campaign involving over 1,000 CSOs, to develop a legally binding international mechanism to regulate the human rights conduct of businesses. Progressio, along with many CSOs, while supporting effective uptake of the 2011 UNGPs, [argued that additional action was crucially required](#) to close the 'governance and accountability gaps' between the international nature of business and the capacity and will of sovereign states to uphold the human rights obligations of companies across national borders and jurisdictions. The gaps made it even more difficult for victims of business-related abuses to gain access to remedy and justice.

The UK, along with other EU governments and the United States, had voted against the 2014 UN Human Rights Council resolution launching this new business and human rights process. In response, Progressio [petitions, such as that organised with Global Justice Now](#) in 2016, urged the UK to engage constructively with the inter-governmental working group tasked with exploring the 'content, scope, nature and form' of a binding international instrument. The sessions being held by the group – chaired by Ecuador – were intended to pave the way for possible treaty negotiations from late 2017.

Zimbabwe and Malawi: community-led action and influence through the 'conserving our land, producing our food' initiative

Progressio's efforts to scale up work with partners to harness support for sustainable agriculture and agro-forestry to improved community livelihoods, stronger protection of natural resources and the fight against climate change were also taking place in Zimbabwe and Malawi. The work had strong similarities with that carried out in the Hispaniola programme.

At the heart of this push was Progressio's continued work in both countries with Environment Africa. With the financial backing of Irish Aid, this partnership had already been producing positive results with communities from 2009 to 2011, as described in Chapter 4. This progress put Progressio and [Environment Africa](#) in a strong position, with the support of the Big Lottery Fund, to undertake a follow-up phase to build on the gains and replicate them in new locations between 2012 and 2015.

Malawi: combined interventions

In central Malawi, the new '[Conserving our Land, Producing our Food](#)' project saw Progressio continue its work with EA to help small-scale farmers and communities in the drought- and flood-prone Salima district to boost their food and nutrition security and livelihoods resilience. It targeted around 11,000 people in 46 villages in the Msosa (Makanjira) traditional authority.

Farmer field schools and savings and loan schemes

A key part of the initiative was to sustain and replicate the promotion of sustainable agriculture, including agro-forestry, through farmer field schools aimed at strengthening peer learning and links with government extension workers. To this end, a Progressio DW, Olivia Musa, worked with EA to train 'lead farmers' as demonstrators of good practice and an ongoing source of support for community-based conservation agriculture protecting land and water resources.

To create a stronger enabling environment for community livelihoods, the project also helped to set up village savings and loan schemes with communities. Some 26 VSLs were set up and, according to an [evaluation](#), were one of the most successful aspects of the project, benefiting women in particular. They helped the communities to meet pressing household needs, invest in inputs and labour for crop production, extend tree nurseries and woodlots, develop livestock pass-on activities and boost livelihood opportunities through non-timber activities. These included bee-keeping, honey production and fish farming in Lake Malawi.

Village natural resource management committees

Another important development was the creation of 33 village natural resource management committees totalling 3,540 members. The VNRMCs, as well as promoting sustainable livelihoods practices and mobilising community commitment to replicating their uptake, played a vital role in [raising wider environmental awareness](#) and promoting the longer-term support of the district council, village heads and government extension services.

In turn, EA, with the support of Progressio, used project findings to produce and promote policy papers in support of its advocacy to influence Malawi's development of a Forestry Act and official policies on disaster risk reduction. An advocacy manual was produced to support such influencing.

Before-and-after evaluation surveys indicated that the project had led to gains in relation to food security and the protection of natural resources. Communities reported a greater range of food sources being available and progress in tackling soil erosion through fruit and other tree planting. They also noted a reduction in charcoal production and consumption, due to the introduction of fuel-efficient stoves and the diversification of fuel sources from agro-forestry by-products and waste.

Zimbabwe: platforms for community progress

In Zimbabwe, the 'Conserving our Land, Producing our Food' project followed a similar approach to that in Malawi. EA supported conservation agriculture through farmer field schools and nurturing the formation of community-based Environmental Action Groups (EAGs) in order to protect land, forests and water resources and also win stronger outside support for sustainable livelihoods. This created opportunities for exchanges and shared learning.

Top: Progressio DW Eriasafu Lubowa working with members of Malawi's civil society organisation nutrition alliance network.



Bottom: former Progressio DW, Fawaz Hamdan, conducting a focus group on water access with internally displaced people in Yemen's Quaidinach district.



Reaching under-supported groups

The project, through the field schools and EAGs, was aimed at reaching some 30,000 people in three wards in each of the Zvimba, Guruve and Nyanga districts in the Mashonaland West, Mashonaland Central and Manicaland provinces respectively. It targeted under-supported groups such as female- and child-headed households, orphans and people living with HIV or AIDS or disability.

The project drew on lessons from Progressio's recent support for EA's work elsewhere in the country. EAGs from Zvimba, for example, visited the Chingondo honey processing centre that EA, with Progressio support, had earlier helped to establish in Wedza in Mashonaland East province, as described in Chapter 4. Similarly, joint work with communities to develop family and community vegetable gardens and integrate beekeeping with agro-forestry benefited from [EA's recent experience of doing so](#), supported by Progressio DW [Cliff Maunze](#), in Guruve and Wedza as well as Lupane district in Matabeleland North province in the west of the country.

Winning support for environmental protection and diversified production

Progressio's follow-up support for this new phase of EA's work in Zimbabwe helped communities to boost and diversify agricultural production, including non-timber products such as honey. At the same time, one of its strongest features, according to an [evaluation](#), was its success in working with the partner to promote environmental advocacy through community-led EAGs. Such [progress](#), aided by [Diego Matsvange](#), a DW with long experience of promoting sustainable agriculture in several regions of Africa, was achieved despite the challenges of promoting project ownership in difficult circumstances. Indeed, people could be more interested in activities meeting their immediate practical needs rather than the potential of advocacy to tackle their livelihoods problems in the longer term. Still, when EAGs took off, they showed they could produce steps in the right direction.

EAG platforms, for example, following support and training on group governance, environmental legislation and the sustainable management of natural resources, lobbied the rural councils of the three districts. In each case they secured land or buildings for agro-processing facilities. In Nyanga, community action by an EAG equipped by the project removed a village head in Nhamburiko who had been involved for his own personal gain in the damaging extraction and sale of sand as well as the settlement of outsiders on grazing lands. His replacement joined the EAG and supported its work to monitor the construction of a new community agro-processing centre.

Community awareness and changed official approaches

The promotion of advocacy platforms, noted the evaluation report, was particularly successful in Zvimba. The EAG nurtured by EA with the support of Progressio oversaw the creation of new EAGs in the district's wards and mentored their development. This process of replication by EA was one that DW Diego Matsvange had previously supported to the benefit of communities elsewhere. In [Nyamavanga](#), villagers, having overcome the refusal of the national water authority to allow them to draw water from a nearby dam, improved crop irrigation and boosted their production and income. This progress led the agriculture department to provide stronger technical support and access to more land.

Based on greater community awareness and action on environmental management, an important achievement of the project, according to sample communities consulted, was that it had led to a fall in local authorities interfering in an unsupportive way on forest protection, and to people enjoying greater and more sustainable access to forest resources to improve their livelihoods.

Such gains for communities, moreover, did not involve environmental costs, with findings firmly indicating a marked reduction in deforestation cases. Indeed, the expansion of bee-keeping and tree-planting on woodlots as well as the piloting of biogas plants and household solar units meant communities reduced their reliance on forests as a source of energy. To sustain the momentum of the project, Progressio's DWs worked with EA to produce manuals on bee-keeping and agro-ecology.

Assessing progress and challenges

In both Malawi and Zimbabwe, the 'Conserving our Land, Producing our Food' project was successful in boosting food production and diversification, promoting environmental awareness and action and in building relationships, such as with government extension services, so that wider sources of support for the communities could be sustained in the longer term. With the right support, people had it in their power to lead development progress.

Challenges, of course, remained. One of the main ones was to ensure that stronger food production and the diversification of food and non-timber products were matched by

successful efforts to consolidate and expand markets for the greater volume and range of output. Another was to increase the quality of production to meet wider market standards, and to boost community income and livelihoods by investing in greater processing to add value to production.

Pursuit of change was thus a longer-term process requiring wider support and action. In this regard, the 'Conserving our Land, Producing our Food' project yielded real-life lessons and evidence that EA and Progressio marshalled in national and international advocacy. This highlighted the need for a holistic and socially inclusive approach to addressing food and hunger, the loss of land, water and forests and the threat of climate change. Progressio, meanwhile, sought to popularise the issues raised in its advocacy through local awareness-raising in the UK also raising funds for its work on the ground (see Box).

From Malawi and Zimbabwe to Dublin and the UK: scaling up civil society action on food and hunger

EA and Progressio galvanised wider civil society action in Zimbabwe and Malawi to urge the two governments, having joined the global SUN Movement taking shape under UN auspices since the start of the decade, to make greater progress in tackling food and hunger.

Together, they helped to set up and coordinate the Zimbabwe Civil Society Organisations in Scaling up Nutrition Alliance ([ZCSOSUN](#)) – opening the way to civil society funding through SUN's Multi-partner Trust Fund – and in Malawi nurtured the work of the [Civil Society Organisation Nutrition Alliance](#). In 2016, Progressio placed a DW, [Eriasafu Lubowa](#), with CSONA to help it develop and introduce an advocacy and communications strategy based on consultation of its members.

Drawing on his work supporting EA's advocacy in Malawi and Zimbabwe, [Christopher Mweembe](#) – the DW who had earlier helped to pilot work in Progressio's Action for Better Governance project in Zimbabwe with the CCJPZ – advocated positive action on hunger, nutrition and climate justice at an international conference in Dublin in 2013. His visit was hosted by Progressio Ireland. The event saw farmers from Africa, including Malawi, urge policy-makers and development advocates and researchers to hear their views and recognise their first-hand experience and knowledge of tackling the problems – a message Christopher Mweembe also conveyed at the time in [commenting](#) on the food and hunger challenges raised in the UN secretary-general's HLP report on the post-2015 development agenda.

In 2016, with drought crippling countries across Southern and Eastern Africa, Progressio ran another [ZimFast and ZimFare campaign](#) to raise awareness of the food and hunger problems facing communities in Zimbabwe and raise funds for its work in the country, mobilising members and supporters. The 2016 campaign, also spurred by Pope Francis' call for people across the world to take part in a 'year of mercy', saw [Archbishop Malcom McMahon of Liverpool](#), [Bishop Declan Lang of Clifton](#), novelist Frank Cottrell-Boyce and ICS volunteers returning from Zimbabwe and Malawi such as [Charlotte Reeves](#) and [Carlos Velázquez](#) lead the way in organising activities and encouraging others to do so. [ZimFast and ZimFare activities](#) entailed participants respectively being sponsored to go on a six-day diet of the average Zimbabwean or hosting a Zimbabwean meal for families, friends or community members in return for donations.

Somaliland and Yemen: struggling for water in fragile lands

By 2010 Progressio had developed a body of work on livelihoods and environmental protection in Somaliland as a relatively new focus of its country programme, and over the early years of the new decade it took forward its budding partnership with [Candlelight for Health, Education and Environment](#).

In neighbouring Yemen, Progressio's efforts to drive forward work with partners on natural resource management and livelihoods, focusing on water rights and sustainability, took place in the deteriorating political environment outlined earlier, which inevitably affected its course and the prospects for lasting advances.

Somaliland: seeking to break a destructive cycle

The aim of Progressio's work with Candlelight was to help the NGO tackle the [vicious cycle](#) of deforestation, land erosion, soil infertility and water scarcity. As noted in Chapter 4, the problems were affecting pastoralist and agro-pastoral communities and being compounded by the widespread destruction of Somaliland's bush and tree cover due to reliance on charcoal as a source of fuel.

In support of Candlelight, a Progressio DW, Lemma Belay, worked to build the capacity of its staff to help communities adopt sustainable agriculture based on better land and water management and halting deforestation. In the Salaxley and Ballo-Gubadle districts,

for example, he worked to improve communities' food security and environmental sustainability by supporting the development of organic vegetable production and pest management, fruit tree nurseries and small and larger-scale composting of waste matter. He also promoted various [interventions to harvest and conserve water](#) needed for crop production and feeding livestock, including drip irrigation schemes and the construction of small dams to collect water run-off.

In addition, Lemma Belay supported Candlelight's public awareness-raising and advocacy on livelihoods and environmental protection. The partner was aware that without policies to support positive community efforts – and the emergence of alternative sources of employment and income generation to curb practices such as the production and sale of charcoal – the destruction would continue. Candlelight published its own newspaper and had an active media presence. In 2012, Progressio recruited another DW, Aide Botta, to sustain its support for the NGO's overall work.

Yemen: advocating new approaches on irrigation

The political uncertainties in Yemen associated with the Arab Spring meant that Progressio's partnership with country's Water Resources Authority was refocused on opportunities for more productive local collaboration in Hodeidah governorate rather than at a national level. Derek Kim – the DW who supported Progressio's advocacy at the Rio+20 summit in 2012 – worked with the authority to promote the need for water decision-making and management based on community involvement and the protection of eco-systems.

In tandem with his practical efforts to encourage inclusive official approaches, Kim supported the advocacy and communications work of the Yemeni Society for Protection of the Environment, a local NGO raising awareness of environmental degradation and water scarcity in the governorate in the context of climate change.

The work of this NGO involved highlighting and seeking to solve problems of the kind experienced by partners such as the Wadi Zabid Irrigation Council, a community-led group of associations concerned with over-use of water in the Zabid valley, an area of major agricultural production. Production of higher-value bananas, for example, requiring intensive irrigation, had been supplanting traditional, water-efficient subsistence crops such as sorghum. The failure to enforce water regulations and uphold traditional water rights had led to under-controlled extraction damaging community livelihoods.

Progressio's partners, supported by Derek Kim, advocated [policies and practices to ensure fair and sustainable access to spate irrigation](#), an ancient technique to harvest and manage flood water from normally dry river beds receiving intense seasonal rainfall. Mounting problems of water scarcity in the Hodeidah governorate, as well as leading to the widespread introduction of groundwater pumps, had seen a drive to introduce modern spate infrastructure.

Humanitarian crisis and changing course

As Yemen entered the prolonged cycle of political crises outlined earlier, however, it became increasingly difficult for Progressio to sustain a wider development approach to water governance connecting water rights with the promotion of sustainable livelihoods, despite signs of local official openness and civil society commitment.

Recurrent emergencies, in which thousands of Yemenis faced crisis in meeting their daily household needs or were forced to flee their homes and take refuge in temporary settlements, led to a mounting need for Progressio, with its on-the-ground presence, to adjust its work. As part of the humanitarian relief efforts underway, its focus switched to helping affected populations to access safe drinking water and sanitation facilities.

In 2014, it undertook [two water, sanitation and health projects](#) financed by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). One was one in Haradh, in the Hajjah governorate on border with Saudi Arabia, where a Ugandan DW, [Sarah Kamya](#), worked with the National Foundation for Development and Human Rights to strengthen its advocacy and communications work in support of internally displaced people. The work raised awareness of issues such as the protection of communal water points, the provision of water treatment systems and hygiene awareness, and also helped to mobilise communities to build facilities such as latrines. The other WASH project with OCHA involved Progressio working with partners to support marginalised people in Eastern and Western Albaida districts of Hodeidah governorate.

Steps for progress: young people and development change

Harnessing the energy of youth through International Citizen Service

During this final period of Progressio's life, the work of its International Citizen Service youth volunteering from 2011 became increasingly significant, bringing important benefits for the organisation and the partners and communities it supported in the global South. Following the initial pilot year in 2011/12, Progressio reflected on the value of its own ICS programme run as part of the overall scheme managed by VSO and concluded that its approach was in keeping with its longstanding development ethos. Progressio sought to optimise its benefits and impact over the next five years.

Progressio, ICS and people-powered development

For some, Progressio's original decision to join the ICS scheme prompted worries that it risked a departure from CIIR and Progressio's traditional approach of promoting longer-term development. The 10-week placement of young volunteers (later extended to 12 weeks in Progressio's case) contrasted, in particular, with the organisation's longstanding approach based on the multi-year accompaniment of partner organisations by DWs, who brought solid professional experience and specialised skills and knowledge in particular fields.

ICS and civil society action

The ICS programme, moreover, as well as being a welcome manifestation of the UK government's continued commitment to international development, reflected the professed 'Big Society' ideals of Prime Minister David Cameron's administration for voluntary action in the UK. This posited that citizens, rather than looking largely to the state to tackle social problems, could be supported and empowered to provide more responsive solutions themselves. The concept was topical in the early years of the new decade. It resonated with discussion in UK policy quarters of how to cushion the impact of 'austerity' public spending cuts the coalition government said were needed to deal with the aftermath of the international financial crisis. 'Big Society' approaches offered different ways of delivering services.

State-civil society dilemmas were not new for Progressio and nor did it necessarily agree, like CIIR before it, with stark state-civil society binaries.

As described in Chapter 3, CIIR had engaged creatively and critically with official donors' and policy-makers' elevation of 'civil society' as a 'non-state' vehicle to help tackle the social costs and challenges of economic adjustment in the global South. Its position was that civil society and the state were not discrete spheres whereby the latter would be insulated from the social pressure of the former. Still, while the organisation advocated the need for public policy and action prioritising the needs and rights of the poor, it had no illusions over the state's capacity and will in many countries to rise to this task effectively. That commitment needed to be nurtured. In the meantime, and as a prerequisite for such a process, the priority was to strengthen civil society's own capacity for positive action with poor communities facing marginalisation, discrimination and rights abuses.

ICS and Progressio's theory of change

This less polarised position on the civil society-state relationship in supporting structural change was the one that Progressio took on joining and participating in the ICS scheme. Its adjusted [theory of change](#), alongside retaining its traditional (and now more integrated) combination of national and international [policy change](#) through advocacy with the sharing of knowledge, expertise and learning with partners via DWs, now incorporated ICS volunteers as a new additional feature targeting youth specifically as a vital constituency. The development was a logical one in view of the organisation's youth-focused work on HIV, SRHR and gender justice, for example.

The new mix was creatively depicted in a graphic in Progressio's [2014 annual review](#), which set out the value and purpose of its suite of interventions. It highlighted that each and all were driven by the views of poor and marginalised people – especially women in view of Progressio's reinforcement of women's rights and gender justice in its new strategy – and aimed overall at removing the barriers that hindered their ability to exert more control over their lives.

How change happens



We listen to what poor and marginalised people, especially women, tell us needs to change



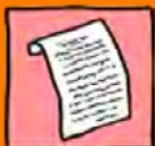
Development workers share skills, expertise and knowledge to help people gain power over their lives



Young adults volunteer overseas, sharing their enthusiasm and innovation with local communities



Young local volunteers work alongside those from the UK, supporting communities to act



Working with international decision-makers, the needs of those with least power and least wealth are prioritised



By amplifying the voices of poor and marginalised communities, those in power are urged to respond



All this supports people to gain control of their lives and overcome the barriers that keep them poor

ICS placements, pairing UK recruits with national volunteers, worked on a range of issues that had been of strategic concern in Progressio's traditional programming centred on the multi-year contribution of specialised development workers to the work of partner organisations. Progressio's ICS work in its Central America focus countries concentrated on supporting partner initiatives on sustainable agriculture, climate change and gender-based violence, while in Southern Africa the emphasis tended to be on HIV prevention and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

ICS, in other words, was not seen as confined to short-term voluntary action but linked to a wider strategy, with the pros and cons of different forms and levels of intervention requiring careful consideration. ICS volunteers themselves, such as Honduras volunteer [Maya Fooks](#), would reflect on the link between grassroots action and structural change.

The fit with Progressio's mobilisation of UK citizen action

At the same time, participation in ICS fitted with the new tone, style and emphasis in Progressio's approach which had already been signalled by alteration of the organisation's strapline in 2010. It was changed from 'Changing Minds, Changing Lives' to 'People-powered Development'. The view was that the former, as with the need for previous strapline adjustments, still conveyed the impression of the organisation being a thinktank rather than one promoting people-centred action for change through better policy and practice.

Policy thinking and policy action, of course, remained vital for Progressio, as evidenced by the numerous initiatives described in this chapter and the output of [policy blogs](#). Progressio, however, continuing the developments underway since the name change from CIIR, was now further stressing the importance of local citizen action in the UK for sustainable development, as demonstrated by its efforts to involve members in supporting advocacy, campaigning and fundraising. The food fasts on hunger in Zimbabwe and letter writing campaigns in support of farmers based on Progressio's work on agro-ecology and food security were cases in point. ICS, with its focus on local action, in both the UK and the South, resonated well with these now stronger dimensions of Progressio's work focused on individual citizen action and the mobilisation of communities.

Promoting a new generation of development actors

A core benefit of ICS, moreover, was that it offered exciting potential for Progressio to nurture a new generation of people committed to positive thought and action on sustainable development, and to imbue such efforts with a social justice and rights-based perspective. The rationale was clear in both the global South and the UK in the North.

In the South, young people had become not only an increasingly significant constituency for Progressio, as shown by its work with partners in Somaliland on the voting age or its engagement of young people in work on HIV prevention and SRHR in all country programmes. As a major demographic in such societies, they were also a vibrant source of pressure for social and political change.

In the UK and the North, on the other hand, young people, following the growth of the UK's development sector and its development education work over the decades, demonstrated an interest in international issues that had perhaps become more mainstream than in the past. It was a constituency that could be tapped strategically. The potential of young people to further strengthen development awareness was vital in the UK at this time. Indeed, politically stoked hostility to aid threatened to erode still high levels of public support for the UK's international development contribution amid rising concerns over living standards and livelihoods at home.

Institutionally, meanwhile, ICS provided an opportunity for Progressio to renew and extend its supporter base, given the organisation's ageing membership. It promised new forms and expressions of international solidarity, attuned to changed times and capable of tapping the energy and commitment that young people could bring and share in both the South and North.

ICS in practice: active gains and valuable benefits

One way Progressio sought to build mutually supportive links between ICS and its wider strategic approach was to place ICS volunteers from the UK to work with their Southern counterparts in country locations where Progressio was or had been active on its strategic themes. This involved sustaining and capitalising on links with partner organisations which had previously hosted or still hosted DWs.

Maximising the value of ICS through existing partner relationships

This approach, as well as seeking to ensure that the ICS programme would be demand- rather than supply-led in line with CIIR and Progressio's traditional operational principles, created potential for new dimensions and initiatives to be grafted onto past or current partner-DW work, as illustrated by examples below.

ICS volunteers' work straddled the range of themes and issues of strategic concern to Progressio, albeit placing a greater emphasis on sustainable agriculture, climate change and GBV in the case of ICS focus countries in Central America and a stronger focus on HIV prevention and SRHR in Southern Africa.

Central America

In [Honduras](#), [ICS volunteers](#) worked with the United for Progress Mixed Cooperative (COOMUPL), a mainly women's cooperative, based in Marcala in the western La Paz department, to plan a local research survey on domestic violence. Its aim was to explore in further depth evidence of an alarming increase in the number of recorded femicides in the area, with volunteer [Emma Justice](#) also benefiting from an orientation briefing on the problem from an academic partner.

