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COMMUNITY LINKS AS AN ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY FOR THIRD WORLD DEVELOPMENT

**A Masters Project by Jill A. Tucker
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INTRODUCTION

To divide the world as between the aiding and the aided is both wrong and psychologically damaging. (1)

The degree of cynicism which now surrounds and pervades the topic of American development aid to the Third World has perhaps reached an all-time high. While well-intentioned practitioners in the field continue to work with dedication and diligence to implement effective and efficient development programs, they cannot ignore the fact that their government is supplying hundreds of millions of dollars in military aid to allied Third World nations; that population pressures and drought in Third World nations effect the price of beef in America; that military satellites violate national borders with impunity; indeed, that in an anxious and fretfully interdependent world their efforts may be shrouded by larger political and economic forces over which they and the populations with which they are working in the Third World, have little or no control.

In addition to these realizations there is often disillusionment with aid agencies--not because the practitioners find themselves working with villains or fools or because they are skeptical of the motives which underlie these agencies' efforts, but because however hard they try, and however much effort they expend, they still often find themselves working within organizational structures with rules and restrictions which hamper and distort their initiatives and actions.

Furthermore, it is true that the development "fads" which have come and gone during the past thirty years have been more numerous than

fruitful. Relief and recovery, investment, technical assistance, planning, education and training, institution-building, community development, political development, and population control (2) have all been invoked as vital "keys" to development in the past. Yet three decades and billions of dollars later, a consensus about the true "key" to development has hardly been attained.

My hope in this paper is to present an alternative to--although not necessarily a substitute for--traditional development strategies, which will encourage the disenchanted to look again, critically and analytically, at the development process, and to see that bureaucratic aid structures and global political and economic forces need not always inhibit their efforts.

Accepting the position that development aid, in principle, is desirable, I intend to describe a radically different process through which aid can be transferred. This process, which I will loosely call "community links"--linking communities in the Third World with those in the First World--is one with empirical integrity and an element of social responsibility. Community links is also a process which depends to a large extent on the participation of ordinary people (not "development workers" per se) for its success. Furthermore, it is a process which strives toward reciprocity between the two communities involved and which relies upon the human capacity for mutual understanding to achieve its goals. Community links is a process for the "hard-nosed utopian, not the bleeding heart, the bureaucrat or the businessman" (3) and above all, it is a process which can work.

Yet a number of serious challenges face the proponents of the community links approach.

First, how can this approach transcend charity and the often naive American liberal tradition? Can "development education" or "global education" make a significant impact in increasing awareness and understanding of vital issues in Third World development, or are these just efforts to extend the geographical boundaries in which old assumptions, thoughts and theories will reign?

Secondly, are these activities really self-help efforts on the part of the Third World community, or just "ventriloquized requests" (4) whereby foreign aid agencies see a need and convince a community that it should be fulfilled?

Thirdly, can this approach truly obtain reciprocity, or is the language of "partnership" one more development sham?

And lastly, what kinds of outcomes are realistically attainable by means of this approach? Are issues of power and control addressed? Do these efforts foster empowerment of Third World communities or merely provide them with a new well?

These and other issues will be considered through this study of three American organizations and one Australian organization currently employing the community links approach to Third World development.

CONCEPT AND HISTORY

It may be surprising to note that widespread awareness of the problems of underdevelopment is remarkably recent. The public debate, academic theorizing and existence of voluntary and official aid agencies and institutions devoted to Third World development are not much more than forty years old. Indeed, it is only since World War II that nations have, to any great extent, been administering official aid funds. Pre-war investment in developing nations went almost exclusively to where it could bring the greatest economic return for the investor. Following World War II, aid became a response to urgent crisis. It was not until

the 1950's that aid was viewed as part of a long-range, deliberate attempt to foster economic, political and social development within the developing nations themselves.

The history of community links in America can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century when partnerships between cities in the United States and others (usually in Europe) were established for two main reasons: either the U.S. city was founded by settlers from the foreign city, or the two cities happened to share the same name.

After World War II, links that were established between American communities and those overseas were still primarily city-to-city links and followed the example of larger relief efforts in that they were primarily gestures of material aid aimed at post-war reconstruction. The choices of cities with which to be linked were generally dictated either by the extent of devastation and need in the foreign city, or the war role of the overseas town.

By the 1950's, however, motivation for community links broadened and gestures of relief generally became less of a theme in such affiliation efforts. For at least thirty years community links have been employed as realistic alternatives to other aid efforts: alternatives which allow people to "leap governments" (5) and become involved in Third World development while also learning about faraway nations and cultures.

For the past three decades towns, cities, civic groups, schools, churches and businesses in the First World have helped to satisfy the needs of specific development projects in far-off nations in Africa, Asia and Latin America, often forming alliances which allow them fairly direct participation in the development process while keeping to a minimum the

detrimental effects of outside intervention. Through identification with a specific community or development project these First World communities feel that they no longer send dollars into a void. Rather, these efforts help these communities to "resist the temptation to say that the problems of the developing world are so enormous and complex that individuals and private sector organizations...can do virtually nothing that can make a difference." (6) As Guy Gran states, hundreds of millions of desperately poor people are "a reality from which the mind seeks to flee into escapist myths." (7) The community links approach to development reminds people that the inhabitants of Third World nations live in families, neighborhoods and communities much like their own, and that by linking our communities with those overseas, we can improve all of our lives in tangible ways.

WHAT COMMUNITY LINKS ARE NOT

A definition has yet to be formulated which might describe the organizational structure and activities of those agencies purporting to promote community links. Recognizing that there is great variation among these organizations, it is sometimes helpful to describe them through comparison with other aid organizations, emphasizing how the community links approach differs from more traditional approaches. Some of these differences are enumerated below. The reader must be aware, however, that the description which this discussion yields is of the community links approach in its ideal form. In truth, none of the organizations studied satisfy all of these conditions. Nevertheless, the discussion

should highlight the main aspects of the community links approach which distinguish it from other approaches.

Cost and Administrative Structure

A diplomat once compared reform of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to the mating of elephants. "It is on a high level, there is a lot of trumpeting and stirring of dust, but any further development is at least 23 months away." (8)

The complex machinery which has been developed by bilateral and multilateral aid agencies to enable resources to be transmitted from "donor" to "recipient" is often completely absent in the community links approach. Because the resources being transferred from one community to another are generally quite small, the community links approach is often able to avoid working with and through bureaucracies in both countries. Furthermore, there are usually no "middlemen", such as consultants, contractors and advisors to add layers of complexity to this process.

Largely due to the lack of such a bureaucratic structure, agencies facilitating community links can establish partnerships which complete development projects at a fraction of the cost which other aid agencies would "charge." Indeed, most community links agencies promise that 100% of a community's contribution will be transferred directly to their partner community with nothing siphoned off to support administrative fees or overhead costs. Furthermore, these agencies are more likely to have the willingness and capability to finance development projects requiring small sums of money. This contrasts sharply with bilateral and multilateral aid schemes where the trend is to adopt large projects to minimize administrative work and expenses.

Motives and Purposes

To take the politics out of aid is likely to put an end to the aid. (9)

The motives underlying the community links approach to development, while appearing naive and romantic to some, are at least relatively consistent in their emphasis on the moral and ethical aspects of their activities. Rarely do they allow the mingling of the altruistic and the "practical" which so pervades the rhetoric of official government aid agencies. Indeed, it is this author's opinion that a moral concern with development and the promotion of national self-interest are too often incompatible for these to be accepted as viable and genuine motives for official aid agencies. It seems infinitely more naive to assume, as these agencies do, that philanthropy and national self-interest will coincide than to believe that programs based primarily on humanitarian motives, such as those of the community links approach, can survive and thrive.

Furthermore, in contrast to governmental aid agencies and multilateral agencies receiving large donations through official channels, agencies promoting community links generally are allowed the freedom to work in countries from which the United States is expressly withholding official aid. Their efforts need not reflect the strategic and corporate interests of their country's government. Such a non-political stance allows these organizations to carry out activities in, and further the knowledge in their countries about, ALL areas of the Third World--not just those regions or countries which happen to be favorably looked upon by their current government's administration.

Power; Self-Help

United States foreign assistance fails to help the poor because it is of necessity based on one fundamental fallacy: that aid can reach the powerless even though channeled through the powerful. (10)

Bilateral and multilateral aid schemes as they exist today largely reinforce the dominant position enjoyed by "donors" over "recipients." In these cases aid becomes much less of a "gift-giving" activity than its name may imply, and more of a game in which recipients scramble to satisfy the conditions necessary to receive their "prize." This may lead to a lack of commitment to a project or program on the part of the recipient since the donor is viewed as the driving force behind the effort.

Through the community links approach, the responsibility to initiate, implement and evaluate development programs is primarily the responsibility of the Third World community. Thus, the community links approach can avoid becoming a process which is controlled by and channeled through the rich. Instead, it is a process where both partners assume responsibility for aspects of the project to which they can contribute the most:

...one provides the motivation, leadership and labor for change, the other the capital that cannot be raised locally. Both parties receive something of value for their contribution: one the resources it needs to complete the project, the other a more thorough understanding of the needs and processes of development in the Third World. (11)

Thus, in its ideal form, the community links approach to Third World development differs substantially from other, perhaps more widely known approaches. In general, it can be said that adherents to this approach would accept the following assumptions about community links:

1) Communities in the First World should be linked with those in the Third World who are actively engaged in self-help efforts in which initiative, planning, decision-making and responsibility for implementation of the projects remain in the hands of the local people.

2) The relationship between the two communities should be viewed as a reciprocal one in which each partner gives and receives something of value. Specifically, the First World partner expects to become better educated by its Third World partner about life in the developing world. The relationship should furthermore be as direct as possible between the communities whereby transfers of communication and funds avoid being channeled through an intermediary or power structure of any kind.

3) Assistance programs which are linked to a government's foreign policy objectives or military considerations will be hampered in terms of the nations in which they can be involved as well as the nature of the activities which can be carried out in those countries. Therefore the community links approach should avoid situations which allow for government influence and sanctions over their activities.

4) Community links can be most effective and should focus their efforts on projects which directly benefit the most needy in the developing world. In most instances this will translate into community links projects which involve small-scale, grassroots development efforts rather than large-scale infrastructure development projects such as the building of airports, power stations, communications systems, etc.

ORGANIZATIONS PROMOTING COMMUNITY LINKS

Until recent years, proponents of the community links approach to development were regarded as utopian, eccentric or hopelessly idealistic. Their contributions to Third World development were regarded as mere tinkering, effecting only marginal adjustments in the lives of a very small number of people. Indeed, the community links approach, like any

other, cannot claim to be able to rectify all inequities or to meet all the needs of Third World peoples. Yet in this section we will study the activities of four such organizations and begin to assess what their contributions have been to Third World development.

It should be noted that each of these organizations represents one particular "variation" on the theme of community links which has been described in the previous pages. Although all of the organizations fall under the general rubric of those promoting community links, each also deviates from the ideal in particular ways.

In order to more easily evaluate the activities of the organizations, each will be studied in terms of the same five dimensions. These dimensions are:

- 1) The stated goals of the organization and the extent of their achievement of these.
- 2) The types of development projects in which the organization engages and the types of populations which it reaches in the Third World.
- 3) The educational component of their activities for citizens of the First World.
- 4) The organization's affiliation with a national government.
- 5) The extent to which partnerships between communities are reciprocal.

Sister Cities International

What we seek is a dialogue. To have the people of one town speak directly to the people of another, and from that initial contact, to grow and to experience and to learn. There are those who would suggest that in the magnitude of our cataclysmic anxiety, linking two cities may seem only a little contribution. But a man's horizons extend as far as his own vision. As Anatole France put it: "It is better to understand a little than to misunderstand alot." (12)

What is a city but the people? (13)

In 1956 President Dwight D. Eisenhower formed a program called "People to People" which gradually evolved into what is now called "Sister Cities International", or "SCI": one of the oldest, largest and most well-known organizations promoting community links in America. Indeed, the variety and geographic dispersion of SCI's activities are impressive. By the time of the organization's 25th Anniversary in 1981, 720 U.S. cities were matched with over 1,000 communities around the world in 77 countries. (14) Nearly half of those U.S. cities are linked with cities in the developing world.

SCI's activities encompass quite a bit more than just the linking of communities. In addition to their coordination of official city links, they also help to facilitate other programs such as travel exchanges for students, teachers and journalists, school affiliation programs, training workshops and seminars, technical assistance programs, a research and information service and a national youth program.

Perhaps to accommodate such a wide range of activities, their stated organizational goals are broad and sweeping. The original goal of the organization as enunciated by President Eisenhower, was simply, world peace. Eisenhower repeatedly stressed the people's need to supersede

governments in their efforts to achieve this ideal. Said the President: "Our most cogent diplomats cannot achieve peace without understanding, and understanding can only be reached through the hearts of people." (15) Eisenhower felt that in the long run, ordinary people could and would do more to promote peace than governments. "Indeed," he said, "I think that the people want peace so much that one of these days governments better get out of their way and let 'em have it." (16)

Twenty-five years later, the fifth President of SCI, Richard G. Neuheisal, would echo the President's remarks, stating in no uncertain terms, "The goal is world peace." (17) The assumption seems to be that SCI activities can break down communications barriers, further global understanding and stimulate American citizens' concern about other areas of the world. These, in turn, will facilitate world peace. Thus, SCI's emphasis is not primarily on Third World development, but on much more general, perhaps lofty goals such as world peace.

In accordance with this stated focus on increasing global awareness and understanding, a large portion of the organization's activities carry no specific component of Third World development, but focus entirely on educating Americans about the rest of the world. Not surprising, however, the amount of education which is yielded from an SCI link depends entirely upon how active a particular city's representatives are in furthering this goal. As the organization itself admits, "One eager person does not a global education program make. The cooperation of school, city and county administrators is vital to the survival and prosperity of educational exchanges." (18) Thus, without commitment by

these people and agencies, American cities linked with cities overseas may be connected in name only.

Conversely, there are numerous examples of SCI educational programs which have made significant, impressive and long-term educational contributions. One example of such a link is the following:

Baltimore, Maryland has four sister cities, one of these being with the city of Gbarnga, Liberia. Indeed, Baltimore and Gbarnga share historical and cultural ties dating from Liberia's 19th century founding by former American slaves. Today the link between the two cities is active despite a temporary setback following the Liberian coup in 1980.

Liberian and African culture are taught at all levels (K-12) in the Baltimore school system. At least 82 schools have been involved in this program. Furthermore, in 1977 a Liberian school official spent a year in Baltimore working with teachers and administrators to develop this school curriculum. In the summer of 1978, teachers from the Baltimore school system and professors from Morgan State University spent six weeks in Gbarnga. Each of these teachers was charged with the task of studying then preparing an instructional unit about Liberia in his or her field of expertise.

The Baltimore/Gbarnga link does not end with a school affiliation program. A museum of Liberian artifacts has been built and a Liberian Awareness Week is staged each year. Furthermore, workshops on Liberian culture have been held as joint ventures among local colleges, universities and community organizations.

but salaries or consultancy fees are never included in such grants. Thus, technical expertise is always provided "free of charge" as part of the sister city exchange.

The SCI-TAP program has quite specific boundaries concerning the types of projects it engages in and the populations it reaches. First, the program is only active in urban areas meaning that the majority of Third World citizens who live in rural areas may well remain unaffected by these projects. Furthermore, SCI-TAP generally works through established institutions, not communities of people, thus the assistance may often encourage development through institution-building rather than through self-help efforts which have the direct involvement of poor, oppressed populations.

SCI's affiliation with the United States government appears to be quite congenial. Along with a letter of commendation from President Reagan, both Charles Z. Wick, director of the United States International Communication Agency, (USICA), and M. Peter McPherson of the United States Agency for International Development, (USAID), contributed short articles in SCI's special 25th Anniversary magazine. However, it is interesting to note that the emphases of these two articles are quite different than those written by other SCI supporters. For instance, Wick's article begins with an interesting assumption that,

...the sister city concept is based on the philosophy that our national interest is well served if cities in the United States, represented by their local elected officials and private citizens from all sectors of community life, can join together in mutual and long-term exchange relationships with cities in other countries.