The ICS-COOMUPL work, which saw shared [benefits and learning](#) over the weeks, built on Progressio's past partnership with the 8,000-strong COOMUPL through DWs. Marvin Zavala Ruiz had supported COOMUPL with his agronomy expertise, while Eli Escoto had provided advice on the diversification and marketing of crops and irrigation as well as the cooperative's wider business development supporting the micro-enterprises of indigenous Lenca women.

Meanwhile, other ICS volunteers in Honduras such as [Rose Foreman](#) and [Fiona Boland](#) likewise capitalised on Progressio's partnerships with other organisations specifically supporting Lenca women's livelihoods such as the Coordination of Peasant Women of La Paz ([COMUCAP](#)). Its organic coffee production and plans for increasing aloe vera output had been supported by a Nicaraguan DW, Roger Díaz. The ICS volunteers' placements supporting and learning about agro-ecology, including the risks of climate change, took advantage of the DW's advice and previous contributions.

Similarly, in [El Salvador](#), ICS volunteer [Beccy Hughes](#) learnt about the scale of El Salvador's water crisis, long the focus of Progressio DW work with partners. Another volunteer, [Rebecca Lawrence](#), part of a later ICS team to spend time in the country, worked with local volunteers on environmental protection initiatives to address problems in Santa Marta, noting the past impact of mining and the continued challenge of engaging the local government on issues such as waste collection and access to water. The immersion and learning of the volunteers, as well as their practical contributions, benefited from Progressio's links and past work with partners such as UNES, [ADES](#) and [FUMA](#). ICS volunteers worked with [UNES](#) and Progressio DW [Maggie van Vogt](#) in 2011 on [emergency response](#) to the damage of a tropical storm.

Meanwhile, in [Nicaragua](#), ICS volunteers linked up with Progressio partner FENACOP. They supported its work to help coffee farmers take advantage of the natural beauty of the countryside around Dipilto municipality in the Nueva Segovia department to develop small-scale tourism as an additional source of economic livelihoods. Their coffee production had been recently damaged by climate-related weather changes. The [volunteers](#) advised on and helped to produce publicity materials, including a video, to promote tourist interest in the area. They worked well with the local council that had previously been supported by Progressio DWs in their local governance work with AMUNSE.

Southern Africa

In [Malawi](#) one of the early teams of ICS volunteers from the UK, including [Sabah Amreen Chohan](#), took part in a range of sustainable agriculture initiatives led by Progressio's longstanding partner promoting agro-ecological methods and tree and water conservation, [Environment Africa](#). Their work took place in Salima district where DWs had previously helped EA set up the village natural resources management committees described in this chapter. It was part of several cycles of ICS volunteering on food security and natural resource management in Salima, with national volunteers helping to sustain momentum from one joint UK-Malawi team to the next. For example, a national volunteer, [Mphatso Mkundika](#), who had worked with UK volunteers and a Malawian government engineer to set up irrigation canals with farmers, returned to the community during a second ICS placement in 2012 to observe the impact of her original contribution and consider how it could be built on.

As illustrated by the blogs and dedicated Facebook pages for [Malawi](#) and [Zimbabwe](#), such connections often drew on the ongoing contribution or legacy of Progressio's work on HIV prevention and SRHR, which had been an important thematic priority for DW work in the two countries.

As Progressio's Malawi country representative, Thomas Msiska, [noted](#) in describing the HIV, SRHR and GBV issues being dealt with by ICS volunteers supporting the Youth Net and Counselling (YONECO), such links provided propitious conditions for helping the



A national volunteer in Malawi addresses schoolchildren on their potential role in communities; Progressio ICS volunteers taking part in a march calling for an end to violence against women in El Salvador;



ICS volunteers supporting an agro-ecology and food security initiative in Nicaragua; an ICS volunteer observes a girl talking with her classmates at a school in Zimbabwe.

partner NGO to raise awareness among young people, particularly girls and young women. Likewise, [ICS support for the work of the Tovwirane HIV and AIDS Organisation \(THAO\)](#), supported by UK volunteers such as [Laura Cullen](#) and their local ICS counterparts, followed Progressio's traditional model of partner support based on peer education and replication. They targeted students and children in schools and engaged key risk groups such as taxi operators. In Zimbabwe, ICS volunteers drew on Progressio's past work with partners in Manicaland to [reflect](#) on the sensitive issues involved in HIV prevention.

Strengthening partner outreach and improving community lives through ICS

Progressio's ICS programme rapidly took on a vibrant life of its own. The organisation recorded that, in 2015 alone, country teams involving a total of 336 UK volunteers and 355 national volunteers in Malawi, Zimbabwe, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua had reached 43,650 community members. Their local action with partners produced tangible and visible results in communities, as shown by a numerical list of sample highlights for the year (see Box). But practical interventions and outputs of this kind were only a surface reflection of the wider capacity-building and livelihood benefits being achieved by the ICS programme with partner organisations and communities. These were brought out in evidence from Malawi.

ICS and the results of local action: practical highlights in 2015

- 2,078 people tested for HIV
- 82 farmers trained in irrigation farming
- 51 eco-latrines built for families
- 23 alcohol and drug prevention fairs held
- 2 children living and working on the streets reunited with their families
- 1 library set up for an indigenous community
- 1 running track built for patients of a rehabilitation centre
- 377 training sessions held in schools
- 3 schools provided with six modern toilets
- 2 fishponds constructed
- 1 car park redesigned and constructed

Source: Progressio magazine, 2016

Evidence from Malawi

According to an independent 2015 Jigsaw Consult field research impact study of two and a half years' ICS work revolving around HIV prevention in Malawi, a significant achievement of Progressio's programme was that its ICS volunteers had helped the [Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS](#) (COWLHA), [UNGWERU](#) ('Bringing Light to Communities') and THAO to strengthen their community outreach in ways that had not been possible before. The partners, respectively active in the Nkhota-kota, Mzuzu and Mzimba districts in Malawi's central and northern regions, had been hindered by a lack of human and financial resources, community distance and isolation and the challenges of engaging specific groups.

Engaging and benefiting young people

Of major value in particular for the three partners was the success of young UK and Malawian volunteers in engaging youth – most of Malawi's population was aged under 35 and thus a crucial target group in immediate and future terms. The ICS volunteers used music, drama, film, talent shows, poetry, dance, quizzes, media and sport to do so in ways that resonated with young people's culture and tastes. This made joint work and community engagement fun, [as Malawian ICS volunteer Patrick Moyo noted](#). The ability of volunteers to bring new ideas, innovative methods and energy to the task produced important institutional benefits for the partners as well as positive impacts in relation to a social group they had found it hard to involve and support.

For instance, in Chikwawa, an ICS awareness-raising day saw a far higher number of young people undertake voluntary testing for HIV than [COWLHA](#) had previously achieved, with ICS volunteers leading by example in getting tested themselves. Similarly, one volunteer with UNGWERU [made a film](#) of ICS volunteers getting tested in a bid to tackle widespread local fears of public stigma and the risks of confidentiality being infringed. COWLHA and UNGWERU, as well as THAO, reported that they had considerably increased their youth engagement since receiving ICS support.

This progress led to the formation of youth support groups and the running of peer-to-peer programmes. With ICS volunteers, for example, UNGWERU managed to set up an [information and awareness-raising programme with 20 schools](#) in Mzuzu, which paved the way for the organisation of mass awareness events such as the one supported by ICS volunteers [Patson Chimaliro and Thoko Nkhata](#). Meanwhile, follow-up ICS support for THAO continued to reach impressive numbers of young people and gave rise to peer education initiatives. These included *pa mphala* clubs promoting better communication between youths and adults on sex and safe sex, as described by ICS volunteers [Sophie Herring](#) and [Leticia Nkhoma](#). It would appear that ICS support of this kind boosted the potential of partners to change lives (see Box).

From changing one life to transforming the lives of others

The power of partners' stronger youth engagement through ICS was demonstrated by the [apparent changes in the life of Hassan Malauna](#), a young man living with HIV from Malenga village in Nkhota-kota. He had faced social isolation and job discrimination as people in communities and employers were reluctant to talk, eat or work with him for fear of contracting the virus.

Having been reached by an ICS-supported COWLHA event, he joined a youth group called TEEN Club, went on to lead its support activities and later successfully applied to become a national ICS volunteer himself. With other ICS volunteers, he delivered training on HIV awareness-raising and mentored support groups to promote life-saving practices and action against stigma and discrimination. Following the end of ICS work in Nkhota-kota in 2014, he continued to volunteer, supporting an 'e-science' youth organisation promoting HIV education in communities.

He said: "I now know how to live safely with HIV and am no longer ashamed of it. It has changed my life. I'm enjoying supporting others in the community and helping others around me to teach the truth about HIV and AIDS. It has raised my dreams and lifted my eyes to once again have hope."

Vital information for stronger partner performance

Partner organisations' strengthened community outreach and engagement through the ICS programme helped them to increase the quantity and quality of their information from communities, at least while ICS volunteers were in place. Alongside producing vital knowledge on the needs and interests of communities and leads on how partner programmes might better meet them in their daily work, this information helped partners improve the planning, design and management of initiatives. The gains ranged from the production of support materials such as training manuals to the strengthening of local advocacy and use of media, as well as identification of new contacts and opportunities for increased networking with like-minded organisations.

The presence of ICS volunteers helped partners to gather baseline data on the situation of target communities for possible project proposals to donors as well as to assess the progress and impact of initiatives already underway with ICS support. ICS volunteers, in addition to increasing the visibility of partners' work, became a resource on which partners could draw to improve their documentation and report-writing skills, as noted by [Naima Aden](#).

[As reported by ICS volunteer Jake Towey](#), for instance, a follow-up monitoring and evaluation visit to a COWLHA support group in Tilimbike, set up with earlier ICS help, yielded insights on the replication of expertise and how HIV awareness-raising had changed the views and attitudes of village leaders. They no longer dismissed HIV-positive people as inevitably physically weak and economically unproductive. The shift, one of many, had reportedly seen PLWHA gain access to agricultural subsidies.

Making 'special' contributions to livelihoods

Partners' stronger community reach and increased volunteering among local youth were important factors in strengthening community livelihoods through ICS. Progressio provided

small seed grants for each cohort of ICS volunteers to design and run a 'special project' with partners in response to issues that communities had identified in needs assessments. According to the Jigsaw study, special projects were the interventions that had the most sustainable impact in Progressio's ICS programme in Malawi. Communities valued their role in helping to increase income and boost the potential for improved livelihoods.

Special project interventions included ICS support in setting up of village savings and loan schemes enabling community members to lend money to one another. VSLs proved particularly effective when supported by volunteers who had knowledge and expertise on financial and business management and were able to train VSL groups and beneficiaries.

This was the case with the ICS contribution to THAO's support for communities in Mzimba district. ICS volunteers helped two pilot VSLs to flourish in Chizungu, their success encouraging the subsequent establishment of another four in the area. The schemes improved people's lives as beneficiaries set up small businesses, increased their earnings significantly and became better able to cover daily necessities (see Quote). THAO went on to set up many more VSLs, often run by women, across the Mzimba district, with the support of consecutive ICS teams over a year.

"We are now able to buy all we need for our meals which has improved our diet and health and our health as a family. I no longer need to go to the doctor like I used to. I can also send my children to school with the money I make from the business. I plan to build a brick house next year once I have saved some more money."

Brenda Ruhanga, Jeremiah village, Chizungu. Source: Jigsaw 2015

Alongside helping to catalyse and support VSLs, ICS special project seed funding involved the distribution of inputs, materials and livestock that communities considered important for their livelihoods – and addressing the poverty undermining their resilience in tackling HIV and AIDS. This strengthened their ownership of the ICS support jointly planned with Progressio's partners.

ICS support for UNGWERU's work with communities, for instance, involved the distribution of goats, pigs and chicks. This put [beneficiaries](#) in a position to earn more income themselves through livestock-rearing and sales and contribute to the funding of local amenities such as [community-based children's centres](#). They also supported income generation by other families affected by HIV and AIDS by committing to pass on offsprings to them, with continued replication aimed at building a growing community resource. Community participation was vital to such special project initiatives, as ICS team leaders [Amy Stops and Jonnex Chiwaya](#) noted in making a follow up visit to assess the progress of a goat pass-on scheme set up by COWLHA with the support of an earlier ICS group.

ICS special projects for better livelihoods also aimed to protect natural resources, in line with Progressio's longstanding approach with partners in both Malawi and elsewhere. With UNGWERU, ICS volunteers promoted community fabrication and use of heat-retentive clay cooking stoves. The purpose was to cut families' consumption of firewood and the rate of local deforestation, as observed by [Charlotte Kennedy and Joackim Nthala](#) in a follow-up visit to monitor the progress of the contribution made by an earlier ICS team. The stoves, as well as contributing to family health by reducing smoke, benefited women in particular. They spent less time gathering wood and being exposed to danger in travelling longer distances in search of it, according to feedback shared with ICS volunteers [Karen Laheen and John Frank Munthali](#).

Sustaining momentum and seeking wider impact

As indicated above, ICS support for partners' efforts to improve the lives of communities often raised awareness of wider structural problems that volunteers sought to address through follow-up action.

For example, in Malawi, national volunteer [Violet Nkhoma](#) and her UK counterpart Andy Griffiths planned a community health campaign in the Masumbankhunda traditional

authority in Lilongwe district following their organisation of participatory water, sanitation and hygiene surveys in 10 villages with Progressio partner Arise and Shine in 2013. They indicated that it would be cheaper and more effective in the long run for the government to invest in sanitation facilities rather than continually spend money on drugs to deal with cholera.

Connecting ICS with Progressio's international advocacy

Efforts to harness the contribution of ICS to the pursuit of more structural policy solutions to local problems were also made at an international level. In 2012, for instance, a group of 10 ICS volunteers from the UK, including Anna O'Flynn, Afraa Ali, Ingrid Leduc and Liam Hilton, met Stephen O'Brien MP, the parliamentary under-secretary of state for international development. They raised water sustainability problems, based on their first-hand experiences in Peru, El Salvador and Malawi.

[Their lobbying](#), integrated into Progressio's 'Waterproof development' campaign targeting the Rio+20 sustainable development summit described earlier, drew on Progressio's DW capacity-building and international policy work with partners on water rights and climate change. It was ICS volunteers Charlotte Hawkins and Meryl Noronha from the UK who presented Progressio's member-supported [campaign letter](#) to the UK's secretary of state on the environment at the joint NGO event held shortly before her departure for Rio.

Targeting the Rio summit was just one example of Progressio using the experiences of the ICS programme to support its campaigning in the UK on international development, seizing opportunities for influencing the UK's policy agenda at topical moments according to need or institutional priorities.

Another example was [Chelsea Thompson](#), an ICS volunteer from Solihull who had worked in El Salvador. As well as writing to her local MP, Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, on the importance of the UK upholding its 0.7 foreign aid target commitment and the need to address water security, she joined other ICS volunteers to support [events](#) held by Progressio and other UK NGOs involved in the 2013 IF campaign for positive G8 action on world hunger at the time of the UK-hosted summit.

To keep up pressure on the UK to support small-scale farmers and sustainable agriculture as an international policy priority in the wake of June's G8 meeting, Chelsea Thompson joined [Barbara Eze](#), an ICS volunteer from Hackney in London who had worked in Malawi, to hand in a [Progressio petition](#) to Lynne Featherstone MP, the Liberal Democrat under-secretary of state for international development. The petition, 'We've fallen in love with farmers, will you?', signed by 4,521 Progressio supporters, was accompanied by a 'Water is Life' photo exhibition. Drawing on [insights](#) from Progressio research on water management with partners and farming communities in rural Haiti, the exhibition's images portrayed the importance of links being made between food security and water security. The display was used to support awareness-raising and advocacy during the September 2013 World Water Week held in Stockholm.

The [involvement of ICS volunteers in Progressio's AGM and supporters' day](#), as well as enriching information-sharing sessions with Progressio programme and policy staff, provided insights to inform the planning of public education and campaigning activities.

Mobilising around the SDGs

National volunteers from ICS focus countries joined such international action too. For example, as civil society mobilised to ensure gender equality was made an ambitious stand-alone goal and a cross-cutting feature of all SDGs, [Wellington Sibande](#), an ICS volunteer with Malawi's Centre for Girls and Interaction (CEGI) and then an ICS team leader in the country, spoke on SRHR and gender equality at a Girls Education Forum hosted in London in July 2015. His work with CEGI had involved engaging faith leaders on the challenges in Malawi.

Another important SDG-related contribution was Progressio ICS volunteers' contribution to a youth summit organised by DFID in the run-up to the SDGs' approval at the UN. ICS volunteer Amro Hussain co-hosted the event, with ICS fellows Alex Duffy and Jess Lee also helping to shape its agenda and support the participation of young people as members of a youth panel created by agencies involved in the world-wide [Action 2015](#) campaign network. The three were also part of a wider group of Progressio ICS volunteers who launched a [blog](#) providing comment, insights and analysis from a youth perspective on the UK's May 2015 general election. [Jess Lee](#) had earlier had chance to reflect on the nature of democracy in the UK from an international angle having witnessed the 2014 elections in El Salvador.



Progress and evaluation reports found that national ICS volunteers, such as the young Hondurans pictured left, were particularly active in continuing their voluntary action with partners and communities beyond the formal duration of their Progressio placements. Their follow-up 'actions at home' were a major factor in sustaining the impact of the ICS programme in Progressio's ICS focus countries themselves. But volunteers from the UK also played a highly valuable role on return, as shown (right) by the running of a school session on ending violence against women and girls.



Progressio's ICS programme also played an important part in the organisation's lobbying and public awareness-raising in the UK on sustainable development. It did so through the Progressio Empower Network, which teamed up ICS volunteers from the UK with local Progressio advocates committed to mobilising community and church solidarity with organisations in the global South working for people-centred development.

Empowering actions at home

This targeting of high-profile policy influencing opportunities through ICS was aided by the creation of a Progressio Empower network, a team of young adults and local Progressio advocates committed to working in their communities and churches in the UK to mobilise solidarity with the world's poor and marginalised.

In 2013, ICS Empower leaders and mobilisers hosted [Café IF events](#) in Scotland, Essex and London, reaching scores of people and raising awareness and support for the IF campaign. The following year, Progressio's Empower network helped to rally supporters to lobby for UK aid spending meeting the UN's 0.7 target to be enshrined in law. In 2016 it celebrated International Women's Day by organising an 'Inspired by Her' event at which an expert panel discussed with Progressio supporters how targets of SDG5 on gender equality could be supported and achieved.

The planning of the Empower network built on another valuable feature of the ICS programme: the '[actions at home](#)' that UK and national volunteers were expected to carry out to sustain the impact of their placements once they had ended. Jonathan Ammoun, an ICS volunteer from Reading, on return from Nicaragua, spent a Christmas volunteering at a soup kitchen supporting the homeless and refugees, for example. [Sandeleh Pfukwa](#), a national ICS team leader in Zimbabwe, volunteered at a children's home where children had been placed in care as a result of orphanhood, neglect or abuse. He ran counselling sessions, helped with the children's homework and discussed children's rights and SRHR issues with older students.

Follow-up actions at home by national ICS volunteers recruited from their communities were one of the most significant factors in sustaining the impact of the ICS programme in the focus countries themselves. The Jigsaw study of ICS performance in Malawi, for example, found that all the national volunteers consulted had continued social action and volunteering with organisations in their communities after their placements with COWLHA.

Promoting valuable personal development and cultural exchange

As well as bringing benefits for the people and communities it supported, the ICS programme had important value for the volunteers individually in terms of awareness, learning, skills and personal development. ICS team leader [Ellie Parker](#) noted such gains from her work to support peer education in Malawi on HIV and the need for public speaking, presentation and group facilitation abilities.

For Progressio, and CIIR before it, international action for development justice had always involved a process of personal change and commitment, and the ICS programme worked to retain the features that had underpinned the ethos of its traditional DW programme. For UK volunteers, immersion in the realities of the struggle for development had important value in itself in terms of appreciating the rich strengths of other – economically poor – people elsewhere in the world (see Quotes).

"We worked with settlements that had been hit by water shortages, whilst also working with those living with HIV to develop a healthier lifestyle. But most importantly, we were fortunate enough to work with villages that were rich in spirit... The 10 weeks that I spent in Malawi was the most insightful, inspirational and rewarding experience of my life. In short, this experience was not just for 10 weeks – it is something I will carry with me forever."

Progressio ICS volunteer Emily Westwell

"Pope Francis encourages the Church to be the Church of the Poor. As a young Catholic, Progressio has enabled me to volunteer in incredible communities in El Salvador. It was truly empowering to live and work with dedicated individuals who strive for the same fundamental values that Progressio stands for."

Progressio ICS volunteer, Meryl Noronha



Such benefits took on even sharper importance for national volunteers, especially so as Progressio strived to involve young participants from less privileged backgrounds themselves. One example was a national volunteer from Zimbabwe, [Maria](#). She had lost most of her family at a young age and then suffered abuse, low pay and long hours as a domestic worker, but was able to build her confidence through the ICS programme and make plans to further her education with the partner organisation's help. In Malawi, the greater confidence and capacity enjoyed by national volunteers as a result of their involvement in the ICS programme boosted the interest of partner organisations in employing them.

In reflecting on his increased confidence in public speaking and interaction, a national volunteer in Malawi, [Eric Veeto Nyengani](#), noted in turn how UK and national volunteers also derived joint benefits from ICS through cultural exchange and dialogue as they shared views, debated differences of opinion and explored common ground. This sometimes meant touching on sensitive issues such as [cultural norms on sexual orientation and identity](#) and [tackling myths](#) and different attitudes and views on sex and sexual health. Such exchanges encouraged volunteers to reconsider their own and each other's culturally shaped assumptions. Discussion topics included comparing the [powerful forces influencing the public](#) such as the media and traditional beliefs in witchcraft. They also entailed [appreciating and addressing language barriers](#).

Positive assessment, challenges and questions

The Jigsaw assessment of ICS performance in Malawi commissioned by Progressio provided an important opportunity for the organisation, through a particular country case study, to consider how successful its approach to the ICS scheme overall had been.

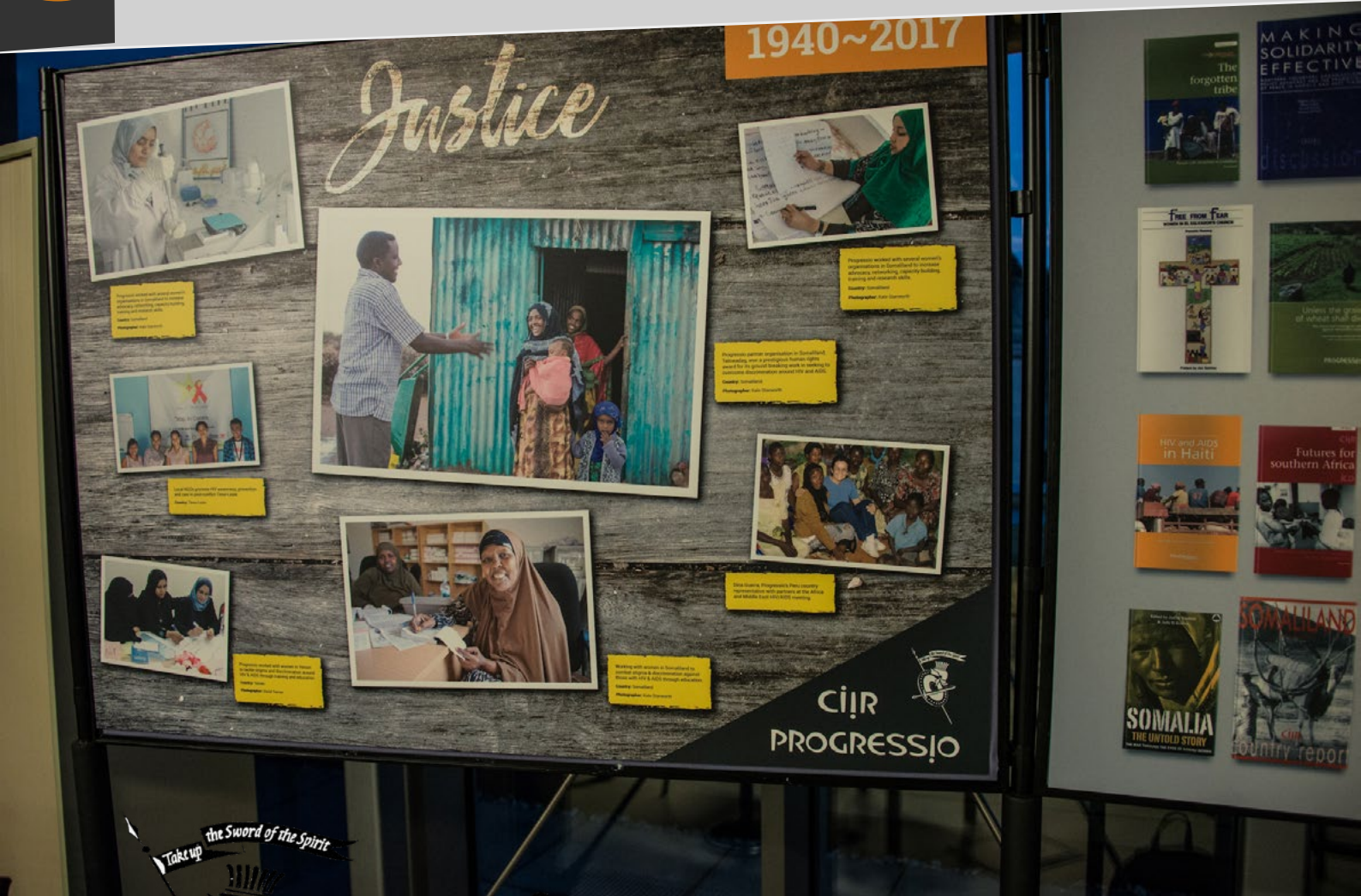
Though focused on in-country activities, the Malawi study largely confirmed the view that ICS programming was making a very positive contribution to the organisation's work. It noted ICS's success, through joint UK-national teams of volunteers, in bringing new ideas, raising local awareness and catalysing youth engagement on local development issues. National volunteers, in particular, due to their understanding of local context and continued in-country presence, had shown the advantage of being able to sustain on-the-ground impact after placements ended.

Still, a palpable question raised in the study, for all the benefits of local action, was how Progressio might tackle the inevitable limitations of the short nature of ICS volunteer placements. This was despite the positive efforts the organisation had made to boost impact sustainability by supporting one ICS team to follow up and build on the previous work of another with partners and communities. In this way, Progressio had sought to connect and make the most of the successive cycles of ICS teams over each year or more. The study, in noting that capacity gains could be sporadic and were more significant and durable when particular ICS volunteers brought higher levels of professional skills more tightly matched to partner needs, stated among other recommendations that Progressio should strengthen the pairing of ICS volunteers with long-term DW professionals.

Forging such a connection between ICS programming and its traditional longer-term capacity-building through DWs was already part of Progressio's intended approach, as described earlier. By 2015, however, the organisation's growing financial difficulties meant that the number of DW professionals it could put in place in country programmes had started falling.

Final chapter, end of story?

Closing an organisation and reflecting on its legacy (2017-)



Ci!R

PROGRESSIO

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WHETHER AND HOW THE ICS PROGRAMME could play a pivotal role in Progressio's future became a crucial question for the organisation from 2015. Despite late autumn celebration of its 75th anniversary that year, when Progressio could look back with pride at its positive track record and aspire to future achievements in the context of the SDGs, the organisation entered a period of prolonged uncertainty. It culminated in due course in its closure little more than two years later.

Progressio draws to a close

In May 2015, the new UK government announced it would hold a comprehensive review of its aid programmes, including a Civil Society Partnership Review (CSPR) to reconsider DfID's working relations with CSOs. As noted in Chapter 5, the future of the PPA scheme, providing core financial support for organisations carrying out work considered strategically important for the UK's international aid effort, had already faced signs of uncertainty at the time of the 2012 IPR review.

Uncertainty and termination of the PPA scheme

The sense within the overall NGO community, in the changing political climate, was that the PPA scheme was now likely to be curtailed. This was despite evidence – such as a positive assessment by the UK's own Independent Commission on Aid Impact (ICAI) – of the PPA scheme enabling effective civil society delivery, innovation and strategic leverage of different kinds. Moreover, though official signals to PPA beneficiaries indicated that the mechanism would not continue, no formal decision was made and no clear information was available on possible successor arrangements. In particular, the possibility of maintaining some form of unrestricted strategic funding *per se* was not discounted.

The confusing ambiguity continued as the UK's overall aid reviews stalled. They were delayed by the forthcoming June 2016 national referendum on the UK's membership of the EU and then by the political changes it led to. It took time for a new government to be formed later in the year under different Conservative leadership, following the resignation of Prime Minister David Cameron.

It was therefore only in December 2016 that the CSPR was completed, at which point it became explicit that the PPA mechanism – and unrestricted strategic funding itself – would indeed be terminated. This was to be replaced by a new set of project funding schemes with eligibility criteria tied to specific themes and approaches, the full details of which were still being developed, to which CSOs could eventually apply on a competitive basis in 2017.

From consultation on the future to a painful decision

During this period of prolonged uncertainty Progressio embarked from mid-2016 on a [consultation with stakeholders on the organisation's future](#). As a much smaller NGO without unrestricted core income of the levels and kinds enjoyed by large agencies, Progressio was in a far weaker position to cope with the unsure circumstances and ride the situation through, especially with no guarantee of funding, including on a project basis, from DfID. Moreover, its efforts in preceding years to raise funds from alternative sources had not borne sufficient fruit to compensate for the eventual loss of its own PPA grant from DfID. Anticipation of the PPA's end was itself a fundraising disadvantage, as Progressio's PPA grant had helped it to attract and match contributions by other donors.

As explained by Progressio's chair of trustees, Martin McEnery, in the preface, the severe financial risks caused the board to conclude that its only responsible choice was to shut the organisation. After a thorough and prolonged consultation, [it announced the decision](#) in September 2016 and brought Progressio's programme operations to a close during March 2017. One of the last acts of the chair and board members before stepping down was to organise a commemoration event hosted by CAFOD, along with a mass at St George's Cathedral, Southwark, both of which took place on 6 July 2017. The gatherings celebrated the organisation's long contribution to international development and social justice and reflected on its implicit legacy for the UK's international development community.



London mass celebrating the 76 years of work of the Sword of the Spirit, CIIR and Progressio, held at St George's Cathedral, Southwark, on 6 July 2017.



Participants at the legacy event hosted by CAFOD whose then director, Chris Bain, introduced the event, followed by a farewell speech by Progressio's president, Fr Cormac Murphy-O'Connor.

Behind the decision: possible options and tough choices

Progressio, of course, discussed with its staff, members, partners and other external stakeholders possible options to avoid closure during the consultation. One was to embark on a strategy of immediate survival and possible future growth based on the ICS programme, given its vibrant impetus described in Chapter 5 and Progressio's manifest interest in harnessing the energy and commitment of youth as a force for social change and institutional renewal. Indeed, Progressio had been praised as a leading performer in the UK's overall ICS scheme managed by VSO.

In the end, however, it was decided that building on ICS as a platform was both a too difficult and too uncertain proposition to take up. On the one hand, it was felt that it would pose major financial risks, given the reliance of ICS on DfID funding via VSO and the absence of assurances that this funding would be sustained in the years ahead. On the other, the risk of excessive reliance on ICS finance placed in question Progressio's wider strategy for change.

As outlined in Chapter 5, a major aim in Progressio's pursuit of impact through its ICS programme was through its connections, or the connections it might establish, with past or current partner organisations in the global South and the DWs still supporting their capacity enhancement, as well as with its international policy advocacy and campaigning in the UK. However, due to the scaling back of these core programme mainstays, there was increasingly less scope for ICS to occupy a complementary strategic place in Progressio's overall suite of interventions and optimise their impact through youth engagement.

Indeed, while Progressio had succeeded in renewing its PPA with DfID since 2011, the level of the grant was significantly lower than on previous occasions. The fall, coupled with the difficulties of securing alternative sources of funding, meant that fewer DWs – particularly so from 2015 amid the disruptive institutional uncertainties surrounding the PPA – could be placed with partner organisations in Progressio's focus countries. By 2016, the total number of DWs had dropped to 36 from 64 the previous year, the latter number itself a fall against Progressio's previous averages of having around 90 DWs in place. Progressio's policy ambitions were similarly being affected by the lower finance available.

With the looming disappearance of Progressio's PPA in the light of the CSPP outcome, one of the key financial foundations of the wider range of Progressio interventions ICS was intended to form part of was being removed. This led to understandable concerns that Progressio's theory of change might become overly shaped by the needs and dynamics of the ICS programme based on short volunteer placements rather than CIIR and Progressio's traditional longer-term promotion of partners' organisational capacity and policy action to tackle the structures hindering development based on social justice. By 2015/16, the ICS programme had come to account for 41 per cent of Progressio's budget.

The organisation faced a situation in which it lacked the money to carry out the work in the ways it had envisaged and wished to pioneer. Without clear prospects for links between the core strands of Progressio's strategy for change to be consolidated in the immediate future, the board decided that reshaping the organisation around an ICS platform, itself dependent on DfID finance, was too much of a departure, particularly without solid guarantees of continued ICS funding.

Funding crunch and loss of a key foundation

Some may debate whether Progressio could have acted differently to avoid the financial crunch represented by the impending loss of its main source of unrestricted core funding due to the abolition of DfID's overall PPA scheme. Such discussions merit historical contextualisation.

From CIIR's middle years onwards, the organisation had managed to diversify significantly its overall sources of income. Over time, the scale of official UK core funding as a proportion of the organisation's budget fell: to roughly 50-60 per cent in the 2000s. This was a sharp drop from the start of the 1990s when ODA money, then tied solely to CIIR's capacity-building in the South, represented 87 per cent of the Overseas Programme's income. Just as the 1990s saw significant growth in EC funding, work in the new millennium attracted the support of other donors such as the Big Lottery Fund, Comic Relief, the Global Fund on HIV and AIDS and Irish Aid to name a few.

Still, despite progress in income diversification, the reality was that official UK core funding, whether from ODA and thereafter DfID, always remained crucial to the organisation's work and sustainability. This had been so throughout in terms of its grassroots capacity-building in the South and became increasingly the case with its international policy work following its integration into overseas programming from the early 2000s. Even as the ICS

programme from 2011 came to occupy a substantial place in Progressio's work and a higher percentage of its income, the overall budget contribution of PPA funding linked to its traditional mix of DW capacity-building and policy work was still sizeable at around 33 per cent. A financial loss of this size was extremely hard to repair.

That said, and whatever the vicissitudes of CIIR and Progressio's efforts to diversify its income base, the notion that the organisation could or should have 'escaped' its reliance on official UK funding, as well as questionable in terms of practical feasibility, is arguably misplaced when the nature of its longstanding funding relationship with the UK government is taken into account. This was about more than a series of grants involving the donation and allocation of money. It involved a form of ongoing partnership that the UK government itself had helped to nurture.

From vital benefits to the end of a positive and effective UK partnership

As recounted in Chapters 1 and 2, the bonds went back to the mid-1960s when official recognition of CIIR's vibrancy in both the global North and South led the UK government, with its growing post-colonial engagement with the developing world, to welcome CIIR's admission to the British Volunteer Programme. BVP membership meant CIIR had the subsequent good fortune – particularly as a relatively smaller NGO – to be included among the selected 'influential' agencies awarded ODA block grants. In CIIR's case, at the time, this was specifically for its overseas capacity-building.

CIIR was part of a sort of a political 'compact' that, through dialogue and pressure as the development sector grew in size, sophistication and influence, would informally take further shape over the years. The UK government and leading NGOs and civil society organisations, while having different roles and approaches, were able to explore achieving a shared pluralistic commitment to advancing the cause of international development. This endeavour survived over time, despite uneasy moments and differences of opinion. In CIIR's case, for instance, as Chapter 2 observed, the organisation clashed with the UK government's reluctance to act against apartheid South Africa yet received rising financial support for its DW capacity-building on the ground elsewhere.

In turn, the PPA mechanism introduced in 2000, while it shifted towards a more open and competitive application system, held the promise of consolidating a framework for strategic cooperation between the UK government and a wider range of beneficiary NGOs and CSOs based on multi-year and longer-term financial support. The scheme enabled CIIR and Progressio, as a successful applicant and with DfID's approval, both to sustain and strengthen its capacity-building and to have policy and advocacy recognised as a legitimate complementary extension of its work supporting partners on the ground.

Involvement in the PPA scheme also brought major institutional benefits for CIIR and Progressio. The funding's flexible nature helped the organisation, as an NGO with little 'free money', to cover the full operational costs of programming, to invest in its continued development and optimal delivery, respond quickly to changing circumstances and also undertake ventures possibly considered too risky or ambitiously long-term by other donors. Examples such as CIIR and Progressio's ability to stay the course in successfully supporting civil society development and state-building in Somaliland over two decades, or its sustained engagement with the development and human rights implications of the political processes in Zimbabwe or Timor-Leste, spring to mind.

The multi-year nature of the scheme similarly offered the prospect for institutional stability and longer-term planning as well as innovation. All these gains were in keeping with overall NGO hopes of DfID, following its 1997 creation as a dedicated ministry with specialised expertise on international development.

Sizeable official UK financing, therefore, rather than being the sign of a donor-dependent weakness on the part of CIIR and Progressio, was in practice a source of major strength for the organisation, albeit permanently vulnerable to changes in the political environment. Indeed, without the vital support of DfID – and the ODA before it – Progressio and CIIR respectively would not have been able to realise many of the work achievements described in this publication. Its contribution to development and social justice owes a great deal to the longstanding commitment of the UK. No celebration of CIIR and Progressio's work is complete without this recognition.

Civil society and Progressio's exit from the UK's international development community

Progressio's impending loss of official UK unrestricted core funding, of course, did not stem from an individually taken 'grant-making' decision. Rather, as explained above, it was due to the new UK government's abolition of the overall PPA mechanism, which coincided



The legacy event saw former staff member Enda Byrne talk about CIIR's early years and Sebastian Scott on his recent ICS volunteering in Zimbabwe. Other speakers were (left to right):
Christine Allen (CIIR and Progressio executive director, 2001-12)
Julian Filochowski, former CIIR secretary for Latin America and former chief executive of CAFOD



Ian Linden (CIIR general secretary, 1986-2001)
Carmen Medina, CIIR and Progressio country representative in El Salvador



James Collins, Progressio's finance director and final chief executive officer
Dinny Hawes (head of CIIR's overseas programmes, 1990-2003)
all photos © Annie Bungeroth

with the outcome of the CSPR and its reconsideration of ways of working with civil society. All the same, the turn of events led de facto to Progressio's somewhat abrupt exit from the UK's sustainable development and human rights NGO community, regardless of its past record and future potential.

Extensive analysis of how the organisation's disappearance – and the concomitant dissolution of the long partnership CIIR and Progressio had forged with the ODA and DfID over the years – may affect the future of the UK's contribution to the cause of sustainable development is not possible here. The issue, as suggested below, may be one for readers to ponder at greater length as part of their reflection on CIIR and Progressio's legacy.

A long source of insight on Southern civil society experience, partnership and voice

One possible reflection, for instance, is that Progressio's extensive range of civil society partners in different countries and regions, and its deep experience of combining work with different partner types to support the empowerment of poor communities facing marginalisation and discrimination, could have been highly relevant to DfID's professed interest in strengthening UK support for smaller CSOs in the global South. The CSPR invoked in general terms such an intention. This is just one example of how the disappearance of Progressio, as a source of insight and accumulated knowledge and expertise, might represent a serious loss. The extensive list of **acronyms** at the back of this publication, as much as a guide for the reader, illustrates the wide scope of the organisation's partnerships over the years.

Flowing from this, a particular strength of the organisation throughout was the closeness of its relationships with Southern civil society partners arising from its daily accompaniment of their work. In turn, its commitment to facilitating spaces for Southern civil society to achieve greater voice, on their own terms, in debates and decisions on international development policy and practice may likewise be missed. It is these voices that resonate in the minds of those who have worked for CIIR and Progressio. Their insights both highlighted the difficult challenges at stake in the organisation's work and validated its relevance and worth (see Box).

MARK LISTER

Southern voices and causes for reflection

I will always remember the simple yet incisive words of, Abeer al Absi, Progressio's country representative in Yemen: "We live in a fragile state but are not fragile people," she told a Progressio event in 2013 on women's rights in 'fragile and conflict-affected countries'.

Realising people's strengths

Her words brought home for me how Northern official policy discourse on 'failed' or 'fragile' states risked stigmatising whole societies and dismissing the people living there as helpless victims, despite their resilience and creativity. In turn, her observation said much about Progressio's outlook. Indeed, a fundamental principle of Progressio's approach – and that of CIIR before it – was to recognise the strengths and potential of our partners in working to support people to empower themselves in the face of immense challenges. That was Progressio's approach to our work on women's rights in and on conflict countries, but even so, Abeer's words caused me to reflect on how even NGOs such as ourselves might be using terms such as 'state fragility' uncritically.

Abeer went on to describe the potential for change against difficult odds, saying of one of our projects to challenge unfair power structures and promote women's rights and gender equality in the country: "Women are the most affected by poverty and the crisis, but Progressio's women champions model has a big impact. It takes voices from the community to change minds of religious and local leaders."

Her assertion was borne out by one of the women's champions, Salima Issa, who explained how change often consists of small but significant steps: "Before the project it was almost impossible to have meetings with men as it was considered inappropriate. Now we are meeting in the local Council office in Al-Marawa district with male members to discuss women-related issues. On top of that we have been given an office by the district head which I consider a big change."

This was just one of many reminders I was privileged to receive of the benefits of Progressio's work, and the fact that the FCO funded this initiative indicated policy-makers could be and were indeed aware of the need to support people's potential to achieve progress in difficult political environments. Yet one of the most painful experiences for me was to see Western backing for the Saudi-led military intervention exacerbate the country's conflict and state crisis rather than help resolve it. This too, with all its devastating humanitarian impact, was a 'state failure'. It was yet another stark reminder of the structural barriers to development that Progressio and CIIR, alongside its partners, had always faced and worked to overcome.

Challenging constraints and making headway

Working with partners to deal with problematic statecraft in both the global South and the global North was a permanent challenge for the organisation over the years. It supported brave partners to beat apartheid, blew the whistle on Guatemalan death squads and raised the mass human rights abuses in Matabeleland



in the 1980s. Providing information on the latter killings sat alongside CIIR's track record of solidarity with Zimbabwe's national liberation struggle and its moves to establish its country skill-share programme to support post-independence development. CIIR and Progressio frequently criticised Conservative and Labour governments alike over the impact of British foreign policy on human rights and social justice, for example their explicit or implicit support for Indonesia's brutal occupation of East Timor.

For all the obstacles and resistance, important victories were often registered. In recent times, they included Progressio's success in working internationally with partners to persuade the EU in 2010 to introduce a bloc-wide ban on illegal timber imports. The organisation's constructive engagement of the UK government was a vital part of that important step forward. The experience showed that a small organisation such as Progressio can achieve major policy shifts.

Indeed, during my time at Progressio I saw many signs that its long-term support for empowering change could help partners make headway. I remember the words of Ines Lopes of Estrela+, the network of people living with HIV and AIDS in Timor-Leste: "Before Progressio we were just a group of people living with HIV and AIDS. Progressio supported our organisation to constitute, to set its vision and strategy to become an influential voice in the national AIDS Committee programme," she told us, following the establishment of a national AIDS strategy. This matched Progressio's success in helping partners to achieve the introduction of a national AIDS strategy in Somaliland.

A remarkable combination of the challenging and the constructive

It may seem remarkable for outside onlookers to discover that a charity rooted in Catholic Social Teaching stood alongside women at the vanguard of the struggle for women's rights in mainly Muslim societies such as Yemen and Somaliland where male power and conservative cultural and religious attitudes generally held sway. With the support of CIIR and Progressio, partners were able over time to positively engage and influence faith leaders on HIV and AIDS, sexual and reproductive health rights and gender, just as the organisation did in relation to the Catholic and other Christian churches in Latin America. The combination of the challenging and the constructive was typical of CIIR and Progressio.

I learnt from inspirational Southern leaders about process and perseverance – how small steps, big changes, ups and downs are part of challenging unfair power structures. I recall the words of Suad Abdi, Progressio's country representative in Somaliland and a founder of its women's rights network NAGAAD. While noting women had made progress in strengthening their political participation, she recognised that deeper change would need to transcend achievement of a quota system for their representation. "Even if a woman does gain a position in politics, it doesn't mean that she has influence. Even at a family level women are very far away from the decision-making processes. Somali girls are told that they are responsible for caring for the family whilst boys are told to be leaders and are given more opportunities."

At its best, Progressio, like CIIR before it, was transformational in combining efforts to challenge and change unfair power structures while helping partners to boost people's own capacity to empower themselves at a more realistic and practical level in order to improve their lives. Perhaps on other occasions we were held back by the realities, constraints and, indeed, dangers of local power, as well as fears of being too radical for our donors or the church hierarchy. There were close calls and complex judgments to make.

Starting something new

In considering Progressio's final chapter, one should also reflect on the role that the ICS youth volunteering programme was starting to play. ICS, in mobilising young people, was demonstrating clear potential to add value to the organisation's combination of policy work and longer-term DW support for partner initiatives on the ground. Just over five years in, Progressio's ICS programme was at too early a stage for its true impact to be properly assessed and known. It was a shame that the organisation, with the financial difficulties and uncertainties affecting its traditionally core interventions, did not get a chance to exploit the full complementary potential of ICS as a source of innovation, learning and dynamism in bolstering Progressio's wider approach to pursuing change.

Indeed, positive signs were already emerging on the ground as young volunteers from the UK and the global South carried out their short placements. Their value was especially maximised when rolling programmes involving several cycles of volunteers were able to create longer-term momentum with partners. For example, one of our Malawian partners, the Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS (COWLHA) testified: "The young people from ICS Progressio brought new ideas. As a result COWLHA had unprecedented access to the young people in the area to help teach about HIV and AIDS, to cancel the stigma." Evidence was emerging that young Malawian volunteers were moving from the stigmatised margins of their communities to playing a valuable role as peer support workers for others and leaders of successful income generation projects.

The full lasting impact of Progressio's overall work is still to unfold. But having seen the evidence of progress and evaluation reports and heard the words of feedback from colleagues and partners in the global South, I know that the organisation's efforts to help sow the seeds of structural change had significant long-term value.