(20)

Beyond these educational activities, SCI does have a relatively small, but steadily expanding development component called the Technical Assistance Program, or SCI-TAP. First established in 1977, this program in technical "twinning" was meant to complement the overall SCI program. The stated goals of this aspect of SCI's operations are cautious and reserved:

If done wisely and with an appreciation of their inherent differences, an exchange of technical expertise between cities in the United States and institutions in affiliated cities in developing countries can result in modest but significant improvements in the quality of life of disadvantaged people living in urban areas of those countries. (19)

SCI-TAP differs from traditional technical assistance programs in a number of ways. First, in most instances the city receiving technical assistance already has an established link with a sister city in the United States. Furthermore, the assistance which is provided does not come from one individual or "expert," but rather a representative from an operating institution in the U.S. which is actively engaged in the same or similar activities as the institution receiving technical assistance in the Third World. The relationship between the two institutions can be quite flexible and should be geared toward long-term cooperation.

Thus far SCI-TAP projects have been carried out in a number of fields, such as public health, water and sanitation, vocational training and employment-generation, work involving the disabled, and small-scale energy development. In many cases, representatives from the Third World community have come to America for training. In other cases a representative from the U.S. city will travel to its sister city institution to provide on-site consultation. In this case the individual's travel and living expenses are paid for with SCI-TAP funds,

Likewise, McPherson stresses the importance of SCI's work to the U.S. national interest:

Sister City International's work is also very important here at home. We have learned that continued progress in Third World development is of growing importance to our own domestic and international well-being. The United States has become increasingly dependent on developing countries for essential raw materials... (21)

In fact, Ronald Reagan is the organization's "Honorary Chairman" and thus appears in some capacity in several SCI publications. Indeed, the organization was started in 1956 as a government-sponsored program, had its first conference in 1958 sponsored by the United States Information Agency, (USIA), and has, through the years, received substantial government support through the Private Sector Office of USICA (formerly the Office of Private Cooperation, USIA,) and USAID. Still, the organization maintains that this affiliation does not in any way influence sister city activities. It is true that active SCI linkages continue to exist in countries with which the U.S. government presently has dubious diplomatic ties, such as Nicaragua and Iran. Still, new links with cities in the developing world are, according to SCI staff member Richard Oakland, almost always identified with the help of the U.S. embassy in that country. It is reasonable to assume, then, that no new links will be established with--and thus no new SCI-TAP development projects initiated in--countries where U.S. diplomatic relations are strained.

Furthermore, SCI-TAP is almost fully USAID sponsored, (22) and thus must clearly adhere to the mandates of its funding agency. So while educational and informational exchanges may be carried out through SCI with no or minimal government involvement, the organization's development

component, SCI-TAP, albeit a successful program, and in many ways unique, must be viewed as an extension of the United States government's development plan.

It is difficult to generalize as to the extent of reciprocity reached between sister cities since in each instance exchanges take different and varied forms. For instance, in terms of SCI's school affiliation efforts, one of the "Seven Essential Components" of this program is the regular, planned exchange of articles from classroom-to-classroom. These articles are usually simple and easily attainable items such as drawings, paintings, letters, or other articles which students might normally produce during a regular school day. In other instances, however, such as the building of Baltimore's Liberian museum, the exchange involved artifacts and other large items. In return for these items Baltimore shipped desks, books and other school supplies to Gbarnga. Thus, items were exchanged in both cases. Whether or not this makes the relationship "reciprocal" is more difficult to determine.

In terms of its development component, SCI readily admits that the relationship between the two partners might fall short of reciprocity:

The number and nature of exchanges between the two cities is likely to be unequal. The American city often responds to technical assistance issues, and receives in return cultural enrichment, but less direct contact with visiting members of its sister city community. (23)

Thus, while American cities provide technical assistance to their overseas counterparts, what they receive in return usually takes the form of a cultural exchange. And who is to say that this type of exchange does not attain reciprocity? While the American city donates the

expertise of their technicians, the Third World city shares an equally valuable resource by educating these technicians and other Americans about their particular country and the realities of life in the developing world. In the long run a contribution such as this which may create long-lasting awareness might well be deemed more valuable than an infusion of technology which may soon be rendered obsolete.

SCI, then, is the largest organization promoting community links in America, involving cities which house over 90 million citizens. Nevertheless, their focus in the Third World is on city links rather than links with rural communities, meaning that while over 70% of the population of developing nations still lives in rural communities, SCI's exchanges with the Third World necessarily carry an urban slant.

Furthermore, although SCI boasts that by 1986 over 750 U.S. cities were involved in the program, certainly only a portion of this total are actively engaged in ongoing exchanges. For example, although San Francisco and Manila have been linked as sister cities for many years, it was not until the overthrow of Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 that the majority of San Franciscans became aware--momentarily--of this link.

In addition, SCI's technical assistance program is innovative in its use of experts (albeit not development "consultants") working within institutions which are currently engaged in the technical activity of interest, and their programs in this area have, thus far, met with a great deal of satisfaction on the part of both partners. Still, the program is one which is sponsored and controlled by the United States government. (USAID) Essentially, SCI-TAP is a vehicle through which

government-to-government aid can be transferred. Aid is thus flowing from the powerful to the "poorer powerful."

Peace Corps Partnership Program

The villagers have often asked me what gift they might send to the people of America. I answer them, "the gift of knowing another way of life." (24)

The Peace Corps Partnership Program, or PCPP, was started in 1964 as a complement to the larger Peace Corps program begun three years earlier. Americans working as Peace Corps volunteers would be able to assist the communities in which they were living and working through facilitating linkages with American groups interested in helping to fund small-scale development projects. Presumably, Americans also benefit by becoming sponsors of these projects. They "begin to learn more about another culture; another way of life. And, by looking at others and sharing in their development process, they discover more about what it means to be an American and citizen in today's interdependent world." (25)

The stated goals of PCPP are twofold: to help a Third World community "meet a need which it has identified as important to its own development," (26) and to "promote understanding of other people on the part of Americans." (27) In addition, underlying these goals, and by implication as a result of the name of the program, PCPP's exchanges also are intended to promote peace. By stating, "Be a Peace Corps partner. Be about peace," (28) it is subtly implied that PCPP efforts not only help to complete locally-initiated self-help development projects, but that through fostering greater understanding among the communities jointly undertaking these projects, the program also engenders peace.

Although PCPP projects are said to address the problems of "hunger, disease and illiteracy," (29) in fact the scope of their activities includes much more than what might generally be subsumed under those headings. Their projects encompass a wide range of fields: agriculture, education, special education, income generation, health, energy, vocational education, and sanitation, to name a few. Requests for funds might be as small as a few hundred dollars or as large as \$5,000. Yet all these projects, so varied in size and scope, fulfill a definite set of criteria. In submitting a proposal for a PCPP project, the Peace Corps volunteer must be able to show that:

- 1) The project is community-initiated and directed;
- 2) The project meets a basic community need;
- 3) The community can provide at least 25% of the total project cost;
- 4) If necessary, there is a suitable lot and clear land title;
- 5) The project benefits women equally as it does men;
- 6) The community has reasonably exhausted other means of support before applying to PCPP;
- 7) There is a stable in-country political and social environment which would allow completion and implementation of a project;
- 8) Appropriate staff will be available to implement the project;
- 9) PCPP funds will be spent only for approved material purchases and the community fully realizes that there is no further obligation on the part of the U.S. partner, and
- 10) The Peace Corps volunteer and the community members agree to establish a cross-cultural exchange with the U.S. partner and to keep them informed of the project's progress. (30)

Thus, the target populations for the program are Third World communities actively engaged in self-help projects in which they are contributing not only the motivation and planning needed to initiate the project, but the labor and a substantial portion of the financial need as well. However, PCPP projects can only be undertaken in countries and communities which have established links with the Peace Corps. Needy communities in countries where Peace Corps does not operate, or in

regions of countries where Peace Corps operates but where a volunteer has not been posted, are generally not eligible to take part in the program.

Criteria #7 for PCPP projects, the requirement that there exist a "stable in-country political and social environment" is further evidence that an underlying goal of the program is peace--not necessarily justice. Thus, a project which assists a community but perhaps also threatens a power structure within which the community exists, would possibly not be acceptable in terms of these criteria. Furthermore, a community initiative taking place in the context of larger societal changes which might render a country's political and social environment less than stable, might not find itself amenable to PCPP endorsement or support.