Mark Lister was a CIIR fundraiser from 1989 to 1994 and the chief executive of Progressio from 2012 to 2016.



Representatives of UK civil society taking part in a 2013 lobby of parliament to oppose government legislation threatening to limit advocacy by charities. Progressio joined others in calling for reform of the Lobbying Act, seeing it as an unwelcome restriction on the ability its members and supporters to speak out on policy issues of concern to them.

A Progressio ICS Empower event held on the 2016 international women's day.

Difficult prospects in a challenging climate

Progressio's reluctant unravelling with the advent of the PPA's abolition occurred in an environment where the future relationship between the UK government, the UK development NGO sector and civil society in the South were at a critical new juncture. NGO and civil society bodies such as the UK's BOND and the global network Civicus, for example, while welcoming the CSPR's recognition of civil society's important role, expressed concerns that the UK government appeared increasingly to be viewing NGOs and CSOs as service 'suppliers' rather than as equal partners to be supported in making their own independent contributions to sustainable development.

Such groups also expressed worry over what they saw as growing official hostility in the UK to civil society as policy challengers and advocates, including restrictions on 'civil society space'. [Progressio itself had spoken out](#) in relation to the [Lobbying Act](#), with the [backing of supporters](#).

This challenging climate raises the issue of whether and how Progressio, with its legacy of thought and practice from CIIR, might have sustained its people-powered approach to sustainable development if a partnership with DfID, whose own role and existence as an independent department had come under mounting political pressure, could have been maintained. Common ground probably would have been found on many issues under Progressio's core themes. But topics posing greater sensitivity, such as the governance needed to tackle economic injustice and conflict, might have proved more challenging as the thrust of official UK policies took another distinct turn.

Under the post-2015 government, for example, the UK was refocusing use of aid, whose sole purpose had been enshrined in UK legislation as poverty reduction, to benefit the 'national interest' alongside pursuit of its stated aims of supporting global prosperity and tackling conflict and security challenges. The shift, including cross-ministry use of aid funds rather than just by DfID, sparked concerns that it risked a return to 'tied aid'. This included in relation to overseas economic development as the promotion of international trade and investment opportunities for UK businesses became a key consideration after the 2016 EU referendum.

Economic growth was seen as both a national priority and as a somewhat automatically beneficial channel for global development progress. Yet, as described in this publication, CIIR and Progressio's experience of working with civil society over decades in the global South was that, without socially inclusive and publicly accountable governance, the nature and pattern of economic growth, as shaped by powerful national and international forces, did not necessarily favour poor communities or protect the environment on which they depended for their livelihoods. All too often it was a cause of conflict and human rights abuses and undermined efforts to tackle climate change.

For Progressio, the 'national interest', as the organisation had argued since *Sword of the Spirit*, involved advancing internationally the cause of social justice to the benefit of citizens everywhere. This wider interpretation meant the UK using its statecraft, informed and shaped by poorer citizens, to facilitate the more equal sharing of power, wealth and resources in the world – even relinquishing some of its own.

Over the years, the organisation had made a small, yet important contribution to creating the conditions in which the UK government's global role paid greater attention to the various challenges of sustainable development and human rights, encouraged and pressed by the UK's diverse NGO sector and wider civil society movements. For many, however, official commitment to such an agenda in practice was now in danger of being diluted or redefined in worrying directions. Prime Minister David Cameron, a member of the UN's HLP on the post-2015 agenda, had invoked the concept of a "golden thread" to address global poverty but the strand of this vision concerned with transparent and accountable governance had seemingly given way to a narrower emphasis on business and economic development opportunities and their purported trickle-down benefits.

Putting a long journey in perspective: a tale of progress and setbacks

In the end, Progressio's critical financial situation pre-empted dilemmas and choices over how it might reaffirm its role in the new circumstances. The organisation had been no stranger to the impact of changing politics and donor interests and approaches on its development agenda based on social justice. Difficulties and setbacks continued to arise in the global South itself even as hopes and signs of progress were generated. Nor, moreover, had it been unfamiliar with fights for financial survival, which always came with the task. The organisation had faced existential challenges in the early 1990s when CIIR had to reshape its work and find new funds in the wake of the liberation and social justice

struggles affected by the distortions of the Cold War. Earlier, as Chapter 1 noted, the Sword of the Spirit came close to being shut down before CIIR had even been born.

A final hurdle in the battle to survive and thrive

As former CIIR general secretary Ian Linden reflects, it was perhaps no surprise at all that the organisation should come up against an insurmountable hurdle in the constant battle to survive and thrive. CIIR and Progressio had been vulnerable throughout its life. Its unfortunate demise was, of course, a radical loss, but not one to be mourned as if the closing of this particular chapter in the struggle for development justice marked the end of the overall story. The strengths of the organisation's contribution and the constraints it came up against merit historical contextualisation, while the value of its work and approach will hopefully be taken up by others in the future (see Box).

IAN LINDEN

The challenges of change and valuing a radical loss

Writing an obituary for an organisation rather than a person is a daunting task. That might be because the 76 years that span the life of the Sword of the Spirit, from which CIIR budded in the mid-1960s and later became Progressio, merit a proper contextual history. Or it might be because I worked at CIIR for 20 of those years, 15 as general secretary, five on its Southern Africa desk, and that puts a strain on my objectivity. Last things first: Progressio's demise from 2016, 16 years after I left CIIR, was sadly mundane. No great dramas. It ran out of money. Roughly £2 million of the organisation's £6 million plus budget at this time came from its partnership with the UK's Department of International Development (DfID), and this ended.

It was ever so. I remember trying to widen the organisation's donor base, knocking on bishops' and convent doors, seeking those elusive German Benedictine Abbots with gold bars under their chasubles, trying to convince American Catholic millionaires that they didn't really want to endow a chair in Mediaeval Studies, or a chapel, but pay for Africans to have a decent life. But most of the Sisters had their elderly to care for – some helped – and only one or two bishops got out their cheque books as I came in through the door – bless them. And I never found those rich Abbots hiding in the Teutonic mists and forests. My 'elevator pitch' with American Catholic millionaires didn't get me past the first floor.

Outward Catholicism: from 'little England' to the lived reality of 'big global South'

But enough of the petty humiliations of fundraising in competition with the well-oiled machines of larger agencies that in some ways occupied the same charitable terrain. CIIR was 'at the edge' and radical. Under the leadership of the late Mildred Nevile, it built a substantial reputation for advocacy in Southern Africa and Latin America, and for outstanding grassroots development work in a range of countries. It was some measure of the times that the most outstanding Catholic woman of her generation, Mildred, never, until her death, received the recognition from the Church that she merited. The UK state, at least, awarded her an MBE which she promptly lost in her car, holding up celebrations as staff scabbled in the front seat to find it.

What made CIIR different was what made Mildred different. CIIR was deeply imbued with the tradition and spirit of Catholicism, but not inward-looking or 'churchy'; it looked outward, never fretting for long about episcopal support or what bishops were worried about. Yet a high regard for the work of the organisation was often forthcoming. I used to have a private joke with Cardinal Hume, our patron, whom I visited regularly. I'd greet him and then ask: "Has anyone been complaining about us?" He'd pause to think then say: "I don't think so." I'd reply: "Then we aren't doing our job properly, are we?" Then we'd laugh. Though odd Catholic and non-Catholic members of the Tory back benches were occasionally apoplectic at what we did. That was comforting.

Looking outward meant CIIR saw the UK in the context of a global Church and cultures and ways of thought as diverse as those of Yemen, Zimbabwe, El Salvador, South Korea, Philippines and Somaliland, to give a sense of the contrasts. Instead of 'little England' there was 'big global South', not the cosmopolitanism of international bankers but of the *barrios* of Latin America and black townships of apartheid South Africa and Rhodesia.

Lived reality of a global Church

Being part of a global Church was not an academic idea but a lived reality. CIIR's overseas programme, in which volunteers – rightly renamed development workers – were recruited on professional rather than confessional grounds to share their skills to strengthen civil society around the world, saw CIIR have outstanding country representatives in place. They supported CIIR's accompaniment of partner organisation initiatives in as many as 12 different countries and, together with the DWs on placements, fed their ideas and experience back into the life of the organisation.

This global feedback, coupled with close bonds of friendship forged with workers for justice and development in local Churches, from archbishops to lay workers, could only shape the implicit theology of the organisation. CIIR became a thoughtful promoter of liberation theology and its contextual variant in South Africa. Sister Pamela Hussey SHCJ, now in her 90s, with whom I was privileged to share my years in CIIR, said in her book *Freedom from Fear* that Christian commitment was "redefined, tested, and purified in the crucible of repression". She was awarded an MBE for work for human rights in Latin America, which shows how little influence the CIA had with the UK honours committee. We hosted – clandestinely – theologians from around the world who wanted to reflect on the nature of this repression, from which emerged the *Damascus Document*.



My sadness in retrospect is that this reflection did not embrace the comparable martyrdoms of the communist world and eastern bloc. The Cold War divided the Church no less than the world and our focus was the military dictatorships and oligarchies. The Sword, originally, had set the trend in doing education work to combat the intellectual flirtation of some Catholics with fascism in the 1940s.

Power and politics: sobering thoughts on social justice and women's empowerment

One of the experiences of accompanying friends through struggles for freedom in the closing years of the Cold War was to see how little the liberation struggles of the time resulted in the situation of women changing however much they had engaged in the struggles. CIIR was a feminist organisation. This Catholic feminism was what motivated books such as *Life out of Death: the Feminine Spirit in El Salvador* by Pamela Hussey and Marigold Best, a Quaker, published in 1997. But above all, feminism informed much of the skill-share work.

Some of the most outstanding country representatives were women. The projects that DWs worked in came under, in one way or another, the heading of 'women's empowerment'. This covered a range of programmes from masculinity training in Latin America and the Caribbean to advocacy training in Zimbabwe. Likewise some of the unseen and unsung heroes in the Church's opposition to apartheid, and against the illegal occupation of Namibia, were women in the Grail.

Looking outward, forgetting yourself, thinking beyond yourself, learning from the other, being at ease on the periphery, at border crossings, I would describe as the spirituality of CIIR (though I don't like the word). It could take you further into the thick of things than your emotional resilience was ready for, but I think there was something about it all that took you in the right direction, moving towards a glimpse into the meaning of discipleship.

There was most poignantly, in the last decade, some sharing in the poor's perennial sense of betrayal. I often think of how the CIIR office was a venue for the leading players in the Zimbabwe Patriotic Front and how betrayed the Zimbabwe people are today by what power did to them. I also remember going off to the EU to negotiate funding to the Churches with the great Afrikaner Dutch Reformed Church opponent of apartheid, Beyers Naudé. There were meetings with Thabo Mbeki, then leader of the ANC, in London pubs, also sharing a sense of hope and common endeavour. There were the friends who were tortured getting rid of the apartheid regime, and how they and the people of South Africa have been betrayed by the political party they sacrificed so much for and, until recently, suffered a corrupt thug, Jacob Zuma, as the president of their nation. I am sure colleagues who worked in Latin America and in programmes in Yemen, destroyed by war, or Latin America destroyed by drugs cartels, will have experienced similar thoughts and sadness.

These are memories that, without mercy, correct visions of what is possible with our unredeemed humanity, with a politics that is about power and not about compassion and the powerlessness of the Cross; these are memories that humble and should not be air-brushed out.

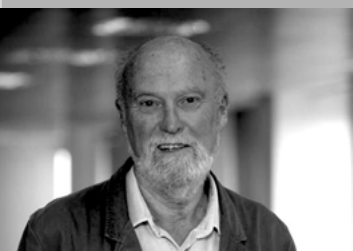
Cold War divisions and the late promise of a Pope from the global South

In short CIIR was a Cold War baby, living in the interstices of a divided Church and a divided world. The geopolitical change when the Cold War ended in 1991 nearly upended the organisation. It was a struggle to "redefine, test and purify" its mission in the new context. Fewer donors were interested in funding advocacy work on Namibia or South Africa and Latin America was starting to slip off the map at DfID. We focused for a while on truth and reconciliation commissions. There was the continuing work with Namibian and South African refugees. We began a new programme on the Church's role in promoting alternatives to the damaging 'war on drugs'.

My successor, Christine Allen, sustained the grossly under-funded advocacy work by the overseas programme training our partners in advocacy, and, of course, CIIR's gender work continued. Her successor as chief executive, Mark Lister, took forward the new ICS programme that Christine had worked hard to put in place for Progressio as a member of the VSO consortium, involving working exposure trips for young people.

Much of Progressio's work and approach will hopefully be taken on by others. Just as Progressio went under there was an irony in having a Latin American Pope who CIIR could have done with 20 years earlier, clear about the implications of the Preferential Option for the Poor, and who could answer honestly that, yes, the Curia were complaining about him. I think many radical Catholics feel a little the way Afro-Americans feel about Obama: we made it but not much has changed. The radical vision of Catholicism, rather than conservative or liberal, remains a vision with a few wonderful exceptions.

I would like to think that CIIR will be seen historically in the same category as the Christian Institute of Southern Africa (CISA): radical, at times distinctly 'edgy', ready to take risks, stumbling into Grace – but also producing world class analysis of development, political analysis of fast-moving revolutionary change, and good theology. I can hear Mildred Nevile saying without fuss: "It had its day. Something else will take its place." I really hope so.



Ian Linden was CIIR's general secretary from 1986 to 2001

Concluding a mission, still on a journey?

To what extent had Progressio run its course and how far had the organisation in its various incarnations come in achieving its aspirations? This is a difficult question to answer. CIIR and Progressio, for the purposes of structuring its work and meeting donor requirements to get it funded, had trodden the standard path of parcelling up aspirations and expectations of development progress into discrete projects and programme initiatives with clear aims in mind. Yet the world did not operate according to linear plans with SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic/relevant and time-bound) targets. Complex issues and powerful interests were in play. So while progress was desirable and possible and indeed often achieved, it also simultaneously faced new challenges as countervailing factors and forces reasserted themselves or took new forms. This reality applied as much to the prospects in the UK and the global North as to those in the South.

The account of Progressio's work in the final period of its life in Chapter 5 illustrates a picture of an organisation still making steps forward while coming up against structural constraints and setbacks. As noted, official encouragement of foreign investment in mining in the north of the Dominican Republic and Haiti posed dangers of weak regulation and threats to the progress made with partners in supporting sustainable rural livelihoods. Likewise, parliamentary moves in Somaliland to tackle violence against women and girls, stemming in no small part from the impact of Progressio's support for women's rights organisations and its engagement of faith leaders, were prone to pressures stalling action to tackle ingrained and sensitive problems such as FGM.

Meanwhile, the violent turn of the political process in Yemen amid charges of Western complicity with the Saudi-led coalition's military intervention and aid blockades causing civilian casualties and one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, raised the bracing question of the degree to which the conflict's devastation would undermine the positive work with partners that CIIR and Progressio had supported over the decades. As covered in Chapter 2, this began with successful promotion of primary health care and maternal and child health. The organisation's longstanding accompaniment of development efforts in the country meant Progressio, had it survived and despite the ongoing security problems, would have found ways to re-engage with the challenges there.

These examples suggest an organisation still on a journey rather than one concluding a mission. The fact remained that, during its history, the organisation had been involved in accompanying partners in longer-run development processes rather than circumscribed short-term efforts with smooth 'exit strategies' indicating that irrevocable progress had been immediately made. The struggle for development, though fought in one-, two- or three-year stages during which 'projects' produced gradual gains, was continuous in nature.

Over the years, for example, CIIR and Progressio played a significant role in supporting sustainable agriculture, whether through its accompaniment of rural development NGOs and peasant organisations in strengthening the promotion and adoption of agro-ecology or through its contribution to advocacy on food security and the importance of small-scale agriculture. As described in several chapters, this work helped to boost production and incomes, strengthen communities' management of natural resources and achieve instances of success in securing policy moves to better protect forests, land and water. Yet even today, for all the evidence of the benefits of small-scale agriculture for sustainable development and poverty reduction, governments, rather than prioritising support for such farmers and protecting their rights, still appear to be largely in thrall to the often damaging interests of agribusiness.

Assessing a record of achievement

CIIR and Progressio's commitment to accompaniment, of course, sat alongside the premise underpinning its capacity-building with partners that its ultimate aim was to work itself out of a job. Even if the organisation's commitment to addressing the complex social and political challenges of sustainable development was ultimately truncated in 2017, reasonable claims can be made that it played a part in creating conditions in which significant milestones had been or could be reached.

Milestones and vital contributions

For example, one can point to its advocacy supporting Timor-Leste's struggle for liberation from Indonesian oppression and the vital contribution its capacity-building made to developing the institutional structures that the newly independent country needed to continue its journey. This was the case, for example, in relation to women's rights and gender inequality or HIV and AIDS prevention and care. Similarly in Somaliland, it made a productive contribution to nurturing and consolidating civil society networks on youth issues, women's rights and HIV and AIDs. Such steps were all of crucial relevance to

the potential of Somaliland's political settlement to be based on greater social responsiveness and inclusion, a process that CIIR and Progressio continually aided by working with partners to promote its holding of free and fair elections.

Likewise, CIIR and Progressio, building on the work first piloted by partners and DWs in Nicaragua, worked to replicate across country programmes the impact of its work on masculinity as a fundamental issue in tackling gender discrimination and inequality. Such efforts dovetailed with the strengths of country programmes such as El Salvador, which played a significant role in putting women's rights on the national policy agenda and further strengthening CIIR and Progressio's institutional prioritisation of this issue. Such developments were a logical progression of the organisation's early focus on gender issues, driven in no small part by the strong position that women had held and would continue to hold in leading the organisation and its work.

Leading innovative approaches

Then there was the distinctive work across country programmes on faith and development in which the organisation drew on Catholic Social Teaching and its ecumenical and inter-faith vocation – inherited from the Sword of the Spirit – to promote the indispensable faith leadership needed to tackle the links between HIV, gender inequality and discrimination and injustices relating to sexual orientation and identity. It pushed the limits of the agenda, opening up spaces that faith leaders and communities might explore and occupy in taking forward a more socially inclusive and just approach to the issues at stake. The progress made offered the potential for dialogue and interaction between often clashing faith and feminist agendas.

In the Dominican Republic, one can point to the outcomes of CIIR and Progressio's support since the late 1990s for the introduction of participatory municipal budgeting which became the law of the land, heralding the potential for its steady institutionalisation. It helped to lay the foundations for the right of citizens to have a voice in decision-making on use of public money. In Peru, DWs helped to spearhead civil society engagement and expertise on environmental sustainability.

Finger on the pulse, working as part of a movement

This far from comprehensive set of examples suggests that CIIR and Progressio played an important catalytic role in many instances. At the same time, it was also the case that the organisation had its finger on the pulse of policy and civil society developments offering potential for it to lend its distinctive support to struggles for social justice already underway. Building on its partners' own strengths, the organisation had a knack of spotting and seizing such opportunities. It often worked as part of a wider community of development actors seeking positive change.

This was the case, for example, with CIIR's support from the 1970s to the 1990s for struggles against repressive rule in South and Central America, white minority rule in Rhodesia and the national injustices and regional damage of apartheid South Africa. Likewise, in the late 2000s, Progressio's creative ambition in working with its civil society partners in Latin America and NGO allies in the UK created the pressure for the EU to approve regulations banning illegal timber imports.

Skill, passion and commitment in working with partners

The aim of this publication has been to document the work and achievements of the Sword of the Spirit, CIIR and Progressio, not to conduct a rigorous definitive assessment of how successful its work for international peace, human rights and sustainable development has been over the years. Its overall performance will be for readers to judge, whether through reflection on this publication's content or more extensive analysis of documentation in the organisation's [archive](#) (see Box at the end of the publication).

Whatever the final overall balance sheet or the significance of specific results achieved along the way, it cannot be said that the organisation did not try to the best of its ability. Its efforts, as borne out by this record, speak for themselves. The organisation worked throughout with skill, passion and commitment, as well as with humble respect for the partner organisations and communities it accompanied in this journey. The organisation took its lead from their agendas, seeking to support and enhance their existing strengths. The quality of Northern NGO partnership with their civil society counterparts in the global South has long been a topic of debate, and it may be that CIIR and Progressio's approach and record over the years, whatever its strengths and inevitable faults, holds lessons for others to reflect on. The struggle for development justice is far from over and must continue, with others drawing on the positive legacy that the organisation has left (see Box below).

Reflecting on a legacy

A full discussion of the organisation's legacy for the wider community of NGOs and civil society organisations in the UK involved in the diverse field of sustainable development is likewise beyond the scope of this publication. But it does raise many questions. What do they judge to have been the value of CIIR and Progressio's contributions? To what extent and how has the approach of CIIR and Progressio shaped their own outlook and practice, and how will it do so in the future? What is the significance of Progressio's disappearance for the development community? What will its impact be?

Questions such as these merit proper exploration that others, for example in the development studies field, may also wish to embark on. Nevertheless, a short final reflection is in order, with spontaneous observations on CIIR and Progressio's work and approach. They suggest the organisation played a quietly influential vanguard role in the UK and more widely over the years, one that should not be overlooked or forgotten.

Spawning organisations and convening initiatives

As noted in Chapters 1 and 2, CIIR's rapid dynamism on its transformation from Sword of the Spirit in 1965, for example, led it to help spawn a variety of organisations as part of an extended family. They ranged from providing forums for debate and exchange such as the Africa Centre to publishing ventures such as the [Latin America Bureau](#), as well as the creation of major bodies such as the Catholic development agency [CAFOD](#).

As the international NGO sector expanded and developed, CIIR's role as a progenitor of specific organisations gave way to its commitment to supporting and nurturing coalitions and joint working. This continued in the new millennium, as reflected by its role in coordinating the Zimbabwe-Europe network [ZEN](#), for instance. By contributing to wider movements and acting as a convenor, CIIR and Progressio were often able to exercise an influence that belied the organisation's small size and weaker resources in comparison with its larger NGO counterparts.

In the second half of the 1990s, to pick another example, CIIR, drawing on the issues raised by its earlier engagement on private sector investment in the Philippines and South Africa, embarked on a body of work on corporate accountability with like-minded organisations.

DINNY HAWES

Enduring values to tackle the problems and dangers of today



Dinny Hawes was a CIIR volunteer in the Raymah primary health care project in Yemen in 1977-1980 and then became desk officer for CIIR's Yemen and Somalia programmes. From 1990 to 2003 he worked as head of CIIR's overseas programme (then called international cooperation for development, ICD).

CIIR and Progressio have been a big part of my life. I was involved in the organisation in various capacities from 1977 – as a DW, a London staff member, head of programme and, post-retirement, supporter. There are so many positive features of its contribution and approach that I could comment on.

The main ones that spring to mind are its advocacy, especially in support of liberation movements in Latin America and the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles in Southern Africa, which provided a platform for activists to lobby Western governments to support their peoples' fight for rights; CIIR publications, such as the Comment series, which gave readers access to vital new sources of information and analysis from the global South; the overseas skill-sharing programme in which CIIR and then Progressio, through the role of its DWs in accompanying the work of partner organisations, was at the cutting edge of supporting their efforts to achieve radical change at the grassroots; and CIIR's role as a midwife in the UK international development and social justice sectors, helping to give birth to many new organisations that sprung directly from its work: CAFOD, Book Aid International, the Africa Centre, the Latin America Bureau, the National Justice and Peace Network.

Also of immense professional and personal value was the experience of CIIR and Progressio as a workplace. It provided the most positive and democratic environment I have ever worked in and left me with many of my closest and most trusted friends.

Internationalism and openness to the other

The values of CIIR and Progressio – its internationalism, its openness to the other, its solidarity with the oppressed and those in need, its cooperative philosophy, its emphasis on equality of gender, race and class – are vital in today's world. Indeed, we are witnessing the alarming growth of racist policies based on self-interest and fear, anti-immigrant hostility and denying migrants their rights as people, closed borders, the questioning of the UK's financial contribution towards international development aid, only tempered by palpable expectations that assistance in the form of aid or trade must now be geared to self-interest rather than centred on poverty reduction. The organisation may have closed, but we must work with all our strength to retain and promote the values of CIIR and Progressio as the organisation's legacy. The struggle must continue until justice is achieved.

This added to the wider momentum underway that eventually led to the emergence of ventures such as the multi-stakeholder Ethical Trading Initiative. Even with its diminished capacity in 2016, Progressio showed foresight in the corporate accountability field, as highlighted by its late-life promotion of work to address gender as a neglected issue in policy and practice on the human rights obligations of companies. Indeed, responsible business conduct on human rights remains an under-recognised and under-supported requirement for achieving the SDGs.

Catalysing a sea change on the importance of advocacy

The tracing of such footprints, of course, must reference CIIR's early involvement in policy research and publishing and what came to be known as 'advocacy'. CIIR was a leader in the field in the 1970s and 1980s, and its work paved the way for development NGOs both in the UK and beyond to develop and expand their own policy research, advocacy and campaigning in the 1990s. This is certainly one of the main features of CIIR's legacy.

Indeed, a sea change has taken place since the early 1980s when CIIR's general secretary, Mildred Nevile, in chairing a development education sub-group of the NGO liaison committee with the EC, had urged European NGOs and aid agencies to embark on stronger efforts to address the structural problems affecting their funding of projects on the ground. She pointed to how trade policies, an issue CIIR had been taking a lead on, undermined the very community livelihoods and development projects they were funding locally.

CIIR's dynamism in policy and advocacy, of course, paradoxically led to institutional challenges as a more crowded and de facto competitive environment subsequently emerged involving better resourced NGO players. Having become a 'victim' of the organisation's own desired success, CIIR and Progressio, though not ceasing to perform leadership roles, increasingly pursued distinct niches for the organisation's policy engagement and policy outputs. These typically emphasised reflecting and projecting the views and voices of Southern partners, a strength that was bolstered by the gradual integration of its policy and programming from the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Tackling the politics of development

A defining characteristic of CIIR's policy and programming from the outset, and its continuation by Progressio, moreover, was that it did not shy away from the politics of development. The organisation's ability and will to engage was rooted in and shaped by its close relationships with Southern partners and their efforts to tackle the barriers to change.

This feature has a certain resonance in view of recent debates in NGO, academic and donor circles on the need to grapple with the underlying 'political economy' constraints on development progress. Similarly, rights-based approaches to development became the order of the day in the Northern development NGO community from the mid-1990s yet had been an intrinsic feature of CIIR's work for many years.

CIIR and Progressio in turn understood the politics of development to encompass the full spectrum of policy arenas and actors affecting the prospects for social justice, not those confined to dealing narrowly with social problems. The organisation may not be able to lay claim to the concept of 'policy coherence' that now underpins the demands of many civil society organisations for policy decisions across multiple areas to be compatible with development justice. But it was certainly an early advocate, as shown by its concerns, in the case of the UK, with the impact of its role in the arms trade, global defence and security, trade and investment promotion, as well as in bodies such as the EU and UN.

Southern participation and valuing people

Another major strength was the organisation's commitment, by having Southern nationals as country programme managers and through the recruitment of DWs from the global South, to boosting developing country participation and leadership in its work as a Northern-based international development NGO. Such a trend has been underway in the development NGO community, and CIIR can be seen as a very early leader in this regard.

Finally, the legacy of CIIR and Progressio needs to be assessed in terms of the people that have worked for the organisation. It has not been possible to name everyone in this publication but, as the biographies of those who have contributed reflections, memories and short case studies attest, many individuals who worked for the organisation have gone on to play important and influential roles in the sustainable development field and elsewhere. Their outlook and practice has been shaped by their CIIR and Progressio experience (see Box below).

People, whether leaders or workers in the organisation or members of the partner organisations and communities they strived so hard to support, were at the heart of its endeavours. In seeking to synthesise and record for posterity the 76-year history of the Sword of the Spirit, CIIR and Progressio, this publication was in large part commissioned and written for them.

ANNIE STREET

**Honduras is
where my heart is**



Annie Street worked for Progressio from 1988 to 2005. She was a desk officer initially on Honduras and subsequently El Salvador, Haiti and Dominican Republic and later became the advocacy coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean. She went on to become head of humanitarian policy at CAFOD.

A little part of my heart is still somewhere up in the remote mountains of north-western Honduras. That was where CIIR was involved in supporting one of the most empowering community development projects I have ever come across.

When I first joined CIIR in 1988 we had just sent out four DWs to the Gracias Social Action project, two health promoters and two agronomists. Over the course of the next 10 years, this project supported amazingly talented and committed peasant leaders from the villages surrounding the town to develop their skills and grow an organisation, which gradually evolved from teaching health, hygiene and enhanced agricultural techniques to focus on rights. It addressed land rights, women's rights and indigenous rights, and mobilised communities to challenge injustice and fight for a better deal. Initially the project was set up by the parish priest in Gracias, but as it developed it became an independent entity without the constraints of church structures.

Time to say gracias

The Gracias project was by no means unique for CIIR. Over the 17 years that I worked for the organisation I was involved with many projects which sought to support people to improve their living conditions as well as address the structural injustices which kept their communities impoverished. In 1993 we were one of the first organisations to set up a programme in El Salvador at the end of the civil war, initially working with returned refugees before branching out to focus on women's empowerment and communications.

In London, our work reflected these approaches as we organised speaker tours of our partners, held conferences and seminars and lobbied the British government for progressive aid policies. Returned DWs played a hugely important multiplier effect in this, not just inspiring friends and their own communities, but many of them going on to work for other aid agencies, NGOs, the UN and the British government's Department for International Development.

CIIR was a big part of my life for 17 years and with the closure of Progressio I look back and feel immensely blessed to have been part of a community of staff, development workers and partners. They all believed passionately in what we were doing and were committed to bringing about small-scale change which would have significant ripple effects.

Annex

Organisational timeline and publication summary



CIIR

PROGRESS!O

Annex: organisational timeline and summary

Leaders and landmarks, titles and trends: a snapshot account of the organisation's evolution and life

BARBARA WARD

Sword of the Spirit
General secretary
(1940-1945)

1940

Sword of the Spirit formed as Catholic-led movement to oppose Hitler's rejection of "kinship and love"

Fighting fascism and working for peace based on the rights of all

Barbara Ward founded the Sword of the Spirit 'movement' with other Catholic intellectuals, inspired by a wartime broadcast by Cardinal Arthur Hinsley, Archbishop of Westminster, on overcoming Nazi oppression and tackling the political issues raised by the war with Germany. A charismatic public speaker and prolific media commentator, she led its efforts to mobilise British Catholics against fascism and unite British citizens in "a campaign of prayer, study and action" for the natural rights upheld by Christianity, both in response to the war and in future peace.

Her joint leadership of the Sword with 'Rudolph' Beales saw the organisation actively promote ecumenical cooperation with other churches on the terms of peace and the challenges of post-war social justice, despite Catholic Church tensions over the role and status of non-Catholics in the organisation.

Ward, an economist, later helped to define and establish the concept of 'sustainable development' as [founder of the International Institute for Environment and Development \(IIED\)](#) in 1971 and influenced the emerging work of the Sword and CIIR on international affairs and development.

RUDOLPH BEALES

Sword of the Spirit
General secretary
(1940-1947)

1944

Concerns on terms of post-war settlement lead the Sword to work on human rights in Central and Eastern Europe.

Beales, a lecturer and later professor of education at King's College, London, brought complementary skills as an organiser to the Sword's work as joint general secretary with Barbara Ward, before solely occupying the post on her departure at the end of the Second World War.

Beales edited the movement's journal, *The Sword*, and provided Sword speakers for BBC broadcasts. His work for the organisation also inspired his authorship of the acclaimed *Catholic Church and the International World Order* published by Penguin in 1941. As the Sword's attention later shifted from the UK's response to fascism to the consequences of the post-war settlement, it led campaigns for food aid, human rights and religious freedom in communist Central and Eastern Europe.

Beales' wife, Freda, continued to play a vital role as the Sword's administrative secretary after his resignation, devoting more and more time to the Sword's increasing involvement in international affairs. This included collaboration with the United Nations Association (UNA) in response to the UN's 1948 adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

<p>MARGARET FEENY</p> <p>Sword of the Spirit Organising secretary</p> <p><i>Strapline: "For the promotion of international relations"</i></p> <p>Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) General secretary (1947-1967)</p> <p>1950 Sword is reshaped to raise Catholic and wider UK public awareness of the Church's role in the world</p> <p>1957 Papal encyclical on Africa</p> <p>1962 CAFOD and Africa Centre established</p> <p>Vatican Council II starts on the Catholic Church's relations with the world</p> <p>Catholic Overseas Appointments bureau set up to support overseas volunteering</p> <p>1965 Sword renamed CIIR</p> <p>CIIR joins secular British Volunteer Programme</p>	<p>Taking an international turn: from Europe's future to the developing world</p> <p><u>Margaret Feeny</u>, while continuing the Sword's work for post-war reconstruction in the UK and Europe based on social justice and human rights, further expanded the Sword's involvement and reputation on international affairs in the 1950s. This included work on peace and nuclear disarmament in collaboration with Pax Christi as well as growing involvement on Africa, which was further stimulated by a 1957 papal encyclical on the region.</p> <p>Following a highly successful 1961 campaign of lectures on the future of Europe, including on the UK's membership of the Common Market, Feeny put the organisation firmly on its long-term future path in the early 1960s. The Sword joined a UN freedom from hunger campaign and made the UK's responsibilities to developing countries the main focus of its work.</p> <p>The momentum generated by the Sword encouraged the Catholic Church to create CAFOD in 1962 and the Sword mobilised supporters to raise funds through Family Fast Days to consolidate the new aid agency.</p> <p>Feeny also nurtured Sword committees on Africa and Latin America (the former leading to 1962 establishment of the Africa Centre) and – in a crucial development – the launch of a Catholic overseas volunteer programme. The Sword went on to take part in official consultations on creating the multi-agency British Volunteer Programme (BVP) and joined the consortium in 1965. As a result, the organisation became a beneficiary of ongoing official UK funding for its secular volunteering, initially mainly in Africa and Central America. Its approach, centred on meeting needs identified by country partners and solidarity with locally driven pursuit of self-reliance and empowerment, was both distinctive and radical at the time.</p> <p>By now, the trajectory forged under Feeny's leadership had led the Sword, using the strapline it had adopted in 1961, to change its name to the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) at the start of June 1965.</p>
<p>MILDRED NEVILE</p> <p>CIIR General secretary (1967-1985)</p> <p>1967 CIIR publishes popular version of papal encyclical on development, <i>Populorum Progressio</i></p> <p>CIIR's independence from official Catholic Church reaffirmed</p> <p>1968 Church in Latin America advocates 'preferential option for the poor'</p>	<p>Blossoming as CIIR</p> <p><u>Mildred Nevile</u>, building on the foundations she too had helped to lay as a staff member from 1958, oversaw the blossoming of the organisation's work in its new incarnation as CIIR. Her contribution shaped the organisation for almost the rest of its life until her death in 2012. She was a source of inspiration and guidance both during and beyond her time as general secretary.</p> <p>Nevile immediately set up an Education Committee and expanded CIIR's education work beyond schools. This paved the way for the eventual emergence of an education department carrying out what later came to be known in development NGO circles as 'advocacy'. Under her leadership, CIIR's education work enjoyed a golden age in the 1970s and 1980s, targeting decision-makers at a time when UK development agencies largely did not do policy work but supported and invested in CIIR's.</p>

1969

CIIR recruits on-the-ground coordinator to assess and support volunteer projects in Central America, including Honduras and Nicaragua

1971

CIIR launches flagship *Comment* series

1972

CIIR steps up speaker visits, observer missions, publishing and lobbying on oppressive minority rule in Rhodesia

CIIR helps to create Christian Concern for Southern Africa targeting investors

1973

Military coup in Chile prompts 15 years' work on Pinochet regime's repressive rule and free-market economic model

CIIR opens volunteer programme in Yemen focusing on maternal and child health

CIIR opens volunteer programme in Ecuador with work on primary health, popular education, rural development and indigenous rights

1974

Prophetic Barbara Ward AGM address on need for a just economy respecting planet's environmental limits

1975

Small is Beautiful author Fritz Schumacher is AGM speaker

1976

CIIR begins 25 years of support for East Timor against Indonesia's repressive occupation

CIIR starts volunteer programme in Peru, with work on urban poverty, health promotion and strengthening Amazonian indigenous organisations

After work on UK 'race relations' in the 1960s amid political rhetoric, public tensions and racism over immigration, solidarity with partners struggling for national liberation, political change and social justice in Southern Africa, Latin America and then East and South-East Asia became the dominant focus of CIIR's education programme. One of the most politically significant instances of impact in CIIR's early years was media-covered denunciation of the 1973 Wiriyamu massacre in Mozambique, which caused diplomatic embarrassment to Portugal's president during a UK state visit and helped to hasten the demise of Lisbon's authoritarian regime and colonial rule in Africa.

Advocacy is born: a golden age for CIIR's 'education' programme

A dynamic publishing programme, including the flagship *Comment* pamphlet series launched in 1971 and continued thereafter, exposed UK readers and media to an array of 'Third World' views and issues, complementing the organisation of conferences and partner tours. CIIR AGMs became a highlight for the UK's international development community as leading speakers from partners in the developing world engaged audiences on people's struggles against poverty and injustice and the Christian response.

The challenges faced by partners included apartheid in South Africa, the continuing rise of military dictatorships in South America in the 1970s, US intervention to back repressive regimes in El Salvador and Guatemala and violently destabilise Nicaragua's post-1979 revolutionary government, and the brutal consequences of Indonesia's 1975 annexation of East Timor thwarting its decolonisation process from Portugal.

Siding with justice, upholding independence

CIIR skilfully adopted a position of non-neutrality in supporting the struggles of the poor and oppressed for justice – 'Taking Sides' became a theme in advocacy – while remaining impartial, independent and respected in its relations with solidarity and political movements. Its reputation for independent critical thought and its preparedness to engage with forces of varying ideological persuasion put the organisation in a strong position to work with the media and engage in a constructive and challenging way with representatives from all political parties in the UK.

Similarly, its pluralistic identity – rooted in Catholic Social Teaching yet independent of the official Catholic Church and committed to working with people of all faiths and none – equipped it well to work with others as a contributor and convenor. It helped spawn new initiatives and organisations such as the inter-denominational Christian Concern for Southern Africa on the ethics of investment and the Latin America Bureau, a secular publisher on struggles for social justice in the region.

CIIR also set up a development policy desk in 1978. It analysed an array of global development issues, including the European Community's aid-and-trade cooperation with its former colonies, as enshrined in the Lomé Convention with the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of countries. Lomé became an important work area and led to CIIR's growing involvement in shaping NGO networking to target EC institutions and influence the UK's role in what would later become the EU.

1977

CIIR helps create Latin America Bureau to raise awareness of struggles for change in the region

1978

CIIR creates desk on global development issues, including Europe's role

1979

CIIR papers target the Lancaster House talks, capping long work critiquing Rhodesia's 'internal settlement' and research on Rhodesia-Zimbabwe challenges

CIIR steps up volunteer recruitment to support post-war development after Nicaragua's 1979 Sandinista revolution

1980

Volunteer programme opened in independent Zimbabwe with work on education, disability and community-based rehabilitation

CIIR makes apartheid in South Africa, its regional impacts and occupation of Namibia a key 1980s focus of advocacy

Murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero spurs CIIR advocacy for human rights, justice and peace in El Salvador amid civil war

1981

Asia policy desk set up

1982

CIIR steps up advocacy on US destabilisation of Nicaragua and mass repression in Guatemala

1983

CIIR visits Zimbabwe and disseminates church partner statements on human rights atrocities in Matabeleland

1984

CIIR opens volunteer programme in Somalia

CIIR helps found Hong

CIIR overseas: the growing role of its 'volunteer' programme

Under Nevile's watch, CIIR's high-profile advocacy was paralleled by the quietly steady, yet no less institutionally significant, growth and impact of the organisation's secular overseas volunteering. New programmes were set up in the 1970s in Yemen, Peru and Ecuador, and then in Zimbabwe on its 1980 independence as well as Somalia in 1984.

The Zimbabwe programme, as would often be the case in later opening other country programmes elsewhere, was the logical extension of CIIR's long advocacy work on the country and the trust it had engendered among local social justice actors. CIIR had supported church partners challenging minority rule and abuses in Rhodesia since the 1960s and contributed influentially to the 1979 Lancaster House talks eventually enabling transition.

Strengthening on-the-ground support, exchange and learning with partners

Expansion saw CIIR recruit on-the-ground volunteer coordinators (later becoming country representatives with full programme management duties), an innovation that further strengthened CIIR's approach involving daily accompaniment of partners and two-way exchange of expertise, knowledge and learning. The setting up of country offices bolstered partner relations and support, and CIIR professionalised its strategies and systems for programme development and management, including volunteer recruitment, selection and induction, in the 1980s.

The closeness of in-country staff to struggles for development based on social justice was a source of radical inspiration and bolstered the ideological outlook of the organisation and its commitment to change against the odds. CIIR showed determination to retain its presence on the ground amid conflict. This was the case in Nicaragua facing counter-revolutionary violence and in Peru where CIIR continued working with partners when other agencies left the country amid the threats of terrorist insurgency and government hostility towards the work of development and human rights groups.

Growing programme experience, meanwhile, saw CIIR step up publishing on its on-the-ground work, as marked by briefings and books on breast-milk substitutes and maternal and child health in Yemen, access to safe water in Nicaragua, and the challenge of disability and rehabilitation inherited from Zimbabwe's struggle for independence.

<p>Kong Link as channel for pro-democracy voices to be heard in plans for UK's 1997 handover to China</p> <p>1985 CIIR promotes Kairos document of South African theologians advocating ecumenical action against apartheid, publishing an edition in its <i>Third World Theology</i> series</p> <p><i>Timor Link</i> newsletter launched, running to 2002</p>	
<p>IAN LINDEN</p> <p>CIIR General secretary (1986-2001)</p> <p>Straplines: "For Justice and Development" "Action for Change in the Third World" "Changing Minds, Changing Lives"</p> <p>1986 Advocacy begins on South Korea's struggle for democracy and labour rights and the challenges of Korean reunification</p> <p>CIIR increases work on peace, democracy, human rights and land in the Philippines on fall of the Marcos regime</p> <p>1987 CIIR books give fairer account of Nicaragua's human rights record and examine violations in the Philippines associated with European business</p> <p>1988 CIIR conference on death squads and development with Philippines, Central America and Southern Africa partners</p> <p>1989 CIIR continues work on land and rural repression, democratisation and inequality in Brazil as the 1989 presidential election restores civilian rule</p>	<p>Struggling for justice and adjusting to the legacy of the Cold War</p> <p><u>Ian Linden's</u> tenure saw CIIR's education programme sustain its solidarity with partner struggles for 'development justice' in Central America, Southern Africa, the Philippines and East Timor amid the embers of Cold War geo-political rivalry and its distorting local impacts, but also reorient the focus of this work. Political transitions from authoritarian regimes were taking imminent shape and posing new challenges in a changed global climate.</p> <p>Events and books on the West's 1990-91 Gulf War with Iraq, the future of the UN and rising UK media and political hostility to asylum-seekers and refugees questioned whether the US-led 'new world order' emerging after the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall was ushering a global age of democratic peace and prosperity.</p> <p>Drawing on partner links in advocacy focus countries, CIIR analysed continued paramilitary and death squad violence; worked on the ground with partners to prevent the derailing of South Africa's 1994 end-of-apartheid elections; ran programmes on the human rights legacy of repressive regimes and civil society's role in democratisation and peace building; and stepped up work to highlight the neglect of women's participation and rights in emerging changes, including East Timor. Its transition to independence as Timor-Leste in 1999-2002 was supported on the ground by CIIR observer missions and celebrated by the organisation as a victory against the odds. It followed 25 years' of work with church and other partners to promote international solidarity with the Timorese struggle for liberation.</p> <p>With Catholic hierarchy opposition to the influence of 'liberation theology' in countries such as Brazil and Peru, from the early 1990s CIIR renewed its awareness-raising on the Church's commitment to a 'preferential option for the poor' and reasserted the importance of Catholic Social Teaching. Faith-related work also included studies and events on the role of conservative Christian sects in political repression.</p> <p>New advocacy programmes: Haiti, Colombia and the 'war on drugs' Advocacy programmes on conflict, human rights and development also began in the later 1980s and early 1990s on the post-Duvalier struggles for change in Haiti as well as the deep-rooted social and economic injustices hindering meaningful political reform and peace in Colombia. Work in Colombia, in dealing with national policy processes affecting the prospects for social justice, encompassed advocacy on local impacts such as the threat of natural resource extraction to the land rights and livelihoods of black and indigenous communities on the Pacific coast.</p>

CIIR opens volunteer programme in the Dominican Republic, also providing a base to start work in Haiti, already the focus of information work, from 1993

1990

CIIR intensifies work on repression and conflict in South Africa as hopes for ending apartheid on Nelson Mandela's release met by rising violence

CIIR forced by conflict to withdraw from Somalia

1991

Advocacy on Haiti grows as coup topples elected Aristide government, endangering prospects for change since 1986 fall of Duvalier regime

CIIR starts decade of advocacy on Colombia and the 'war on drugs'

CIIR's overseas volunteer (development worker) programme renamed and expands and diversifies as International Cooperation for Development (ICD)

ICD programme opened in Namibia following its 1990 independence, centred on HIV and AIDS, education, access to information, civil society development, disability and livelihoods

First Gulf War forces ICD to suspend work in newly unified Yemen facing punitive Saudi action

1992

CIIR book *Fixing the Rules* on GATT and WTO paves way for 1990s trade work including EU and Lomé

Book and information work in Santo Domingo encourage Latin America's bishops to uphold 1968 and 1979 'option for poor'

1993

ICD programme in El Salvador starts placing development workers (DWs) with partners after

In challenging standard narratives on the drivers of Colombia's conflict, CIIR explored the complexities of the drugs trade. This strand became a platform for a wider cutting-edge initiative with Andean and international partners over the next 10 years on the 'war on drugs'. It promoted alternative EU policies to the damage and abuses in the global South of inappropriate and ineffective militarised solutions promoted by the United States. CIIR contributed to the development and influence of EU civil society networking on the issue.