Of course a crucial aspect of the PCPP program is the cultural exchange which is anticipated between the American community and their overseas counterpart. Generally the education which Americans receive as a part of this exchange comes from three sources:

- 1) Narrative progress reports describing in detail the project's progress and the impact that it is having and will have on the community;
- 2) Cross-cultural exchange packets including letters, music, photos and artifacts from the partner community, and
- 3) Personal thank-you letters sent by community members to their American partners.

Once again, how fruitful the exchange actually is and how much of an education the American community actually receives depends to a large extent upon how successful a particular partnership happens to be. Still, it should be noted that PCPP has often found sponsorship in American schools and school children. Their involvement in these projects is bound to provide them with a different type of education

about the Third World than that which can occasionally be found in (but more often is found left out of) the general American school curriculum.

One example of this type of exchange is that which is taking place between students at Corcoran High School in Syracuse, New York, and the students in a school in Sierra Leone. The "Global Writers Club" at Corcoran, composed of students studying French and Spanish, produced greeting cards with graphics which were based on West African design styles. They sold these cards in order to generate the funds needed to sponsor the building of a school in Sierra Leone. In return for their efforts they will receive letters, photographs and cultural artifacts from the students of this school in Sierra Leone.

Conceding that Peace Corps is a program funded and supported by the United States government, and that all costs and expenses of PCPP (other than project sponsorship) are covered by Peace Corps, it seems reasonable to extrapolate that the development projects undertaken through PCPP will only be those which have the unspoken sanction of the United States government. Furthermore, when, as an arm of U.S. foreign policy, Peace Corps moves heavily into certain regions as it doing today in the Central American nations of Honduras and Guatemala, the PCPP program might, however unwittingly, become an active participant in America's foreign policy maneuvers.

It can be asserted that every aspect of the PCPP program is dependent upon the United States government. The countries and regions affected are determined by the government, and overhead funding supporting the program itself is provided fully by the government. Were

Peace Corps to be expelled from a country as it has been in the past, PCPP's development efforts would also cease there. Conversely, if Peace Corps steps up its program in the country of a newly-established United States ally, that country will likely also reap the benefits which can accrue from the linkage of their communities with American communities through Peace Corps Partnership.

PCPP, as other promoting community links, does not claim to effect completely "equal" exchanges between communities. Nevertheless, the rhetoric of "partnership" suggests a reciprocal relationship beneficial to both parties.

It would be difficult to determine which partner contributes "more" or "less" to the development effort. The Third World community contributes fully 25% of the total project cost, which might be a considerable amount in terms of village economies. They also contribute their labor for organization of the project as well as construction or implementation. Furthermore, they supply their American counterparts with letters, photographs and objects which represent their culture and people. Together these can amount to a great deal of time and money expended on the part of this community.

The American partner may also have invested months of hard work to raise the funds needed to make a donation. In other cases the American partner may be a wealthy individual in search of a tax deduction, a foundation looking for a philanthropic outlet, or even a business. The contributions of these partners thus may involve more or less of a financial "sacrifice" depending upon precisely who the partner is. These

American partners are also encouraged to send letters, photographs and other items to their overseas partner. So, while a PCPP partnership may not always involve an "equal" exchange, at least in the best instances, the partnership can be said to be reciprocal.

PCPP has been quite successful in "enabling Americans to contribute directly to small-scale development projects in overseas communities."

(31) The program has enriched the lives of members of American and Third World communities, and to the extent which is practically possible, the relationships between these communities achieve reciprocity. However, the program is undoubtedly constrained by the fact that, in the end, its potential for achievement is subject to the will and whim of the United States government.

Community Aid Abroad

A world where millions die of obesity while tens of millions are dying of hunger is safe for noone. (32)

In 1953, Father Gerard Tucker, an Anglican priest from Melbourne, formed a group called "Food for Peace" which sent aid funds to a hospital in Uttar Pradesh, India. The money, contributed by a group of elderly pensioners living together in a convalescent home, was used to buy high protein food for patients in the Uttar Pradesh hospital. Following this initial effort, Father Tucker began to speak to other Australian groups about living conditions in the Third World and how they might help to improve these conditions. Within five years, by 1958, \$10,000 had been contributed by several different Australian community groups to the Food for Peace program.

In 1962 Mr. David Scott succeeded Father Tucker as the director of Food for Peace and the name of the organization was changed to Community Aid Abroad, or CAA. This change resulted from the realization that it was not sufficient to hand out food to the needy; rather, it was crucial to enable people to help themselves to create a better future.

Now, in 1986, there are 180 active CAA "Groups" working throughout Australia in cooperation with CAA headquarters in every state. The organization continues to work on the Group system and the concept of people-to-people aid while also stressing education for Australians concerning the reasons for poverty in the Third World.

CAA differs from other community links proponents in its emphasis not on world peace, nor simply on the successful completion of small-scale development projects, but rather on JUSTICE. As one CAA brochure

states: "...finally, that is the reason for CAA's being. Justice. Economic justice. Social justice. For all people." (33) Thus, throughout their literature runs a pervasive theme; a theme which originated at the time of the organization's name change in 1962: CAA is committed not to tackling the symptoms of poverty, but rather its causes.

In accordance with this emphasis, CAA is candid in recognizing the possible political implications of their projects. CAA stresses the importance of the "new political power" gained by community members involved in self-help efforts and thus the organization is willing to work with highly-politicized local groups. (34) CAA is concerned that its projects NOT be palliatives which placate marginalized groups. They are also concerned that their projects not be absorbed into unjust local power structures. Rather, they attempt to identify projects which empower "the poorest of the poor" such that these people are able to take action toward furthering their own social development.

Thus, CAA stresses the need for justice and empowerment rather than--or as prerequisites to--the more common community links goals of development and peace.

CAA supports a broad range of projects including those in the fields of health, training, education, production, employment, agriculture and literacy, yet all of these varied projects must adhere to a set list of criteria. Although many of these principles are similar to those set forth by other community links proponents such as PCPP, CAA differs in the more openly political positions which its criteria reveal. These criteria are as follows:

- 1) The project, where possible, should be of a development nature; i.e. aimed at the liberation of people from economic and social oppression;
- 2) The project should be in keeping with the wishes of the community being assisted, and must have the active involvement of local people or their accepted representatives;
- 3) The project should be aimed, as far as possible, to assist the poorest and most exploited section of a community;
- 4) The project should lead to economic viability and should be designed, where applicable, to stimulate the initiation of similar projects in the surrounding area;
- 5) The project must recognize the especially oppressed position of women in most communities, and should...lead to their gaining equal access to the resources of their community;
- 6) Leaders of the projects assisted must have sufficient ability and integrity to ensure success of the project and encouragement of the local community;
- 7) CAA's assistance should take the form of financial aid;
- 8) Projects involving the introduction of a new technology must be relevant to the needs and capacities of the recipient community, must be able to be sustained through local effort, and must be in harmony with the local environment and culture.
- 9) The nature of the project should be such as to allow identification by the supporting CAA Group and subsequent assessment and reporting back to CAA.
- 10) CAA efforts must be concentrated on development rather than relief projects.
- 11) Projects may be assisted from time to time which are of special importance because of their technological, education or ideological content. Such projects may qualify for support even though some normal project requirements may be lacking. (35)

CAA has had no difficulty in identifying projects which fit these criteria. In 1985 alone the organization supported 189 projects in 19 countries. The "costs" of these projects have ranged from as low as A\$107 to as large as A\$317,000 for joint agency projects. Furthermore, the projects have involved small community groups, semi-governmental networks, and even, in a few cases, direct work with governmental agencies. Under each of these varied circumstances a different level and type of commitment on the part of CAA is required, but the organization has proven itself flexible enough to work effectively under all of these different conditions.

Many of the problems of the poor world can be traced to the excesses of the rich world.

That's a fact many in the rich world would rather not face.

That's a fact we want to bring home to many Australians. (36)

CAA has always believed that our promotions should question our wealthy and overindulgent society and should promote real change, both for the poor and for the rich, if the needs of the poor are to be met...New supporters join CAA with their eyes open, knowing we are for social change, not just for well-meaning charity. (37)

CAA, like all other community links proponents, purports to attack world poverty on two fronts: in the Third World as well as in the First. However, few organizations stress that the causes of poverty exist on both of these fronts as CAA does. Indeed, CAA's educational component tends to promote controversy. In 1985 CAA brochures displayed such headlines as, "Wealth--the World's No. 1 Killer," and "Don't Waste Your Charity on People Like These"--headlines which may have offended some, but which have also served to make CAA's educational program unique among those promoting community links. Thus, the major thrust of CAA's educational campaign is not simply awareness of the existence of poverty, but also a significant effort at analysis of its causes.