Targeting Europe for change on aid and trade

CIIR's advocacy on democratisation and human rights was matched by policy work in the 1990s on aid and trade for post-conflict reconstruction and development in Central America and Southern Africa. CIIR, building on its 1980s support for SADCC solidarity against apartheid's regional aggression against countries such as Angola and Mozambique, turned its attention to how a new South Africa and an internationally active EU could boost pro-poor local development and regional integration. CIIR challenged Brussels on issues such as the damage of EU member fisheries policies on Namibia whose 1990 achievement of independence CIIR's Southern Africa desk had earlier helped to support through advocacy with church partners in the country and international ecumenical action.

This EU-focused regional work sat alongside CIIR's continued advocacy on the future of Lomé, which slotted into a wider portfolio of work over the 1990s on the damaging impact of the EU's common agricultural policy and the skewed process of world trade liberalisation on food security. Targeting WTO summits in 1999 and 2001, CIIR built on its important role in catalysing awareness and action on the development problems of the GATT talks that gave birth to the world trade body in 1994.

Grappling with 'globalisation'

This was the emerging era of free-market 'globalisation' and CIIR's advocacy built on its work on trade to cast light on the development and human rights threats of moves to ease international flows of finance and investment. Examples included CIIR's contribution to 1997 defeat of the OECD's Multilateral Agreement on Investment as well as work with civil society allies targeting Asia-Europe (ASEM) summits around Asia's 1997 financial crisis and its damaging social costs. Such action gave rise to work on the impact of economic change on women in the region and the 1999 launch of the multi-year SEACA programme. This enhanced the advocacy capacity of partners in seven countries in East and South-East Asia.

CIIR also ran initiatives with partners on ethical trade in global supply chains and the human rights conduct of business. The work included working with other NGOs to engage in dialogue and influence companies such as BP whose operations in Colombia and Angola had sparked serious human rights concerns. Private sector conduct on human rights had been a concern since CIIR's promotion of work in the 1970s and 1980s respectively on foreign investment in apartheid South Africa and large-scale agriculture in the Philippines.

CIIR overseas: programme expansion and boosting Southern participation through ICD

CIIR's overseas programme, renamed International Cooperation for Development (ICD) in 1991 to boost its secular appeal to potential DW recruits and avoid faith connotations in non-Catholic countries, went from strength to strength.

1992 peace accords, with focus on women's rights

1994

CIIR supports on-the-ground international monitoring of elections in South Africa marking end of apartheid

CIIR observes elections in Mozambique and continues work on conflict and peace in Angola

ICD DWs help Nicaragua partners pioneer influential work on gender and masculinity, children's rights, disability and multilingual education

1995

ICD increases number of DWs in Haiti amid uneasy return of civilian rule after US intervention, and CIIR highlights the damage of internationally driven free-market policies

Launch of international advocacy on human rights legacy of conflicts and civil society's role in peace and democratisation

1996

ICD appoints country representative in Somaliland and helps build civil society networks and organisations to consolidate peace over the decade

1997

CIIR renames education department international policy department (IPD)

CIIR launches economic justice projects, including on Asia financial crisis, investment and business and human rights

ICD pilots ground-breaking work on participatory municipal budgeting in Dominican Republic

ICD launches environmental education programme in Peru and boosts DW support for ICT and alternative media partners

By the late 1990s, the number of ICD country programmes had risen to seven in Latin America and the Caribbean and four in Africa and the Middle East, with a peak of around 130 'volunteers' – now called development workers (DWs) to reflect the significant professional expertise they brought to multi-year placements with partner organisations – involved in projects.

The 11 country programmes came to be managed by country representatives who were nationals. In a further reflection of ICD's commitment to Southern leadership (as well as North-South exchange), two-thirds of DWs placed with partners were recruits from countries in the global South.

Thematic diversification: rising to the challenges of partners

From an early concentration and innovative approaches on primary health care, maternal and child health, disability, literacy, popular education and rural development during the 1970s and 1980s, the range of themes and issues addressed by CIIR's ICD programme expanded further in the 1990s.

Work on HIV and AIDS was reinforced as a cross-cutting priority in Zimbabwe and the new post-independence Namibia programme. ICD's DW recruits helped state ministries and civil society networks to set up or strengthen health education services and social welfare programmes, target youth and promote voluntary counselling and confidential testing (VCCT).

Meanwhile, helping to build peace, democratic institutions and rights-based civil society networks became a vital focus in consolidating the Somaliland programme from 1995 in response to Somalia's collapse as the Siad Barre regime was overthrown. In Yemen, ICD capitalised on progress since the 1980s in supporting the expertise of traditional midwives in community-based health services, in turn boosting recognition of women's role in public life and challenging gender inequality. While Somaliland and Yemen had low levels of HIV incidence, ICD, drawing on the lessons of its work in Southern Africa, played a leading role from the late 1990s in catalysing local research, awareness-raising and preventive action on the threat.

In the early 1990s, income generation and livelihoods became an increasingly important ICD focus in the context of free-market adjustment policies, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean where urban projects were also launched. They complemented CIIR's continuing strong track record of working with partners to promote rural development based on effective support for small-scale agriculture.

In turn, the devastation of Hurricane Mitch in 1998, exacerbated by unsustainable land use involving deforestation and soil erosion, led ICD in Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador to launch a Central America programme on environmental education. It drew on ICD's successful piloting of such work with partners in Peru, the lessons of which were also used to launch follow-up an Andean programme on sustainable environment issues with civil society groups in neighbouring Ecuador.

Gender and discrimination, participation and rights

The Peru and Ecuador programmes also sustained CIIR's long commitment to supporting bilingual education and boosting the capacity and voice of indigenous organisations and movements, with ICD also stepping up its work on issues of ethnicity and race in countries such as Nicaragua, Honduras and Namibia. In the Dominican Republic ICD partnered organisations supporting the rights of Haitian migrants and Dominicans of Haitian descent. Such efforts formed part of an ICD-wide

<p>1998 ICD's DWs support emergency response to Hurricane Mitch in Central America</p> <p>CIIR urges UK to act on murder of Guatemalan Bishop Juan Gerardi and support truth commission on civil war abuses</p> <p>1999 CIIR launches four-year multi-country advocacy capacity initiative in Asia</p> <p>CIIR sends observer mission to East Timor in run-up to independence referendum and mobilises pressure on Indonesia to accept the vote in favour after pro-Jakarta militias inflict mass violence</p> <p>ICD draws on lessons HIV and AIDS Zimbabwe and Namibia to catalyse action in Yemen and Somaliland and make HIV a stronger priority in Latin America</p> <p>2000 Delegation of farm workers from Southern Africa addresses CIIR AGM and European parliament on land and labour rights</p> <p>Change of government in Ecuador reflects influence of indigenous movement long supported by DWs specialising in advocacy and communications</p>	<p>drive on diversity and discrimination. This often took an inter-sectional approach, for instance linking work for the rights of children and young people with that to tackle discrimination on grounds of disability or HIV status, as in programmes such as Nicaragua, Zimbabwe and Namibia.</p> <p>At the heart of its work on diversity and discrimination was ICD's commitment to addressing gender, which was further strengthened during the 1990s, in line with an overall push within CIIR. Its overseas work had always acted to boost the position of women, but its approach now involved a focus on the wider challenge of gender inequality as ICD, drawing on its expanding partnerships with women's rights organisations in country programmes such as El Salvador, made the issue both a major area of work and a cross-cutting feature of projects.</p> <p>In turn, thanks to the pioneering leadership and support of partners and DWs in Nicaragua, ICD started piloting ground-breaking work to tackle problematic masculine identity as a prerequisite for change on gender. This laid the basis for replication of work on masculinity across CIIR's other ICD programmes in the 2000s.</p> <p>Scaling up impact through networks, research, alternative media and communication During the 1990s, ICD broadened its types of work and partnerships in an effort to scale up impact and tackle the structures preventing poor people having a greater say in decisions affecting their lives. Its approach ranged from helping civil society groups and NGOs to strengthen their community impact through stronger linkages and networks, to work with research centres promoting pro-poor policies. It also saw media and communication partnerships to raise awareness of social justice issues and strengthen the voices of poor people in public debate and policy-making. Building on longstanding support for community radio, this strand of work now involved nurturing wider alternative media as well as strengthening civil society's media relations capacity and use of Information and communication technologies (ICTs).</p> <p>Country strategies and regional exchange The country expansion and thematic diversification of CIIR's overseas 'capacity-building' provided further impetus for ICD to develop integrated country strategies, based on the joint work of partners and DWs to achieve collective impact on common themes and issues. In turn, ICD developed regional strategies during this period to maximise learning, exchange and mutual support between its country programmes in Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa and the Middle East.</p>
<p>CHRISTINE ALLEN</p> <p>CIIR Executive director (2001-2006)</p> <p><i>"Changing Minds, Changing Lives"</i></p> <p>Progressio Executive director (2006-2012)</p> <p><i>"Changing Minds, Changing Lives"</i></p>	<p>Reshaping CIIR and becoming Progressio</p> <p>During Christine Allen's leadership, CIIR, while sustaining existing momentum and boosting its further impact, underwent major adjustment, change and innovation in the new millennium. The moves sought to put the organisation on a longer-term strategic footing in response to continuing shifts in the development donor and NGO environments.</p> <p>Programme-policy integration A major turn from 2002 was to centre CIIR's policy and advocacy work on issues of concern to partners in ICD's much expanded capacity-strengthening in the global South, which now comprised 12 country programmes after the recent new addition of Timor-Leste. By then, it had become much harder to adequately fund CIIR's international policy (education) department (IPD) with its own largely separate work</p>

"People-powered development"

2001

UK and Europe 'Men Aren't from Mars' tour on lessons of masculinity and gender work in Nicaragua now being replicated in Central America and Dominican Republic

On-the-ground support of East Timor partners on elections leading to 2002 independence

Guatemala-East Timor exchange visit on truth, reconciliation and justice for rights crimes

2002

CIIR opens Timor-Leste programme with DWs helping partners promote gender equality as crucial feature of nation-building

CIIR observes Somaliland's first-ever local elections, starting a 15-year cycle of election monitoring to strengthen its electoral process and democratisation

ICD pilots work in Somaliland to engage faith leaders on HIV prevention

CIIR policy statement and faith reflections on HIV and AIDS to raise debate among Catholics

British Angola Forum set up with CIIR involvement

ICD conference in El Salvador shares learning on DW-supported civil society influencing of local government in Latin America, drawing on work in Dominican Republic

ICD runs Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua environmental education programme on pro-poor management of water, land and forests, with twin projects launched in Ecuador and Peru

portfolio. Donor strategies had changed and larger, better-resourced UK NGOs now had fully fledged policy, advocacy and campaign units and reduced their investment in CIIR's work.

The move meant ending or phasing out advocacy work on non-ICD countries such as Colombia, Guatemala, Brazil, South Africa, Angola, the Philippines and Papua. Still, CIIR ensured scope for covering ICD programme-relevant advocacy work within the new multi-year Programme Partnership Agreement (PPA) funding it repeatedly secured from DfID from the early 2000s as a successful applicant to the scheme introduced by the UK Labour government elected in 1997. This enabled the strengthening of national advocacy capacity in the South to become a major aim in country strategies for DW partner placements, while CIIR's new international advocacy enjoyed the legitimacy of being even more directly rooted in ICD partner experience and voice.

Armed conflict, violent repression and DW security considerations had in the past often ruled out or constrained joint work in common focus countries by CIIR's international advocacy and ICD programming on the ground. Yet where the organisation had found external political and internal institutional space for departmental collaboration and synergies, the results had been productive. Examples included work on land reform and the plight of black farm workers in Zimbabwe and Namibia, citizen participation and gender in poverty reduction strategies in Nicaragua and Honduras, and the role of ICD's Peru programme in facilitating research and local contacts relevant to CIIR's advocacy on the development and human rights challenges of the drugs trade.

Relaunching and reaching out as Progressio

By 2006, policy-programme integration was largely complete and also one of the factors that culminated in CIIR adopting Progressio as its new working title that year. Disappearance of the word 'Catholic' was a loss for some, but the board concluded the new name would energise Catholics – it invoked Pope Paul VI's famous 1967 encyclical on development, *Populorum Progressio* – and reach wider and younger constituencies. The change sought to tackle the misleading religious and academic think tank connotations of CIIR's name and superseded the parallel projection of its secular overseas programme as ICD, which lost its validity in the light of policy-programme integration.

This momentous decision, however, was about more than name change and finessing the complexities and strains of the organisation's faith-rooted and wider pluralistic identity. It was intended to reassert and project Progressio's position and role in a now diverse and highly populated development NGO community. A planning process over preceding years saw the organisation revisit its values and approach, and a rebranding exercise was followed by a drive to strengthen its communications. This included relaunch of *CIIR News* as the glossy *Interact* magazine, development of a website, blogs and use of social media.

While aimed at lifting the organisation's profile, this drive emphasised the voices of partners and DWs as the lifeblood of its work and strengthened interaction with Progressio members and supporters. The latter became increasingly important as Progressio sought much wider public support for its advocacy and adopted a stronger campaigning approach to its UK and Northern awareness-raising and policy influencing.

The efforts enjoyed the keen support of Progressio Ireland, which, aided by Progressio's strong membership in Ireland and its relationship with Irish Aid, had already been set up as a charity in 2004. It played an

2003

CIIR conference in Namibia on future of post-apartheid Southern Africa

Roundtables on political roots of Christian-Muslim-indigenous faith tensions and conflict in Papua, Mindanao and East Timor

2004

Needed but Unwanted report highlights anti-Haitian discrimination in Dominican Republic and becomes key text on migration and citizenship

ICD support in Yemen for maternal and child health and primary health care gives way to rights-based work on HIV prevention drawing on lessons in Somaliland

Disability rights laws in Namibia following long DW support for civil society and state partners addressing disability

2005

CIIR mobilises church support and faith input for UK Make Poverty History campaign on poor country aid, debt and trade at Gleneagles G8 summit

Somaliland's national electoral commission asks CIIR to observe parliamentary elections as DWs help consolidate civil society networks on youth, women, disability and HIV and AIDS

Ecuador community radio station supported by ICD trainer helps citizens demand political change

CIIR report on struggle for human rights and peace in Indonesia-occupied Papua

2006

CIIR becomes Progressio with strategy prioritising participatory governance, pro-poor natural resource management and rights-based HIV prevention

Campaign to stop terminator technology launched using insights

important role in supporting Progressio's thematic work and fundraising over the next decade.

A new strategy: sharpening the focus of Progressio's work on key themes

Rebirth as Progressio fittingly involved a new strategy for 2005-10. To sharpen the strategic focus of the organisation's existing portfolio without sacrificing responsiveness to partners' specific interests, it made participation and governance, environmental sustainability and HIV and AIDS its overarching thematic priorities, with a gender focus mainstreamed in each. With synergies between the themes, and a renewed focus on the faith dimensions of development, the 2000s were another dynamic period in the organisation's life.

Participation and governance

Progressio made work to boost citizen participation aimed at achieving policies more responsive to the poor and holding power-holders to account a key focus of programmes during this period. It made headway, responding to the needs of partners in different national and regional contexts.

Targeting local government for pro-poor change in Latin America

Building on momentum created by pilot initiatives since 1997, Progressio helped Dominican Republic partners win approval of a 2007 national law making citizen participation in municipal budgeting compulsory and to promote its gender-focused application. The progress helped Progressio and its Dominican civil society and state partners, following their emergency response to Haiti's 2010 earthquake, to launch cross-border work for local development and bi-national cooperation based on effective decentralisation. London-based advocacy urged accountable aid for Haiti's reconstruction taking this approach.

Over the decade, all of Progressio's Latin America programmes supported civil society participation to promote local government responsiveness to people's welfare and livelihoods in decisions on social spending and local development, where possible in partnership with municipal authorities and local government associations themselves. Links were also forged with national advocacy by civil society partners on local issues of concern to people. In El Salvador, Progressio DWs provided valuable technical support for partners campaigning to significant effect for legislation to protect water resources, including from privatisation and the damage of mining expansion.

Somaliland and Yemen: consolidating civil society networks and influencing politics

In Somaliland, Progressio, built on ICD's success in supporting the post-conflict development of civil society networks on women's rights, youth, HIV and AIDS and disability. It helped partners win policy changes as it supported the internationally unrecognised nation to consolidate its political settlement and continue its democratisation. They included reduction of age thresholds for voting and election candidates in advance of Somaliland's second-ever presidential election in 2010. This was highly significant for young people as the majority of the population and the contest saw unprecedented numbers of women and young people take part.

This progress in participation demonstrated the steady impact both of Progressio's civil society support since the 1990s and its continual work from 2002 to monitor the onset of regular elections. Progressio helped to strengthen Somaliland's electoral process and systems in partnership

from work with partners protecting farmer seed-saving and biodiversity in countries such as Ecuador and Zimbabwe

Strength of Progressio's work for agro-ecology in Latin America helps it contribute to IAASTD consultation on future of agriculture and to NGO networks and advocacy on climate change

DW-supported partners promoting sustainable agriculture in countries such as Honduras and Dominican Republic tapping markets for fair trade and organic produce

HIV prevention, treatment and care facility set up in Hargeisa, Somaliland

Progressio places DWs with only organisation in El Salvador defending rights of sex workers in work for HIV prevention and gender justice

Progressio joins Catholic-led *Livesimply* solidarity campaign with world's poor to revive spirit of *Populorum Progressio*

Catholic Social Teaching website set up

2007

Decision to close Namibia DW country programme

Decision to open new DW programme in Malawi

Dominican Republic law mandating participatory local budgeting is the culmination of a decade of partner work supported by DWs, with new efforts underway to promote its gendered application

Strengthening civil society engagement of local governments now a key work strand in Latin America and Caribbean and also being launched in Yemen as DWs help civil society networks emerge

2008

'East Timor: Who Cares?'

with its National Electoral Commission (NEC). Meanwhile, in Yemen, Progressio DWs enabled civil society networks to emerge in Hodeidah and Aden from 2006 and carry out advocacy targeting local councils, albeit with progress coming up against setbacks linked to the national politics of decentralisation.

Promoting local space and international action for change in Zimbabwe

Later in the decade, governance initiatives with NGO and Church partners in Zimbabwe also got underway on gender-sensitive budgeting, child and youth rights and parish-level civic education for greater local accountability. DWs' on-the-ground support helped partners open space for positive action amid the constraints of Zimbabwe's ongoing crisis, their work twinned with CIIR and Progressio's longstanding behind-the-scenes international advocacy. This urged Western governments to recognise Zimbabwean civil society views in diplomacy on the political process. To this end, Progressio nurtured and coordinated Northern ecumenical and EU civil society networks.

Timor-Leste: challenging impunity and advancing women's rights

Continued solidarity by Progressio alongside its DW programming was likewise needed to respond to Timor-Leste's post-independence stability being rocked from 2006 by political crises rooted in the legacy of Indonesian rule. Progressio backed calls for an international tribunal to tackle impunity for human rights crimes and ran an 'East Timor: Who Cares?' campaign for the UK and the West to boost aid for national reconstruction and remedy past complicity with Jakarta's occupation such as arms sales.

The scars also involved surging violence against women, an issue Progressio increasingly prioritised in the DW country programme it had established in the early 2000s. Over the decade, DWs, as well as promoting the integration of gender into state policies and planning, helped to strengthen women's networks. This work increased women's political representation and, in 2010, won promulgation of a law against domestic violence.

Environmental sustainability and protecting poor people's access to natural resources

This impetus on participation and governance was rivalled by Progressio's work with partners on environmental sustainability. This focused on promoting poor people's equitable access to the natural resources they relied on and needed to manage well for their livelihoods, as well as protect from the damaging impact or predatory threat of powerful economic interests.

At its heart was Progressio's array of partnerships supporting rural development based on small-scale agriculture, enriched in recent years by environmental education initiatives. Long vibrant in Latin America and the Caribbean, this work now gained strength in Progressio's Africa and Middle East country programmes from 2006. It promoted agro-ecology to help small farmers avoid reliance on costly technology and damaging chemical inputs, tap the rising market potential of organic and fair trade-certified produce and increase their income. It often involved agro-forestry, with tree cover helping to protect land, soil and water and fight climate change. Water rights and the social justice issues at stake, and their relationship with climate change, became a major concern in Progressio's grassroots work and international advocacy and networking.

campaign starts on human rights impunity and Western complicity with Indonesia

International advocacy on crisis in Zimbabwe leads to Ecumenical Network on Zimbabwe and Zimbabwe Europe Network

First-ever conference held by Somaliland AIDS commission, civil society HIV networks and faith leaders on joint strategies

Work with PLWHA groups started in Timor-Leste

Report on HIV and AIDS in Haiti

Successful three-year campaign starts for EU regulation to stop illegal timber imports and sales

2009

Progressio joins coalition Put People First urging new economic policies at London G20 summit on 2008 financial crisis

Post-coup repression in Honduras threatens DW-aided partner progress on legislation protecting water and forests

Government in El Salvador keeps moratorium on mining as DW-aided civil society partners press for law on right to water

DW work with partners on sustainable agriculture and protecting natural resources built up in Malawi and Zimbabwe

Start of 'Just Add Water' campaign in which DWs and partners lobby at the 2009-10 climate change negotiations

Policy submission to FAO summit advocates small-scale farming as solution to 2007-08 global food price crisis and climate change

Support for positive faith-based responses to HIV and AIDS in Somaliland and Yemen now being replicated in Malawi and

This portfolio, linking food security, rural livelihoods, natural resource management and support for action on climate change, helped Progressio make policy contributions to wider civil society advocacy and official consultations on the future of agriculture. The issue had been forced back on the policy agenda as a result of the global hunger crisis, which had again been brought into stark relief by the 2007-08 world food price rises and mounting concerns over the impact and abuses of land acquisition by investors.

Campaigning for a new climate on food security and rural livelihoods

Progressio used its programme experience to run several major advocacy campaigns in the 2000s, which highlighted and tackled the damaging threats often posed by the powerful interests of large-scale agriculture. The initiatives included:

- A 2006-08 campaign urging policy-makers to stop companies introducing 'terminator technology' – genetic modification of plants to produce sterile seeds – threatening farmers' traditional seed-saving and the diversity of seed varieties;
- A successful 2008-11 campaign for UK and EU regulation to stop the importation and sale of illegal timber and timber products in which Progressio, using partner evidence of deforestation, land grabs and human rights abuses in Honduras, played a distinct role in wider NGO pressure for remedial action; and
- A series of initiatives from 2009 on the global urgency of protecting water security and ensuring equitable access to water.

Adding to pressure on water

Progressio's 'Just Add Water' initiative targeting the Copenhagen climate change summit and follow-up meetings in 2009-10 won in-principle recognition for water issues to be tackled in talks on a successor framework to the Kyoto Protocol expiring in 2012. This set the scene for its subsequent 'Waterproof Development' campaign.

Launched to influence the position of the UK government at the UN's 2012 sustainable development summit in Rio de Janeiro, 'Waterproof Development' pushed for water security and equitable water rights to be made a key feature of the post-2015 global framework for sustainable development being negotiated to replace the Millennium Development Goals. The initiative drew on Progressio's work on water with partners in Yemen, Zimbabwe and Central America, as well as Peru where a recent project had highlighted the unsustainable use of water in asparagus production for export. A 2010 report raised local awareness of the problem and caused a media splash in the UK, with supermarkets vowing to assess their 'water footprint'.