CAA's educational activities are quite diverse. These include:

- 1) Assistance to teachers, encouraging their inclusion of topics on Third World development in their curriculum. Such assistance may take the form of in-service courses for teachers, provision of classroom resources such as audio-visuals, and help with appropriate curriculum development. In 1985 a newspaper entitled "Teachers for One World" began to be published to further assist teachers on an ongoing basis.
- 2) Sponsorship of conferences and seminars on CAA activities and other matters of public concern.
- 3) Provision of speakers and presentations to interested groups, organizations, and schools.
- 4) Creation of media watch groups to monitor the press and respond to relevant articles via Letters to the Editor, etc.
- 5) Production and broadcast of a weekly radio program called "Third World Magazine" which is aired over three radio stations.
- 6) Production of articles, pamphlets and "Action Information Sheets" informing people about significant problems and issues, and

providing specific suggestions as to what actions they can take concerning these.

- 7) Organizing study tours to countries where CAA is involved to provide in-depth, first-hand analysis of the problems of poverty in the developing world.
- 8) A media campaign to improve the quality of the Australian government's overseas aid program.

Through these varied efforts CAA works to decrease the attitudes or activities of all Australians--not only those actively involved in CAA--which may be hindering development in the Third World. Their efforts are comprehensive and direct, and recognize the need to have a citizenry with a sufficiently sophisticated grasp of the important issues in Third World development, with which to intelligently take action. For CAA stresses that "as long as the rich remain ignorant, aid will be misdirected and the efforts of people to improve themselves counteracted and rendered useless." (38)

CAA has no official affiliation with the Australian government, yet the organization relies heavily on the financial support of the government to carry out all of its varied activities. Indeed, in the recent past as much as 30-40% of CAA's total budget has come from the Australian government. Perhaps surprising to Americans, however, acceptance of this aid money imposes no restrictions on CAA activities, and CAA remains the nation's leading critic of the Australian government's overseas aid program.

For example, in 1984 the organization published an "Action Information Sheet" which boldly made such statements as:

Hundreds of millions of people are living in desperate poverty and many are dying. The Australian government's aid program could do much to help. But it has become ineffectual and even counterproductive...Australian aid goes not to where the need is greatest, but to where our short-term political interests are best served. (39)

Nevertheless, in 1985 and 1986 the organization continued to receive substantial financial support from the government which in each year accounted for at least one-third of CAA's overall operating budget.

According to CAA staff member Jeff Atkinson, the danger in accepting this large amount of governmental aid lies not in possible political interference, but rather simply in the vulnerability which results from overreliance on one funding source. This governmental aid could be cut at any time for reasons that have nothing at all to do with CAA's actions, yet such a cut would undoubtedly severely cripple the organization's activities. Thus, we see from this example that the constraints and ramifications associated with accepting government aid funds are quite different in the Australian setting than they are in America.

In truth, although CAA promotes "people-to-people" aid and group sponsorship of projects, reciprocity is not an ideal toward which they strive. In fact, although some CAA Groups may have a special relationship with an overseas community, most Groups merely receive feedback in the form of progress reports which are generally written by a member of the CAA office or field staff. What CAA Groups receive in return for their efforts are a host of educational and support materials which do not come directly from the field, but are generated through CAA's main offices.

It appears, then, that CAA's activities implicitly recognize that as long as foreign aid--not merely interdependence among nations--exists, there will remain an inherent imbalance in the aid relationship. Presumably CAA would argue that the causes which require aid to be necessary--generally speaking, underdevelopment--must first be eradicated before true reciprocal relationships can be formed. Indeed, this is a reaffirmation of CAA's commitment to address the causes of problems rather than their symptoms.

CAA is clearly unique in the field of community links with its openly political and progressive public education campaign which challenges its sponsors rather than praises them for their involvement. Furthermore, the organization's goals focus much more deeply on the causes of underdevelopment than those of other community links proponents. In addition, although CAA is the recipient of Australian government funds, such assistance poses no restrictions on their activities. CAA is free to work in all countries, and all regions within those countries, with a wide variety of indigenous groups. Lastly, the organization does not seek reciprocal relationships between Australian and Third World communities. The educational component of their program, which is indeed a vital ingredient, is fulfilled without the community-to-community relationship being a reciprocal one.

International Development Exchange

One of the youngest American organizations promoting community links, International Development Exchange, or IDEX, was founded in 1985. IDEX was the final realization of an idea which had been nursed for years by two long-time development workers, Paul A. Strasburg and W. Anthony Lake. Through their experiences with the United States Department of State, International Voluntary Services, The United States National Security Council and the Ford Foundation they discovered that the majority of agencies administering aid to Third World nations were unable to administer small grants to grassroots level efforts. Thus, they perceived that valuable community-level projects were being left unfunded while millions of dollars were pumped into larger development schemes. In addition, both Strasburg and Lake saw a great need for Americans to more accurately perceive the demands and conditions of life in the Third World. In IDEX they sought to develop a "structure and procedure to make it possible to grant small amounts of money efficiently," (40) while at the same time helping Americans to begin to understand the "needs, reality and promises of global development in a tangible, meaningful way." (41)

The stated goals of IDEX are, similar to PCPP, twofold. At the "conclusion" of each project there should be two outcomes: "The standard of living of a recipient community should be improved in a significant, long-term way," (42) and "Sponsors should have gained at least a modest understanding of the living conditions of their beneficiaries." (43)

With the employment of such language it appears that the goals and expectations for change in the Third World community are much higher than those expectations for the American sponsors. Furthermore, the organization avoids mentioning the somewhat loftier goals of other organizations such as world peace and global understanding. IDEX's goals are for sustained, significant change in a Third World community and increased awareness on the part of sponsoring American groups.

All of the projects accepted by IDEX must fulfill a specific set of criteria which determine what types of projects will be undertaken as well as what populations might be assisted. These criteria are as follows:

- 1) The project should be planned, managed and implemented not by outsiders, but by members of the Third World community who are actively striving to improve their own general welfare.
- 2) The project must improve the lives of the local poor while promoting long-term economic welfare and equality within the community.
- 3) The assistance requested should be for tangible goods such as equipment, supplies or materials. In most cases, IDEX sponsors will not pay wages, salaries, consultancy fees or general administrative expenses.
- 4) Project requests should not be for more than \$5,000.
- 5) It should be possible for the project to be completed within one year of the date funds are received.
- 6) The project should be self-sustaining. It should not depend upon skills and resources not available to the community.
- 7) Some organization or person who is not a direct beneficiary of the project must agree to receive and account for grant funds and provide reports to IDEX and the project's sponsor on the project's progress.

Thus, any project, in any field, whether it be health, agriculture, income-generation, education or others, which can fulfill these criteria will be considered for funding. The populations reached are any that

intend to undertake a project fulfilling these criteria, in any country, in all settings, rural and urban.

It is implied in the IDEX project application, however, that IDEX will avoid assisting projects which favor or are controlled by powerful factions within a community, as the application probes for information as to who participated in the decision to undertake the project, who will benefit from the project, how eligibility and participation in the project is determined, etc. To date IDEX has had little difficulty identifying projects which meet these criteria. In its first year of operation thirteen projects were sponsored in eight countries.

Schoolchildren in Indonesia and California are working together to build a library. In Redwood City, California, our American partners will hold bake sales and car washes to raise funds for the small project that their Indonesian friends have begun. The Indonesian children will finally have the library that their community needs, and the American children will learn about life in a very different culture. In the process, children on both sides of the Pacific will discover new worlds. (44)

IDEX's educational activities stem primarily from sponsorship of projects. If a group is interested in sponsorship they are able to choose a project from a roster which is continually being updated. Such selection guarantees that the partnership is one which is "tailor-made" to suit the sponsor's educational needs. For instance, school children in America are able to be matched with youngsters undertaking a project in the Third World, or a Junior Achievement group may choose to sponsor an agricultural project in which a detailed production and marketing plan can educate them about business management in the developing world. A woman's group in America may choose to support the work of a woman's cooperative overseas. In each case the sponsors choose the project which

will best suit their educational needs. Then, through progress reports, photographs and possibly the exchange of other items, sponsors can begin to understand and appreciate another culture.

Another aspect of IDEX's educational program lies in their heavy reliance on volunteers and interns. With a full-time staff of only two individuals and a total yearly budget of less than \$60,000 the organization must rely on volunteers for much of its work. Yet presumably these volunteers receive new knowledge and insight in return for their contributions. For instance, every project adopted by IDEX is assigned a "project representative" who takes responsibility for stateside evaluation of the project as well as correspondence with the project's field contact. These project representatives are usually returned Peace Corps volunteers and others with prior experience in the Third World who view IDEX as one of the few opportunities to continue their involvement in Third World development while living in America. For many of these volunteers, their monthly meetings and individual work for IDEX builds on an education which began while they were overseas.

Furthermore, the IDEX staff is continually speaking to community groups and showing their two slide presentations in search of new sponsors. Even though many of these showings will not lead to sponsorship, they often stimulate lively and informative discussion about the Third World in general, and serve as informal educational forums.

Unlike the other organizations in this study, IDEX specifically chooses not to seek government funding to support any facet of their activities. This decision poses a constant challenge to the organization

in its effort to secure funds for overhead expenses and salaries since no portion of sponsorship contributions will be used for these purposes. Nevertheless, the organization feels that they benefit in many ways from their non-reliance on government funds. By virtue of this stand IDEX is afforded the freedom and autonomy to work in all regions and nations of the world regardless of a country's diplomatic relations with the United States. Thus, the organization's operations remain free from restrictions or mandates from any funding source.

At IDEX we believe in the power of communities in the developing world to improve their lives and in the will of American communities to broaden their perspectives. By combining initiative in the Third World with concern in the First, IDEX can make a difference that matters. (45)

As noted previously, the language of reciprocity in the IDEX literature is tempered and unpretentious. While the benefit of engaging in an IDEX partnership results in a tangible improvement for a Third World community, the benefit to the American community sponsoring the project is repeatedly put forth as simply a "better understanding of international development." (46) Yet once again, the extent and quality of the reciprocity in an IDEX partnership depends to a great extent upon the specific characteristics of the groups involved. An American individual or a church group sponsoring a project may require only that progress reports and photographs of the project be sent to them, while an elementary school class may expect an exchange of letters, cassette tapes and other items in addition to reports and photographs.

It is interesting to note, however, that while the language of "partnership" and "exchange" is prevalent in the IDEX literature, the

Third World partners are also referred to as "recipients" and "beneficiaries" (47) as they are in more traditional aid settings. One is prodded to ask: is it inconsistent to refer to the same people as "partners" as well as "recipients"?

At any rate, IDEX stresses not an equal exchange, but a fair one in which "each partner contributes to the partnership by doing what it does best." (48) This statement allows for creative possibilities and experiments with new types of aid relationships, yet it does not preclude the possibility of a paternalistic "donor/recipient" relationship as that which some would view as the "best" for both parties.

IDEX has achieved a remarkable amount of success in its young lifetime and preserves a level of autonomy that other American organizations cannot claim to own. However, its youth may also account for possible inconsistencies in the terminology it employs, as well as its apparent unwillingness or inability to tap to the fullest extent its potential to make progressive political statements and to wage a progressive educational campaign such as that waged by CAA.

ANALYSIS

We have discussed the values, philosophies and techniques inherent in the community links approach to development in its ideal form, and have studied four organizations which purport to be utilizing community links in their development efforts. Clearly there is great diversity among these organizations, none of which adhere to the ideal in every way. Yet how, specifically, do these organizations vary from the ideal and from each other? How much variation can exist before an organization ceases to be employing community links? This section will examine the organizations comparatively, assessing the degrees of variation among them and how such variation is accommodated within the ideal.

Size

The most obvious difference among the organizations is their size. It is not surprising, then, that the activities of an organization with a yearly operating budget of 6.6 million Australian dollars will differ from those of an organization existing on \$56,000 annually.

The main difference which growth of an organization seems to dictate is the extent to which direct community links are maintained. For instance, when CAA first began its activities in the 1950's, direct group participation was crucial. Expansion and growth, however, have transformed the organization, which in 1985 had an income of 6.6 million Australian dollars (49) to a very different operation than it was thirty years earlier. Now CAA is able to maintain a pool of funds ready for project sponsorship such that when a suitable project is identified it can be funded immediately. Later, an existing CAA Group is asked to

sponsor the project and they, in effect, reimburse CAA for its expenditure. This CAA Group may or may not establish contact with the overseas community which it is assisting.

Furthermore, CAA sponsorship Groups no longer always take the form of existing communities of people, such as church groups or school groups, who engage in activities other than those involving CAA. Now the majority of CAA Groups are joined together for the express purpose of CAA sponsorship. Individuals join an existing group closest to where they live or start a group which may be open for membership to anyone living in a particular area.

In addition, CAA's activities have recently moved beyond the concept of people-to-people aid, becoming more than just a "broker" for sponsorship of community-initiated efforts. In the past few years CAA has begun to send Australian development experts to Africa and has thus become in part an implementing organization. While group sponsorship still clearly dominates CAA's efforts, the organization is also becoming involved in activities which look much more like those of large aid-giving institutions than the community links ideal.

SCI's activities may similarly be effected by the organization's size. With over 350 participating American cities which are linked with cities in the Third World, it is impossible for the organization to monitor all their activities. Thus, out of these 350 links, a sizable percentage may be non-functional. And even of those which are active and functioning, the closeness and quality of the link may not be monitored. Thus, while citizens of one American city might be learning a great deal about a different city's or country's social, economic and political

systems, another city's citizens might only be learning that, once again, Americans must come to the aid of "those poor people in faraway places."

In contrast to the large sizes of CAA and SCI, and in addition, as a result of the different emphases of their goals and strategies, PCPP and IDEX are able to achieve more direct links between communities. Both of these organizations encourage the American communities to choose the specific project in which they are interested, and these communities are assured that 100% of their contribution will be used to support that project, not the organization's operating expenses. Furthermore, when a Third World community proposes to become involved in a PCPP or IDEX partnership they are made aware of their responsibility to educate their American partners.

Yet what should stop even PCPP and IDEX from expanding to the point that it is also difficult or even impossible for them to maintain direct and close community links? Paul Strasburg of IDEX states:

We are not striving for expansion, but rather replication. If we can succeed in linking sixty American communities with sixty communities in the Third World each year, we hope that others will view our work and deem it worthy of imitation. The IDEX model is unpatented. (50)

Community Initiation and Self-Help

Verbal affirmations of the principle of self-help would be more convincing if the principle were not so often violated in practice and if Americans with lengthy, high-level experience with aid programs did not keep repeating year after year that they were still learning it. (51)

Although all of the organizations purport to be helping to meet important needs of a Third World community, are these needs identified by the community itself, or have they been convinced of these needs by a

well-intentioned outsider? Does the community links approach to development really stand out as one which supports primarily community-grown, grassroots efforts, or is this just another farcical case in which the community appears to make the decisions while in reality a foreign aid agency retains control?

Indeed, in terms of the SCI-TAP program this seems to be the case. Although two of the criteria for their program are that "the project should address needs that are considered important to the people or community assisted" (52) and that "the project should be directed toward local implementation, control and operation," (53) the fact remains that proposals for SCI-TAP grants are submitted by the American partner in a Sister Cities linkage, not by the Third World city or institution. Furthermore, according to SCI Director of Member Services, Richard Oakland, it is not at all uncommon for the USAID mission in a developing nation to make suggestions that a certain project be undertaken if they are aware that a city in the developing country is linked through SCI with a city in America. Thus, although a Third World community may actually initiate a project and simply request assistance from its sister city, who would then submit a proposal to SCI-TAP, this process is not the norm. Indeed, there is quite a bit of room here for the "ventriloquized" aid requests which are so common among some aid agencies.

For CAA and IDEX this type of problem is rarely evident as the community itself must submit a proposal which asks for detailed information concerning how the project was selected, who participated in

the decision to undertake the project, who will benefit from the project, etc. Many of these questions are ones which only a community member could answer.