Strengthening the scope and impact of work on HIV and AIDS

Progressio strengthened the scope and impact of its work on HIV and AIDS during the 2000s. Its longstanding commitment in Southern Africa was now taking fuller shape in the Horn of Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Challenging stigma and discrimination with civil society and faith leaders

A major achievement in Somaliland, alongside supporting the National Aids Commission born in 2005 to develop its strategy and public awareness campaigns, was to help nurture the emergence of civil society networks and coalitions and support their mobilisation. By 2010, for example, Talowadag had consolidated its position as a leading civil

<p>Zimbabwe as well as Latin America programmes tackling HIV from gender, masculinity and sexual and reproductive health and rights perspective</p> <p>DWs support partners promoting LGBTI rights in Honduras and Nicaragua</p> <p>2010</p> <p>Positive independent evaluation of Progressio as beneficiary of DfID's PPA scheme providing strategic core funding for successful NGO applicants</p> <p>Progressio meets Pope Benedict on UK visit and highlights Church's role in development</p> <p><i>Drop by Drop</i> report on Peruvian asparagus export boom and unsustainable water use</p> <p>Work launched in Yemen and Somaliland for sustainable natural resource management</p> <p>Progressio decides to close Ecuador programme leaving solid legacy of civil society support</p> <p>Progressio coordinates NGO emergency response in Dominican Republic to Haiti earthquake and issues briefings on failure of reconstruction aid to involve civil society</p> <p>Advocacy by DW-nurtured women's rights networks helps secure Timor-Leste law on domestic violence</p> <p>Progressio observes Somaliland presidential election, with increased participation of youth and women reflecting their growing demands for fair political representation</p> <p>Somaliland's Talowadag coalition, consolidated with DW support as leading civil society actor tackling HIV stigma and discrimination, given international award</p> <p>2011</p> <p>Renewal of Progressio's PPA grant but lower than applied for</p>	<p>society coalition supporting the rights of people living with HIV or AIDS (PLWHA) and challenging the stigma and discrimination they faced. Overall progress in awareness-raising led in turn to greater take up of the anti-retroviral treatment and psycho-social support services at a special facility Progressio had helped to set up at the Hargeisa Group Hospital.</p> <p>A key feature of Progressio's work during the decade, building on its early lead in Yemen and Somaliland, was to step up work with partners to support the potential of faith leaders and preachers to become a mass-reach channel for positive rather than damaging messages on HIV prevention and the rights of PLWHA. Its success in the two mainly Muslim societies saw Progressio replicate the approach with partners in Southern Africa.</p> <p>In predominantly Catholic Latin America, Progressio's Catholic roots and independence from the official Church helped the organisation to increase its Church partnerships and nurture critical dialogue with the diverse civil society groups tackling HIV and AIDS that the ICD programme had been supporting since the later 1990s. Many of these groups, as in Central America, were promoting HIV prevention by tackling the linked problems of gender discrimination and inequality, patriarchal attitudes, negative masculinity, and religious orthodoxies infringing sexual and reproductive health and rights.</p> <p>Supporting groups facing most risk and discrimination</p> <p>Progressio's rights-based work with partners, often targeting young people, to tackle HIV, now sought to reach a range of groups most at risk of HIV and spreading HIV infection such as long-distance lorry drivers. It increasingly supported the rights of marginal groups facing the sharpest prejudice, hostility and abuse such as sex workers and men who have sex with men. Country programmes such as Nicaragua and Honduras took a lead in supporting the courageous work of partners challenging discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the battle against HIV and AIDS.</p> <p>Spaces for dialogue on sensitive issues</p> <p>Issues of the kind described above were often sensitive and difficult for faith leaders and communities, including the Catholic Church. A strength of CIIR's and Progressio's constructive yet challenging approach was that it created space for others to discuss the challenges more openly themselves. This had been so in relation to debates on promoting condom use. In the early 2000s, CIIR took a lead in developing and promoting its institutional policy on HIV and AIDS, taking on board different views. It also produced a series of faith reflections to raise wider debate of the issue.</p> <p>Bringing a critical faith dimension</p> <p>The new direction of engagement on HIV and AIDS was important in Progressio reasserting the faith dimensions of its work as a vital strand of its new strategy. Its 2011 publication, <i>Faith Alone Is Not Enough</i>, promoting insights from faith-based partners and PLWHA, put Progressio in a strong position to contribute to DfID's 2012 <i>Faith Partnership Principles</i> on the role of faith groups in fighting global poverty. In 2010, Progressio was among the faith-related UK development NGOs invited to meet Pope Benedict XVI during his official UK visit. Policy and media briefings during his stay spotlighted for Catholics the international development duties involved in their faith.</p> <p>From 2006, Progressio threw its energy behind the <i>Livesimply</i> campaign launched by organisations of the Catholic Church of England and Wales to mark the impending 40th anniversary of <i>Populorum Progressio</i> in</p>
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Prayer Alone is not Enough report on faith leaders and communities in rights-based responses to HIV and AIDS

Work in Dominican-Haitian border region promoting pro-poor local government and bilateral cooperation made key aim of Hispaniola programme

Progressio helps set up UK parliament group on Haiti and a UK-Ireland Haiti advocacy platform

Progressio joins UK's International Citizen Service youth volunteer scheme

2012

DfID's *Faith Partnership Principles* published, following Progressio's support and input

Campaign to 'Waterproof Development' sees DWs engage policy-makers at June Rio+20 summit, with Progressio supporters and ICS volunteers returning to the UK and lobbying the UK government

Launch of Progressio-supported gender auditing guides to bolster gendered implementation of citizens' participation in local budgeting in Dominican Republic

Announcement UK will open embassy in Haiti

2007. The campaign called on citizens to live more simply and sustainably and act in solidarity with the world's poor. As well as encouraging pledges, Progressio set up a Catholic Social Teaching website as a support resource.

In the wake of 11 September 2001 attacks and the US-led second Gulf War in Iraq in 2003 to topple former Western ally Saddam Hussein, Progressio had organised events to discuss the damaging ramifications of the West's 'war on terror' on human rights, conflict and inter-faith relations in the global South. They drew on Progressio's international advocacy work with partners in the Philippines, Timor-Leste, Indonesia and Papua as well as the lessons of its on-the-ground work in Somaliland whose relative peace contrasted with ongoing instability and conflict in Somalia.

Working in a changing climate on international aid

The dynamism of Progressio's work was accompanied by the introduction of a new system from 2008 to strengthen assessment of its progress, achievements and learning, coinciding with rising donor expectations of NGOs to show greater evidence of impact. Further shifts in donor priorities also meant that Progressio, while having a solid total of around 90 DWs in place at the end of the 2000s, was now finding it difficult to maintain the geographical spread of its country programmes.

Closing in Ecuador and Namibia and a new programme in Malawi

With donors declaring intentions to concentrate on the world's poorest nations, the decade closed with DfID ending the funding it had specifically provided for Progressio's DW programming in Latin America. The region was considered economically richer overall and less in need of development aid. The new three-year PPA grant successfully secured from April 2011 was lower than Progressio had applied for and unable to fill the gap. The developments forced Progressio to close its Ecuador programme in 2011. This was a major loss in view of the contribution CIIR and Progressio had made since the 1970s to strengthening civil society in the country, including its influential indigenous people's organisations.

Meanwhile, in Southern Africa, Progressio reluctantly decided in 2007 to close the programme it had run in Namibia since its 1991 independence as donors withdrew from the country, despite the persistence of sharp inequality, on its achievement of rising middle-income status. Still, the donor shifts brought opportunities. In 2008, Progressio opened a new country programme in Malawi, one of the world's least developed countries and previously a focus of CIIR advocacy on its struggle for multi-party democracy. The programme saw vibrant work with partners on environmental sustainability and natural resource management, which also involved collaboration and exchange with counterparts in Zimbabwe.

Bringing new energy: Progressio joins the International Citizen Service (ICS) scheme

Another significant development later in Christine Allen's period as executive director was Progressio's successful application to join the UK's International Citizen Service (ICS) scheme. Set up by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government elected in 2010, ICS involved 12-week overseas placements in which 18 to 25-year-old volunteers from the UK were paired with national counterparts to support local development initiatives by partner organisations.

	<p>Progressio established its own pilot programme in 2011/12 as a member of the ICS consortium of agencies managed by VSO. The success of its initial work in Malawi, Zimbabwe, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Peru subsequently led to renewal of Progressio's ICS programme in the two Southern African and three Central American focus countries.</p>
<p>MARK LISTER</p> <p>Progressio Chief executive officer (2012-2016)</p> <p><i>"People-powered development"</i></p> <p>2012 Progressio observes Somaliland's second-ever local elections with more women standing and elected following DW-supported partner advocacy on women's political representation</p> <p>Report launched in El Salvador with partner consortium on lessons of HIV prevention work based on tackling gender discrimination and negative masculinity</p> <p>Follow up programmes underway in Zimbabwe, Somaliland and Yemen to reinforce and scale up work to reach groups most at risk of contracting HIV or spreading the virus</p> <p>Awareness-raising project 'Combating Discrimination against Women' launched in Hodeidah, Yemen</p> <p>Partnerships established with local government bodies and town councils in the Dominican Republic see DWs support wider take up of participatory planning and budgeting in border provinces with Haiti over next three years</p> <p>Publication on Haiti decentralisation and civil society participation</p> <p>Progressio urges attention to water rights in policy action on land grabs and moves to boost private investment in agriculture</p>	<p>Promising prospects and future uncertainty</p> <p><u>Mark Lister</u> assumed leadership of Progressio in October 2012 with foundations in place for continued impact, and as the organisation celebrated its 75th anniversary in late 2015, it was encouraged by developments in the global arena. One had been 2013 election of Pope Francis, the first pontiff from the global South, whose outlook resonated with Progressio's. The other was governments' recent UN approval of the SDGs, ostensibly heralding a more ambitious and rights-based approach to sustainable development, in line with the stance Progressio and CIIR had advocated at this time and in the past.</p> <p>But this was also a period of rising uncertainty as UK government moves from 2010 and particularly 2015 to review its approach to international aid put the future of DfID's PPA civil society support mechanism, a key foundation of Progressio's financial stability and programme creativity, more and more in doubt. The looming advent of the PPA scheme's abolition led to Progressio's 2016 decision to close but not before it had registered further significant achievements over preceding years, in the face of adverse pressures.</p> <p>Moving forward and stepping back in Latin America</p> <p>Despite the value of the new ICS scheme in sustaining work in Central America, Progressio's retreat in Latin America and the Caribbean from its traditional DW programming involving multi-year placements was complete by 2016. Yet even as it was obliged to cut back, Progressio scaled up existing achievements and pursued new gains.</p> <p>Final contributions in Peru and the Dominican Republic</p> <p>Phase-out of the Peru programme in 2011-13, for example, saw DW-supported partners boost community participation in legislation-enabled water user councils they had promoted in the later 2000s to support equitable access for poorer people. It was yet another example of the organisation's long contribution to advancing water rights and wider environmental sustainability in the country.</p> <p>In the Dominican Republic, Progressio helped its civil society and local government partners to strengthen and institutionalise now mandatory implementation of participatory local budgeting across the country, while now concentrating on the poorer border area with Haiti. DWs based in provinces there worked collectively to support Dominican municipalities turn stronger civil society participation into inclusive local development plans and also support their Haitian counterparts to do likewise. This was a key aim of what, since Haiti's 2010 earthquake, had become a Hispaniola programme promoting bilateral cooperation between the two countries sharing the island.</p> <p>In tandem, Progressio helped Jesuit partners in the border region to make further progress in promoting agro-forestry and community gardens and livestock-rearing as the basis for local food security, better nutrition and health, and women's empowerment. The gains were particularly strong on the Dominican side of the border. They included a rising number of agro-forestry model farms boosting productivity and incomes, consolidated structures uniting local farmer groups with</p>

DfID progress review of overall PPA scheme with positive report by independent team assessing Progressio's work

2013

Progressio supports IF campaign in UK urging G8 action on world hunger with support of returning ICS volunteers

Peru programme closes following phase out of DW and ICS work from 2011

Work in Central America shifts from DW-based programming to ICS volunteering

Dominican Republic starts spending 4% of GDP on education after long campaign aided by DW specialists on public finance and media

'Fragile states, phenomenal women' AGM event chaired by a *Guardian* associate editor

2014

Closure of Timor-Leste programme with over a decade's DW work leaving in place effective networks on women's rights and HIV and AIDS

'Unbreakable' campaign launched for women's rights in fragile states to be a priority in post-2015 development agenda

Progressio an active member of the Beyond 2015 and Action 2015 campaigns

Zimbabwe Action for Better Governance project piloted in 2010 ends with scaling up of community gains in more districts

Policy submission with Zimbabwe partner to UN business and human rights body on gender impact of mining and agribusiness

'Food for a Better Future' agro-forestry initiative on Dominican-Haitian border ends with gains on food production, nutrition,

greater collective strength, and trained health promotion teams sharing expertise with a rising number of other communities. The Hispaniola programme left a solid record on its 2016 closure.

A positive legacy in Timor-Leste

Progressio also left a positive legacy in Timor-Leste on closing its programme in 2014 as donors withdrew from the country on taking its rising oil wealth as a sign aid was less necessary. By then, civil society partners, building on pilot initiatives supported by Progressio since the late 2000s, had extended civil society monitoring of local public spending across many more districts and also placed DWs with women's rights partners to build on the law against domestic violence.

A subsequent drive by Progressio DWs on HIV and AIDS also left gains in place. They included consolidation of the Estrela+ network of PLWHA that Progressio had supported since 2010 and introduction of a national prevention and care strategy following creation of an official national AIDS commission. These steps were important as HIV incidence in Timor-Leste, while still relatively low, was showing alarming signs of being on the rise.

Fragile states, fragile people?

With programmes increasingly centred on Malawi and Zimbabwe in Southern Africa and Somaliland and Yemen in the Horn, Progressio's work on its three priority themes took place amid growing policy debate and action on the challenges of so-called 'fragile states'. Drawing on its programme experience with partners, Progressio, in contrast, stressed the major resilience and creativity of people struggling for change in such settings and urged policy-makers to recognise and better support such potential. Its stance culminated in the 2014 launch of an 'Unbreakable' campaign focusing on women's rights.

The 'Unbreakable' campaign: promoting global action on women's rights

'Unbreakable', highlighting the gendered impacts of conflict and weak governance and women's importance as a force for societal cohesion and peace, involved a series of briefings and panel events at UN meetings. Targeting final UN negotiations on the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 and the challenge of achieving the SDGs from 2016 onwards, it urged positive global action by the UK and UN bodies to support women's voice and influence, tackle gender-based violence (GBV) and promote sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). This included through state commitment to the CEDAW treaty requiring progress on equality between women and men.

An important message in the 'Unbreakable' campaign was the need for policy-makers to encourage the potential of faith actors to play a supportive rather than obstructive role on SRHR, which drew on the continued strengths of Progressio's work on HIV and AIDS.

From reinforcing progress on HIV to a wider drive on 'gender justice'

Over 2012-16, Progressio undertook follow-up initiatives with partners in Yemen and Zimbabwe to reinforce and scale up the gains of previous work, with DWs supporting the mainstreaming of HIV awareness and prevention in prisons, the transport sector and employer bodies. Meanwhile, DWs in Somaliland helped partners roll out integrated prevention, treatment, care and support services to five regions,

health, protection of natural resources and women's community leadership

Independent evaluation of ICS volunteering in Malawi provides overall positive assessment of impact

2015

New Progressio strategy making women's rights, resilience and livelihoods, participatory governance its thematic priorities

First 'Unbreakable' annual side event held at Commission on the Status of Women meetings in New York to urge state commitment to tackling gender issues in finalising and pursuing the SDGs

Progressio publishes popular guide to Pope Francis' encyclical letter *Laudato Si* urging new politics and economics to tackle poverty, inequality and climate change

Joint paper with ActionAid urging the UK's action plan on business and human rights to address gender

Saudi-led military intervention in Yemen conflict disrupts and later forces suspension of DW work with partners

HIV prevention, support and care services now in place in five regions of Somaliland, building on pilot facility set up with DW help 10 years earlier

Culmination of 2012-15 'Conserving our Land, Producing our Food' initiative in Malawi and Zimbabwe, scaling up earlier work to boost rural livelihoods, protect the environment and fight climate change through sustainable agriculture

Conservative government elected in UK in May with rising signs it will end DfID's overall PPA scheme

Progressio celebrates 75 years' work in November

building on the success of the IPTCS facility piloted and consolidated in Hargeisa, the capital.

Progressio, however, had long since been focusing on gender discrimination and inequality and SRHR as crucial prisms through which the challenge of HIV prevention ought to be seen and addressed. This approach gave rise to a preeminent concern in the final period of Progressio's life to tackle the wider challenges of 'gender justice'.

Participatory research in 2015 with young women and girls, as well as men and boys, belonging to different churches in Zimbabwe, for instance, led to *The Price of Womanhood* report. It examined the gender and SRHR dimensions of problems such as early pregnancy and cultural norms tying the social respect and status of girls and young women to traditional conceptions and expectations of marriage.

Citizens' participation and women's rights: voice and influence against the odds

Progressio's work on governance, now centred on countries affected by conflict and weak governance, grappled with the challenges of promoting citizens' participation and women's rights in settings presenting a range of socio-cultural and political barriers to change. The barriers in Yemen – national and international – could not have been starker.

Somaliland: challenging the gender limits of politics and 'peace'

In Somaliland, Progressio supported a sustained drive by partners on gender and women's rights in tandem with its continued monitoring of elections and support for the NEC to strengthen its electoral process and systems. Somaliland's second-ever local elections in 2012 produced a noteworthy increase in the number of female candidates standing and elected, thanks to the mobilisation of partners supported by Progressio. Yet the numbers were still low and traditional male elder opposition stymied pressure for introduction of a quota system for women's political representation. Meanwhile, the scale of violence against women and girls (VAWG), including female genital mutilation (FGM), remained under-recognised and unaddressed by local decision-makers.

In response, Progressio launched research projects with partners in 2015. They explored more deeply the structural socio-cultural, religious and political barriers hindering both women's political representation and effective action to tackle VAWG and gender-based violence as acute problems for the inclusiveness of Somaliland's political settlement.

The participatory generation of findings helped to build a 12-member civil society coalition pressing for legislation to tackle VAWG and GBV and, in the process, engage traditional and faith leaders – crucial audiences in view of their influence in communities and role in dispensing justice in the absence of a strong, independent formal judicial system. Brought to the fore was the importance of tackling the links between negative or positive masculinity and VAWG and GBV.

From championing women to devastating setbacks in Yemen

In Yemen from 2012, amid Arab Spring hopes, Progressio DWs specialising in civil society advocacy provided advice to partners running a street-based civic education campaign by 'women champions' in the port city of Hodeidah. The women, wearing a distinctive pink sash, raised public awareness of VAWG, challenged gender discrimination and encouraged more women, particularly the poorest and most marginalised, to become champions themselves. They pushed for legislation against early marriage and to increase women's political representation. A later DW-supported partner campaign engaged a wide

2016

Closure of Hispaniola programme

Progressio missions visit Somaliland to observe and accompany NEC planning of presidential election due to be held with new voter registration system

DW-supported action research in Somaliland nurtures vibrant civil society coalition on gender-based violence

Price of Womanhood report on sexual and reproductive health and rights in Zimbabwe

Civil society networks on hunger and nutrition gain impetus in Zimbabwe and Malawi with DW support

Fasting campaign in the UK raises awareness of hunger in Zimbabwe

Progressio helps shape academic research on making gender a central concern in state action and private practice to ensure business 'due diligence' on human rights

June launch of stakeholder consultation on Progressio's future

September decision to close the organisation in a carefully staged way

UK government confirms in December that it will terminate the PPA scheme for development NGOs

range of stakeholders in Hodeidah governorate to tackle VAWG, in particular FGM.

Initiatives aimed at removing barriers to women's participation in public life in Yemen, dovetailed with a later effort by Progressio, with Oxfam, to promote civil society monitoring of local government in several governorates and national support for pro-poor decentralisation. This work, however, was disrupted by Yemen's political crisis.

It spiralled into civil war as Houthi rebels in 2014 overthrew Yemen's post-Arab Spring government and a Saudi-led coalition, armed and backed diplomatically by the UK, the US and France, intervened in a destructive bid to reinstate it from 2015 through air strikes and blockades hindering vital imports of food and medicines. Progressio joined others in calling for an international inquiry on the violation of humanitarian and human rights law by all sides and did what it could to help partners tackle its devastating development costs. The dangerous situation meant Progressio was largely forced from 2015 to suspend its DW work with partners on governance, women's rights and water and sanitation.

Parish progress: action for better governance in Zimbabwe

Political conflict and fragility also continued to affect citizens in Zimbabwe, with uncertainty surrounding planned elections for 2013. Yet the parish-level 'Action for Better Governance' civic education initiative Progressio had launched at the end of the 2000s with a Catholic Church partner now made impressive headway. Building on a successful pilot in Chinhoyi, DWs helped the partner extend the ABG initiative to several dioceses in Mashonaland West province where a growing number of established parish advocacy committees helped communities better interact with local leaders.

As a result, local leaders addressed refuse collection and access to water and sanitation problems. The gains were small yet significant in a difficult political context. Partners shared the lessons of this work in national civil society and Southern African church forums to support advocacy on the country's structural governance problems. Progressio drew on the insights to inform its international advocacy and networking on the crisis.

Monitoring in Malawi

Political tensions were also mounting in the run-up to Malawi's first combined general and local elections in 2014 following a major corruption scandal. They led Progressio to place another DW with Catholic partners to work with the country's NEC to promote citizen participation and support peaceful contests. This accompaniment continued the tradition of CIIR and Progressio in monitoring elections in difficult political environments.

Environmental action and rural livelihoods: further gains in Malawi and Zimbabwe

In Malawi and Zimbabwe, Progressio's 'Conserving our Land, Producing our Food' initiative, building on earlier progress with Environment Africa (EA), scaled up the promotion of sustainable agriculture and agro-forestry to boost community livelihoods, protect natural resources and combat climate change. Similar DW-supported partner initiatives were now also taking shape in Somaliland and leading the way in raising public awareness of the need for effective action on its threatened environment.

In Malawi's drought- and flood-prone Salima district, DWs helped EA replicate sustainable production methods by farmer field schools, set up savings and loan schemes with communities, and create village committees to promote local and external support for the sustainable management of natural resources. The work improved food security, reduced deforestation and soil erosion. It also produced evidence used by the partner to influence forestry and disaster risk policies.

Similarly, in Zimbabwe, Progressio DWs supported EA's work with communities to establish environmental action groups and promote their multiplication in districts in three provinces. As well as boosting local environmental awareness and action and reducing unhelpful official intervention, lobbying by the groups led local authorities and government extension services to provide help for the diversification of agricultural production. The work sought to benefit under-supported groups such as female- and child-headed households, orphans and people living with HIV or AIDS or disability.

Building on the momentum, Progressio DWs, helped EA nurture the emergence of civil society networks in Malawi and Zimbabwe, which urged their governments to tackle food and hunger problem as members of the global Scaling up Nutrition movement. Progressio, in response to a 2016 global call by Pope Francis for solidarity with the world's poor, organised a ZimFast and ZimFare campaign in which UK supporters went on a diet of the average Zimbabwean or hosted a Zimbabwean-themed meal.