In the case of PCPP, although it is clearly emphasized that projects should be community-initiated, self-help efforts, there is much room for outside influence since a Peace Corps volunteer is always involved in the effort, and, indeed, is the person who submits the project proposal to PCPP. However, if the project were one which the community did not fully endorse, they would probably not contribute 25% of its cost, as is required. This figure alone almost assures that PCPP projects will be ones to which a community is dedicated.

Global Education/Development Education

And one thing I would really like to tell them about is cultural relativity. I didn't learn until I was in college about all the other cultures, and I should have learned about that in the first grade. A first grader should understand that his culture isn't a rational invention; that there are thousands of other cultures and they all work pretty well; that all cultures function on faith rather than truth; that there are lots of alternatives to our own society. (54)

All of the organizations studied emphasize the need for education of citizens of the First World about the Third World. Indeed, global education and development education have recently become catchwords which are commonly used not only in educational forums, but also more generally in the media. Yet what are the assumptions of our four organizations concerning their educational campaigns, and how do these assumptions affect this component of their work?

Throughout SCI's literature runs the theme that global education, as carried out by SCI, will foster peace by increasing the amount of international communication and exchange which takes place on a person-to-person level. Beneath this hopeful and optimistic viewpoint lies the assumption that world peace is attainable merely through increased understanding.

Yet another interesting theme also appears in the SCI literature. Charles Wick, Director of USICA stresses that the U.S. national interest is served by this increased understanding, and M. Peter McPherson, Director of USAID, notes that it is important to understand the developing world since the U.S. is increasingly dependent on these countries for our raw materials. Furthermore, Richard Oakland states that,

While trade development and the stimulation of business are not the primary purpose of a Sister Cities program, new or improved trade relations can be a natural by-product of contacts made in the course of visits by Sister City groups, which in many cases include business leaders. (55)

These statements and others reveal that global education is not merely an ideological issue and that greater awareness about all regions of the world is a high priority for a wide coalition of groups--many of those primarily concerned with the revitalization of the U.S. economy or the strengthening of U.S. national security. Part of SCI's educational message is, then, that we must be knowledgeable about the world to be able to protect our interests in it.

What appears to be the norm in SCI's educational campaign is not analysis of the problems of developing nations, but rather descriptions of their culture and society. Thus, more than promoting a deep

understanding of other societies, SCI's efforts often conjure up a sort of folkloristic conception of these people and their cultures which may even serve to strengthen attitudes of charity and paternalism.

Although increased awareness is certainly a valuable outcome in itself, CAA believes that this type of education does not provide an impetus for change--change which those at CAA believe is vital if Third World populations are to be liberated from economic and social oppression.

Underlying CAA's educational campaign are assumptions which are not generally held by the American organizations promoting community links. CAA primarily differs by assuming that we must understand other nations in terms of how--economically, politically and socially--they relate to us on an individual as well as national scale. For this reason CAA stresses education about the world which will help Australians assess how their actions and their government's actions effect the rest of the world.

So, for instance, an educational campaign which CAA brings to the schools is not generally of the variety which stresses how the people of "Country X" dress, eat, live, etc. Rather, CAA stresses larger, all-encompassing issues such as food flows, the world distribution of food, or what they call the "Three Myths about World Hunger." (56) CAA's educational campaign at every level--from school children to adults--focuses not on descriptions of exotic foreign cultures and traditions, but rather includes penetrating analysis of the causes of poverty and underdevelopment.

Although PCPP and IDEX's educational efforts may be more closely monitored than those of SCI, they still appear prone to the same brand of descriptive treatment of Third World cultures as compared to CAA's analytical treatment of issues. Thus, while they plead for deeper understanding about the conditions of life in the Third World, rarely do they call for examination of the larger issues which cause or impact upon these conditions. These educational efforts encourage widespread support of community-initiated development projects, but they may not encourage action directed toward widespread, fundamental social, political or economic change which might decrease the need for such projects.

All of the organizations studied attempt to provide a deeper and more realistic understanding of the Third World than the episodic, unsophisticated media coverage which is generally available to American and Australian citizens. While CAA clearly seeks to provide an education involving more analysis than the other organizations, they all, at the very least, seek to strip people of the "protection of unawareness." (57)

Reciprocity

The language of partnership employed by the stronger partner in the dialogue is sheer mystification because there can be no valid partnership without reciprocity. (58)

Words strain,
Crack and sometimes break under the burden,
Under the tension slip, slide, perish,
Decay with imprecision... (59)

The language of partnership, sharing, exchange, and reciprocity is not generally employed by CAA, but is common in the literature of SCI, PCPP and IDEX. Yet what is meant by these terms? Do they merely mean

that there is a two-way relationship among the communities or is an equal exchange implied? Do both parties feel as if they jointly "own" the product of the partnership or does ownership belong to one or another of the groups? Are these merely appealing terms to attract sponsors or are they played out in reality?

In truth, an equal exchange is almost never realized by the American organizations, yet while the SCI-TAP program implies that the major burdens of project funding and implementation will be borne by the Americans, in the cases of PCPP and IDEX it is the Third World community which appears to bear this burden.

Concerning the issue of reciprocity in its technical assistance program, SCI states that "the number and nature of exchanges between the two cities is likely to be unequal." (60) It seems that SCI believes that the American city "gives" the most in this program since they supply the manpower needed for technical assistance and receive in return, at the most, cultural enrichment. Considering, however, that the SCI-TAP program is largely funded by USAID, the actual monetary expenditures imparted by the American city could be quite small. Nevertheless, an exchange of technical information is viewed as more substantial than an exchange of cultural information and thus the American city is viewed as the more vital partner in this type of Sister City relationship.

PCPP attempts to avoid situations which might create a "donor/recipient" type of relationship by requiring a substantial commitment from the Third World community. This community provides the direction and planning for the project, the land and land title (if

appropriate), labor to implement the project, the energy and commitment to maintain a cultural exchange with their American partners, as well as the funding of 25% of the project's cost. Certainly the American partners in a PCPP exchange must realize that the Third World community's contribution is the driving force behind the project although the American community's contribution is also crucial. Thus, although the two communities may not contribute "equally" in the sense that their contributions of time, funds and energy are not the "same", nevertheless, they both contribute substantially.

Although IDEX does not require that a Third World community fund 25% of a project's cost, their expectations for what the two matched communities will contribute are similar to the PCPP program. They state clearly that,

While people in the developing world contribute the planning, management, labor and energy needed to complete and maintain a project, American groups can assist by providing resources which are out of reach for Third World communities. (61)

Each partner contributes what it is best equipped to contribute, and presumably each, by virtue of choosing to engage in the partnership, believes that they will also receive something of value. Thus, an IDEX exchange, similar to that of PCPP, involves a reciprocal relationship. Whether or not there is an "equal" exchange, however, is probably impossible to determine.

While CAA supports community links, they do not purport to establish "partnerships." And although the communities involved in their program receive something of value by virtue of their involvement, they do not necessarily receive this from one another. The financial aid which Third World communities receive usually comes from a particular Australian

community, but where technical assistance is involved as it is in a portion of CAA's projects, this support comes directly from CAA. Likewise, although an Australian community may receive progress reports and photographs from the community with which they are matched, they receive most of their information about the Third World and issues of development from CAA directly. Each community gives and receives, but their relationship is not "reciprocal."

Outcomes

It appears, then, that none of the organizations studied practice a "pure" form of community links. Each organization has certain strengths just as each has weaknesses, and each yields a particular product. Yet what kinds of outcomes most often tend to be produced by those practicing community links? What kinds of contributions can and do these outcomes make to the field of Third World development? And how do these differ from those of organizations employing other strategies for development?

Perhaps that which one notices first about the outcomes of community links efforts is that they generally result in very small projects, often ones which are not linked to other similar projects, and which usually do not cost more than \$5,000 to implement. The most common projects undertaken involve improvement or construction of water systems, building of educational facilities, and start-up of small-scale agricultural projects.

With the massive problems faced by hundreds of millions of citizens of the Third World it is easy to regard these efforts as insignificant in

that they effect only a small number of people in marginal ways. Yet the incredible success rate for these projects as well as the fact that they almost always are of direct, tangible benefit to the communities which they effect, cannot easily be dismissed.