Calling for change, defending rights

With water, land and forests under threat from various forms of resource extraction, 'land grabs' and a new drive by policy-makers to boost large-scale private investment in agriculture, Progressio followed up its recent campaigns with a new wave of advocacy on the livelihoods and human rights issues at stake, in particular their impact on women.

In 2013, it continued its 'Waterproof Development' campaign by urging the World Bank to recognise the water security and rights of small-scale farmers, often women, in its policy work on the 'business of agriculture'. This under-explored angle provided a niche for Progressio as it mobilised support for the 2013 IF campaign by UK development NGOs pressing the UK government for action on world hunger as chair of the G8 summit.

From 2015, following the UK government's introduction of a national action plan on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, Progressio worked with civil society and academic partners in the UK to advocate gender being made a central concern in the human rights 'due diligence' expected of business under the UNGPs. This late-life foray on corporate accountability, resuming the organisation's periodic involvement in this field, went on to involve advocacy on UN moves to develop a binding international treaty to uphold the human rights obligations of companies within and across national borders.

Championing change and regeneration through ICS

Championed during Mark Lister's leadership, the ICS programme became increasingly important in Progressio's work and was recognised as a strong performer within the overall ICS consortium. Some 2,800 young volunteers took part in ICS projects over the five years before Progressio's closure, with evidence of important results being achieved with partners and communities, despite the short nature of ICS placements.

	<p>Signs of positive impact – in partner countries and in the UK</p> <p>A 2015 independent assessment of Progressio's ICS work in Malawi noted volunteers had helped partners tackling HIV stigma and supporting local livelihoods to strengthen their community engagement, reaching younger people in ways not possible before. ICS was particularly effective when consecutive ICS teams were linked to maximise continuity and volunteers brought higher levels of skills. National volunteers, often from disadvantaged backgrounds, not only benefited from their participation in the scheme but sustained their commitment to working for development after their placements ended. Communities valued ICS special projects in which small seed grants were used by ICS teams and partners to catalyse specific support initiatives for their livelihoods strategies.</p> <p>In the UK, Progressio harnessed the energy of returning ICS volunteers to its advocacy and campaigning. As part of their ICS pledge to undertake 'action at home' and members of the Progressio Empower Network, they supported Progressio events and lobbying. The vibrant role of ICS volunteers reinforced the drive begun under Christine Allen's leadership to strengthen the involvement of members, supporters and the wider public in Progressio's work. As well as benefits in the global South, ICS provided an opportunity for organisational renewal as Progressio engaged younger people in its work and sought to inspire a new generation of development change-makers in the UK.</p> <p>Clear potential, difficult context</p> <p>To optimise ICS's value, Progressio linked its volunteering with its traditional capacity-strengthening. The aim was to capitalise on the longer-term presence of professionally experienced DWs in multi-year placements with partners to create propitious conditions for the value of ICS volunteers' contribution to be sustained. ICS was not seen as a separate programme but intended to enhance Progressio's strategy for change, with youth engagement complementing its existing mix of DW programming and advocacy.</p> <p>However, funding constraints, particularly the impending loss of the PPA from 2015, affected the number of DWs Progressio was able to place. It thus became more difficult for Progressio to implement its overall strategy as effectively as it wished to through incorporation of ICS, despite the scheme's positive work and major potential. Progressio's trustees, in reaching the difficult decision in September 2016 to close Progressio following a process of stakeholder consultation, had concluded that reliance on ICS, itself dependent on DfID funding, could not provide by itself a viable basis either for the organisation's survival or its desired approach to supporting sustainable development.</p>
<p>JAMES COLLINS</p> <p>Progressio Chief executive officer (2016-2018)</p> <p><i>"People-powered development"</i></p> <p>2016 Staged phase out of programming with handover to other partners and stakeholders begins in autumn</p>	<p>Drawing to a close</p> <p>James Collins, custodian of CIIR's and Progressio's finances during the best part of his more than 30 years of service to the organisation, took over as chief executive officer in late 2016, combining the role with his existing position as finance director. It was the second time he had stepped up to lead the organisation at a time of transition, having done so from mid-2012 in the interim between Christine Allen and Mark Lister.</p> <p>James Collins' support, oversight and commitment helped Progressio gradually bring its programme operations to a conclusion by the end of March 2017. He supported sometimes anxious staff facing the stress of closure, saw through the difficult negotiations involved in concluding programmes and projects and managed relations with Progressio members, donors, stakeholders and the public. He handled the financial</p>

2017

New reports launched on gender challenges of Somaliland's political settlement as well as on Zimbabwe's transport routes, sex work and HIV

Gradual closure of programmes completed by the end of March

July London event hosted by CAFOD to celebrate the life of Sword of the Spirit, CIIR and Progressio

2018

Official institutional closure on deregistration as a UK charity

and legal requirements involved in final institutional closure, culminating in deregistration with Companies House and the UK Charity Commission in March 2018.

A lively end to a long life

Even as it brought its programmes to an end, Progressio, drawing on the commitment of its staff, remained productive and continued to promote the impact of its work.

In the case of Somaliland, for example, Progressio capped its more than 20-year contribution to peace, democracy and human rights in the putative nation by launching with partners a series of publications in London in early 2017. As well as joint reports on the gender challenges of Somaliland's political settlement and the findings of action research on GBV, it released the report of its 2016 observer missions on preparations for Somaliland's third-ever presidential elections held in November 2017. Progressio, having closed, was unable on this occasion to observe the contest, but its partners in previous rounds of election monitoring, University College London and Somaliland Focus, did so.

There were further signs of Progressio's impact later in the year after its closure when the University of Essex's human rights centre published the research a staff member had helped to design on gender and business due diligence on human rights. Its findings were used by the UK's corporate accountability coalition CORE and Womankind Worldwide to produce a briefing on land and women's rights targeting the UN's November 2017 annual global forum on business and human rights.



Acronyms

A

ABC	British Agencies working for peace and human rights in Colombia
ACJ	Christian Youth Association (YMCA, Ecuador)
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific group of states
ACTSA	Action for Southern Africa (UK)
ADEL	Agency for Local Economic Development (El Salvador)
ADEPHCA	Association for Development and Human Promotion (Atlantic Coast, Nicaragua)
ADES	Social and Economic Development Association of Santa Marta (El Salvador)
ADIM	Alternative Association for the Integral Development of Women (Nicaragua)
ADM	Association for Municipal Development (Nicaragua)
ADRA	Action for Rural and Environmental Development (Angola)
A4ID	Advocates for International Development
AGM	Annual general meeting
AIDSESP	Inter-ethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Amazon
ALER	Latin American Association of Radio Education
AMCC	Women Builders' Association of Condega (Nicaragua)
AMUNSE	Association of Municipalities of Nueva Segovia (Nicaragua)
ANC	African National Congress
ANDP	Activists Network for Disabled Persons (Somaliland)
ARENA	Nationalist Republican Alliance party (El Salvador)
ARPAS	El Salvador Association of Participatory Radio
ART-GOLD	Articulation of Territorial Networks initiative on local governance and development (UNDP)
ASC	Civil Society Assembly (Guatemala)
ASDI	Salvadorean Association for Integrated Development
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ASEM	Asia-Europe meeting
AU	African Union
AWEPAA	Association of West European Parliamentarians against Apartheid

B

BAF	British Angola Forum
BBA	Benchmarking Business in Agriculture (World Bank)
BCC	British Council of Churches
BP	British Petroleum
BVP	British Volunteer Programme

C

CAAT	Campaign Against the Arms Trade
CAFESA	Peasant Federation of Salcedo (Dominican Republic)

CAFOD
CAFTA
CAH
CAM

CAMAREN

CANTERA

CAP

CASTA

CATER

CBC

CBD

CBO

CCER

CCJ

CCJPZ

CCN

CDC

CEA

CEDEPAS

CELAM

CEM-H

CE-MUJER

CEPCU

CEPES

CEPROSH

CERFAS

C4D

CIDSE

CIFCA

CIIR

CIMI

CINEP

CISA

CISAS

CIT

CNBB

CJM

CMB

CNR

COATLAHL

COINCIDE

Catholic Fund for Overseas Development
Central American Free Trade Agreement
Aguaruna and Huambisa Council (Peru)
Environmental Movement of Campamento (Honduras)
Training Consortium for the Management of Renewable Natural Resources (Ecuador)
Centre for Popular Education and Communications (Nicaragua)
Common Agricultural Policy (of the European Community/Union)
Centre for Sustainable Agriculture and Appropriate Technology (Dominican Republic)
Andean Centre for Rural Technology (Ecuador)
Bartolomé de las Casas Centre (Peru)
UN Convention on Biological Diversity
Community-based organisation
Civil Coordinator for Emergency Relief and Reconstruction (Nicaragua)
Colombian Commission of Jurists
Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe
Council of Churches in Namibia
Commonwealth Development Corporation (UK)
Ecuadorean Agro-ecology Coordinator
Ecumenical Centre for Promotion and Social Action (Peru)
Latin American Bishops' Conference
Women's Studies Centre (Honduras)
Solidarity Centre for Women's Development (Dominican Republic)
Centre for Pluricultural Studies (Ecuador)
Peruvian Centre for Social Studies
Human Solidarity Promotion Centre (Dominican Republic)
Centre for Research, Reflection, Training and Social Action (Haiti)
Communication for development
International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity
Copenhagen Initiative for Central America
Catholic Institute for International Relations
Indigenous Missionary Council (Brazil)
Centre for Research and Popular Education (Colombia)
Christian Institute of Southern Africa
Centre for Information and Advisory Services in Health (Nicaragua)
Cross-border inter-municipal committee (Dominican Republic-Haiti)
National Bishops' Conference of Brazil
Juan Montalvo Centre (Dominican Republic)
Bilateral Mixed Commission (Dominican Republic-Haiti)
National Radio Coordinator (Peru)
Colón Regional Agro-Forestry Cooperative Atlántida (Honduras)
Coordinator of Research, Development and Education Centres (Cusco, Peru)



COMAL	Alternative Community Marketing Network (Honduras)	ETC-ANDES	Ecology, Technology and Culture in the Andes Association (Peru)
COMUCAP	Coordination of Peasant Women of La Paz (Honduras)	EU	European Union
COMUS	Woman and Health Collective (Dominican Republic)	EUKONET	European Ecumenical Network on Korea
COMUS	United Communities of Usulután (El Salvador)	EUTR	European Union Timber Regulation
CONAIE	Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador	EZN	Ecumenical Zimbabwe Network
CONCOPE	Consortium of Provincial Councils of Ecuador		
CONTRASIDA	Against AIDS (El Salvador)	F	
COOMUPL	United for Progress Mixed Cooperative (Honduras)	FADCANIC	Foundation for the Autonomy and Development of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast
COOPASOL	Agro-ecological Production and Multiple Services Cooperative of Solimán (Dominican Republic)	FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
CORAMS	Radio Training Centre for Salvadorean Women	FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
COSONGO	Consortium of Somali NGOs	FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK)
COWLHA	Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS (Malawi)	FEDOMU	Dominican Federation of Municipalities (Dominican Republic)
CPAS	Centre for Alternative Health Programmes (El Salvador)	FENACoop	National Federation of Agricultural and Agro-Industrial Cooperatives (Nicaragua)
CPICH	Chorotega Indigenous Peoples Organisation (Nicaragua)	FEPP	Ecuadorean Populorum Progressio Fund
CPT	Pastoral Land Commission (Brazil)	FEPROMU	Provincial Federation of Women (Ica, Peru)
CR	Country representative	FGM	Female genital mutilation
CRIES	Regional Coordinator of Social and Economic Research (Nicaragua)	FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade action plan (European Union)
CSCQBE	Civil Society Coalition for Quality Basic Education (Malawi)	FORMABIAP	Programme for the Training of Bilingual Teachers in the Peruvian Amazon
CSO	Civil society organisation	FMLN	Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (El Salvador)
CSONA	Civil Society Organisation Nutrition Alliance (Malawi)	FONGTIL	Timor-Leste NGO Forum
CSPR	Civil Society Partnership Review (UK government)	FOPAG	Forum for Peace and Governance (Somaliland)
CSVr	Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (South Africa)	FOSDEH	Honduras Social Forum on Foreign Debt and Development
		FRETILIN	Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor
D		FSLN	Sandinista National Liberation Front (Nicaragua)
DEFRA	Department for Environment and Rural Affairs (UK)	FTAA	Free Trade Agreement of the Americas
DEMUCA	Local Development and Municipal Strengthening of Central America and the Caribbean Foundation	FUMA	Maquilishuatl Foundation (El Salvador)
DfID	Department for International Development (UK)	FUNCAR	Foundation for Cultural Exchange between Caribbean People (Dominican Republic)
DHAT	Disability HIV and AIDS Trust (Zimbabwe)	FUPNAPIB	Pico Bonito National Park Foundation (Honduras)
DW	Development worker		
E		G	
EA	Environment Africa (Malawi, Zimbabwe)	GADN	Gender and Development Network (UK)
EAG	Environmental Action Group	GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
EC	European Communities/European Commission	GAVO	General Assistance and Volunteers Organisation (Somaliland)
EDUCA	Institute for the Promotion of Quality Education (Peru)	GBV	Gender-based violence
EMPSA	Ecumenical Monitoring Programme of South Africa	GEA	Environmental Management Group (Peru)
ENCOD	European NGO Council on Drugs and Development	GMOS	Genetically modified organisms
EP	European Parliament		
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreement	H	
		HAPI-UK	Haiti Advocacy Platform for Ireland and the UK
		HAVOYOCO	Hargeisa Voluntary Youth Committee (Somaliland)
		HLP	High-level panel report of the UN secretary-general on the post-2015 development agenda
		HYDA	Hargeisa Youth Development Association (Somaliland)



I**IAASTD**

International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development
International Aid Transparency Initiative
International Baby Food Action Network
International Cooperation for Development, CIIR's renamed overseas programme

ICJ**IDC**

International Commission of Jurists
International Development Committee (UK House of Commons)

ICS**ICTs**

International Citizen Service
Information and communication technologies

IDB**IDEAS**

Inter-American Development Bank
Research, Documentation, Education, Advice and Services Centre (Peru)

IDMA

Institute for Development and the Environment (Peru)

IFC

International Finance Corporation, the World Bank's private sector lending arm

IFI**IIED**

International financial institution
International Institute for Environment and Development (UK)

ILSA

Latin American Institute for Alternative Society and Laws (Colombia)

IMAU**IMBISA**

Islamic Medical Association of Uganda
Inter-regional Meeting of the Bishops of Southern Africa

IMU

Institute for Women's Research, Training and Development (El Salvador)

INGO

International non-governmental organisation

IMF**IPCC**

International Monetary Fund
Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change

IPD**IPILC**

International Policy Department, CIIR
Institute for Linguistic and Cultural Research (Nicaragua)

IPTCS

Integrated Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support Services (Somaliland)

ITDG

Intermediate Technology Development Group (UK)

J**JCWI**

Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (UK)

JSMP

Judicial System Monitoring Program (East Timor)

JSRM**JUNACAS**

Jesuit Service for Refugees and Migrants
Agro-ecological Farming Union of Salcedo (Dominican Republic)

K**KCR****KEEP**

Katutura Community Radio (Namibia)
Korean Ecumenical Education Programme

L**LAB****LAC****LAP**

Latin America Bureau (UK)
Legal Assistance Centre (Namibia)
Latinamerica Press (Peru)

M**MAI****MAMDEPI**

Multilateral Agreement on Investment
Association of Municipalities of Elías Piña Province (Dominican Republic)

MANERELA+

Malawi Network of Religious Leaders
Living with or Personally Affected by HIV and AIDS

MAO

Olancho Environmentalist Movement (Honduras)

MCN**MDC**

Nicaraguan Communal Movement
Movement for Democratic Change (Zimbabwe)

MDGs**MEAL****MIAA****MISA****MODE**

Millennium Development Goals
Monitoring, evaluation and learning
Malawi Inter-faith AIDS Association
Media Institute of Southern Africa
Management and Organizational Development for Empowerment (Philippines)

MOGA**MOVIDA**

Malawi Organic Growers Association
Movement for Life without Violence (Dominican Republic)

MPLA

Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola

MPP

Mouvman Peyizan Papay (Peasant Movement of Papay, Haiti)

MUDHA

Movement of Dominican Haitian Women

N**NA****NAFTA****NANASO**

Noticias Aliadas (Allied News, Peru)
North American Free Trade Agreement
Namibia Networks of AIDS Services Organisations

NANGO

National Association of NGOs (Zimbabwe)

NANGOF**NAP**

Namibia NGO Forum
National Action Plan (on business and human rights)

NASSA

National Secretariat for Social Action (Philippines)

NCP

National Contact Point (for handling OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises complaints)

NEC

National Electoral Commission (Somaliland)

NECTOI

National Employment Council for the Transport Operating Industry (Zimbabwe)

NEF**NEG****NFBCZ**

New Economics Foundation (UK)

Namibia Ecumenical Group

National Faith-based Council of Zimbabwe

NFPDN

National Federation of People with Disabilities (Namibia)

NGO**NIC****NIEO****NPA**

Non-governmental organisation

Newly industrialised country

New International Economic Order

New People's Army (Philippines)

O**OACA**

Office of Environmental Advice and Consulting (Peru)

OCCZIM

Organisation of Collective Cooperatives



OCHA	of Zimbabwe UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	SNDF	Somaliland National Disabilities Forum
ODA	Overseas Development Administration (UK)	SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London)
ODI	Overseas Development Institute (UK)	SOLNAC	Somaliland National AIDS Commission
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	SONSAF	Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum
OIDHACO	International Office for Human Rights Action on Colombia	SORRA	Somali Relief and Rehabilitation Organisation
OST	Omaheke San Trust (Namibia)	SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
P		SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition Movement (UN)
PADECOMSM	Association for the Development of Communities in Morazán and San Miguel (El Salvador)	SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation (Namibia)
PAPDA	Haitian Platform for the Promotion of Alternative Development	T	
PHC	Primary health care	TAFOS	Social Photography Workshop (Peru)
PISIL	Lenca Indigenous Independence Health Project (Honduras)	TBA	Traditional birth attendant
PLWHA	People living with HIV or AIDS	THAMASO	Tuberculosis, HIV and AIDS and Malaria Support Organisation (Zimbabwe)
PMB	Participatory municipal budgeting	THAO	Tovwirane HIV and AIDS Organisation (Malawi)
PPA	Programme Partnership Agreement (with DfID of the UK)	TNI	Transnational Institute (Netherlands)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper	TUC	Trades Union Congress (UK)
PUCP	Catholic University of Peru	U	
R		UCA	Central American University
RCP	Peruvian Scientific Network	UCL	University College London
REDE FETO	Women's Network of East Timor	UDACIZA	Union for the Development of Apostolic Churches in Zimbabwe and Africa
REDES	Salvadorean Foundation for Reconstruction and Development	UINPI	Intercultural University of Nationalities and Indigenous Peoples (Ecuador)
REMHI	Recovery of Historical Memory project (Guatemala)	UN	United Nations
RICa	Regular Impact and Capacity Assessment, Progressio's monitoring, evaluation and learning system	UNA	United Nations Association
RONGEAD	Network of European Agencies on Agriculture and Development	UNAG	National Union of Agricultural Workers and Ranchers (Nicaragua)
S		UNAPROBOSQUE	Union of Forest Producer Associations (Restauración, Dajabón province, Dominican Republic)
SACBC	Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference	UNCTAD	UN Conference on Trade and Development
SACC	South African Council of Churches	UNDCP	UN Drug Control Programme
SADC	Southern African Development Community	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
SADCC	Southern African Development Coordination Conference	UNES	Salvadorean Ecological Unity coalition
SAfAIDS	Southern African HIV and AIDS Information Dissemination Service	UNFCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
SAFE	Sustainable Agriculture, Food and Environment alliance (UK)	UNFPA	UN Population Fund
SAHAN	Somaliland HIV/AIDS Network	UNGASS	UN general assembly special session
SAKS	Animation and Social Communication Society (Haiti)	UNGPs	UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
SANGOCO	South African NGO Coalition	UNGWERO	Bringing Light to Communities (Malawi)
SEACA	South East Asian Committee for Advocacy	UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
SENDAS	Services for the Alternative Development of the South (Ecuador)	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
SER	Rural Educational Services (Peru)	UNIFEM	UN Development Fund for Women (now UN Women)
SF	Solidaridad Fronteriza (Border Solidarity, Dominican Republic)	UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
SFw	Solidarité Fwontalye (Border Solidarity, Haiti)	UPML	Popular Union of Women in Loja (Ecuador)
		URACAAN	University of the Autonomous Regions of the Nicaraguan Caribbean Coast
		URNR	National Guatemalan Revolutionary Unity (Guatemala)
V		VAWG	Violence against women and girls
		VCCT	Voluntary counselling and confidential



VPA	testing Voluntary Partnership Agreement (with the EU on forest law enforcement, governance and trade)	Y YWU	Yemen Women Union
VSL VSO	Village savings and loan scheme Voluntary Service Overseas (UK)	Z ZACRO	Zimbabwe Association of Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation of the Offender
W WASD	Women's Association for Sustainable Development (Yemen)	ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
WASN	Women and AIDS Support Network (Zimbabwe)	ZAPSO	Zimbabwe AIDS Prevention and Support Organisation
WCC	World Council of Churches	ZELA	Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association
WHO	World Health Organization	ZEN	Zimbabwe Europe Network
WOLA	Washington Office on Latin America	ZIMFEP	Zimbabwe Foundation for Education with Production
WORDA	Women Rehabilitation and Development Association (Somaliland)	ZNCWC	Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children
WTO	World Trade Organization	ZPCDA	Zimbabwe Parents of Children with Disabilities Association
		ZWRCN	Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network



Further information and the organisation's archive

Comments and queries

Following closure of Progressio, no formal capacity exists to deal with detailed queries and requests relating to the contents of this publication or the work of the Sword of the Spirit, CIIR and Progressio. However, feedback on the publication is welcome. The former chair of Progressio's board of trustees is happy to receive this and may also be able to handle enquiries of a smaller-scale and manageable nature:

Contact: Martin McEnery (martin.mcenery@outlook.com), former chair of Progressio's board of trustees (2008-2017)

Readers interested in finding out more about the organisation's work, for example for the purposes of research, are encouraged to visit the archives of the Sword of the Spirit, CIIR and Progressio. Below is a description of these collections, along with contact and access request details.

The Sword of the Spirit, CIIR and Progressio archive

A 65-box archive of the Sword of the Spirit, CIIR and Progressio is hosted for permanent retention by the **Westminster Diocesan Archives** in London, UK. The collection consists of the organisation's publications (books, pamphlets, briefings and reports), conference reports, papers, photographs, negatives, theses, DVDs and CDs and more. The records document the activities of the Sword of the Spirit, CIIR and Progressio between 1940 and 2017 and the organisation's relationship with counterparts in the UK and worldwide. The collection provides a valuable resource for research on the organisation's work and its place in the overall evolution of UK work for international development.

Access requests

Access requests should be addressed to the Westminster Diocesan Archives. Address: Westminster Diocesan Archives, 16a Abingdon Road, Kensington, London W8 6AF. Telephone: +44 (0)20 7938 3580. Email: archivist@rcdow.org.uk CIIR records (1955-2004) are also deposited at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London (ICS 151 CIIR): <http://archives.urls.lon.ac.uk/detail.aspx>. This collection consists primarily of photocopied material generated by CIIR and other associated charities, government departments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

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