As currently practiced, this strategy is one which tends to yield slow, gradual, incremental change. So while 500 links may result in a small, yet significant amount of change in the lives of a tiny minority of Third World citizens, with replication of these efforts one cannot underestimate the potential impact of 500,000 such links. This, of course, will not happen overnight, but it could happen in a matter of a very few years or decades. That so many aid organizations feel it imperative to produce quick, momentous results is one reason why true development often does not take place. The community links approach avoids this pitfall and tends more often to succeed in its efforts.

A more penetrating criticism of the outcomes of this approach may be that community links, along with most other development strategies, still tend to result in products which fail to address, change or in any way effect the sources and causes of poverty and underdevelopment. Specifically, the community links approach is criticized as just another "fad" offering a new technique, while its ultimate aim or goal (simply the generic "Third World development") remains constant, and constantly inarticulated. Thus, the approach often glosses over the importance of the reduction of power differences in Third World societies, as well as among Third and First World nations. Critics claim that without addressing this power issue community links is destined, in the long term, to fail in its effort to liberate people from situations which

breed poverty and oppression. The end-products of this approach become palliatives which placate the poor with a new well or a new school while the elite-controlled power structures which insidiously dominate and oppress them remain firmly entrenched. They may realize "productivity" but very little "development."

Indeed, this is a valid criticism, yet more valid in terms of the work of some organizations than others. While the SCI-TAP program seems particularly prone to working through hierarchical, power-dominated structures with dubious degrees of participation, CAA's activities consciously and stridently avoid this dynamic. Indeed, in evaluating their projects and others, CAA encourages its Groups to ask:

Is it a "non-political" programme which will actually be absorbed into an unjust local power structure? Or does it face up to the local social and political realities? (62)

Thus, for CAA genuine development necessarily includes changes in relationships among people and in their power to control their resources.

While PCPP and IDEX do not specifically address the issue of power, their projects, as community-planned, initiated and implemented endeavors, foster the growth of a social process which can help to enhance power over the self. Through participatory, self-help efforts such as those which PCPP and IDEX support, people join together to build social, economic and political organizations which serve them. In this process people "unite to acquire the knowledge and techniques they need to develop their resources and free themselves from hunger, disease and ignorance." (63) Through such unified action, these development activities and processes become no less "neutral" than the processes which alienate, exclude and oppress people. The efforts promoted through

community links often result in individual and community empowerment--and this is not neutral.

Obtaining "development" by means of this slow, difficult process may not be the most "exciting" route to mass empowerment. In the words of Guy Gran:

It certainly requires alot more time, work and trouble than collecting some disgruntled mid-level army officers and shooting up the President's palace...But if one's goal is not power per se but a democratic society and economy, one cannot expect to get there in any foreseeable time frame (say 15 to 30 years) without laying the groundwork wherein the mass of people develop democratic culture, abilities and aspirations, and the habits of continuous citizenship. (64)

These processes and habits are precisely what community links have the ability to promote.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of the community links approach is its effort to achieve change in the First World as well as the Third World. The "outcomes" of this approach, then, should exist not only in the Third World, but in the First World as well. An underlying assumption of community links is a "recognition of our frightening and unasked for unity" (65)--a recognition that many of the problems and conditions in the Third World can be traced to causes and actions in the First World. This is an assumption which does not generally underlie efforts by those promoting other strategies for development. Yet what kinds of changes in the First World can realistically be expected? Is community links just another attempt to assuage white American guilt with the illusion that we are "helping", and as a result achieve an "unjustified optimism about the process of change and development [in the Third World] and the impact which we can have on those processes"? (66)

Robert Packenham explains in terms of America that,

American history has not been propitious from the point of view of enabling Americans to understand and appreciate the need in Third World countries for accumulating power and authority... (67)

In fact, Americans have had an "excessively dogmatic liberal tradition" (68) which has led to profound misconceptions about how political and economic development should take place in developing nations. Yet the same inarticulate liberal assumptions which allow for these misconceptions may also be those which stimulate Americans to "get involved." Is it better, then, for Americans to be involved in Third World development through such efforts as community links if their involvement stems from this naive liberal tradition, or should they simply not be involved? More eloquently stated by Packenham:

Can we Americans transcend the liberal tradition? Equally importantly, can we do so without abandoning all that is worth saving in it--which is to say a great deal? (69)

The answer to this seemingly rhetorical question may lie in the educational work of CAA. CAA proves that citizens of the First World need not be fed a watered-down, emasculated, primarily descriptive education about the Third World. Rather, an education which requires a capacity for analysis and deep understanding is feasible. Still, just as the community links activities which lead to empowerment in the Third World imply a long, slow process, the activities which bring about true understanding in the First World will also require time, energy and patience. Equipped with these, the outcomes of community links in the First World can transcend charity, naivete and attitudes of paternalism.

Indeed, if organizations promoting community links can provide a penetrating, analytical education for First World citizens, their

outcomes in the First World will be no less vital than those occurring in the Third World. Conversely, if this education remains shallow, allowing for the perpetuation of naive assumptions about development, community links could become at best "just another fad"; and at worst, a fraud.

CONCLUSION

As the developing nations of the world forge ahead in their drives to industrialize, they will undoubtedly continue to seek and receive assistance from the World Bank, USAID and various agencies of the United Nations. They will also continue to press for large structural changes, such as alterations in the International Economic Order, which the organizations promoting community links cannot hope to influence. At the same time, however, the poor majority of these countries will continue to rely upon those people and organizations experienced in promoting community-level change to help them effect slow, gradual improvements in their lives.

Community links, once regarded as a utopian approach to development, has proven itself to be infinitely more efficient and practical than the large-scale, top-down development models used by a majority of aid agencies whose efforts are focused solely on change in the Third World. Community links is one of the few approaches which acknowledges global interdependencies and the need for cooperative action on the part of all citizens in our interconnected world. Admittedly, it is also a strategy which is not yet refined in many ways and whose practitioners, such as the four organizations studied, are still, to a large extent, working separately without a great deal of exchange and interaction. Yet

community links is one of the few approaches to Third World development which has even modest potential for bringing about new levels of consciousness among people in the Third World as well as those in the First, which might result in significant, long-lasting change. I reiterate: community links is a strategy for "the hard-nosed utopian, not the bleeding heart, the bureaucrat or the businessman," (70) and above all, it is a strategy which can work.

Notes

- (1) John Kenneth Galbraith as quoted in Seymour J. Rubin, The Conscience of the Rich Nations, New York, Harper and Row, 1966, p. 62.
- (2) Robert A. Packenham, Liberal America and the Third World, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1973, p. 116.
- (3) Guy Gran, Development By People: Citizen Construction of a Just World, New York, Praeger, 1983, p. 8.
- (4) Desmond McNeill, The Contradictions of Foreign Aid, London, Croom Helm, 1981, p. 11.
- (5) Dwight D. Eisenhower as quoted in Betty Wilson, "Forward", Sister Cities International 25th Anniversary Magazine, Washington, D.C., Sister Cities International, 1982, p. 5.
- (6) David B. Abernethy, IDEX Letter of Recommendation, Stanford, July, 1985.
- (7) Gran, p. 7.
- (8) William and Elizabeth Paddock, We Don't Know How: An Independent Audit of What They Call Success in Foreign Assistance, Ames, Iowa State University Press, 1973, p. 290.
- (9) Rubin, p. 41.
- (10) Frances Moore Lappe, Joseph Collins and David Kinley, Aid as Obstacle: 20 Questions About Foreign Aid and the Hungry, San Francisco, Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1980. p. 10.
- (11) International Development Exchange, Proposal to the Public Welfare Foundation, Palo Alto, IDEX, 1985, p. 6.
- (12) Edward R. Murrow as quoted in "Perspective: the Growth of Sister Cities International," Sister Cities International 25th Anniversary Magazine, Washington, D.C., Sister Cities International, 1982, p. 16.
- (13) William Shakespeare as quoted in Raymond L. Bancroft, "Your City and the World," Sister Cities International 25th Anniversary Magazine, Washington, D.C., 1982, p. 16.
- (14) Richard G. Neuheisal, "Introduction," Sister Cities International 25th Anniversary Magazine, Washington, D.C., Sister Cities International, 1982, p. 6.

- (15) Dwight D. Eisenhower as quoted in "Origins: The Eisenhower Concept," Sister Cities International 25th Anniversary Magazine, Washington, D.C., Sister Cities International, 1982, p. 12.
- (16) Dwight D. Eisenhower as quoted in Wilson, p. 5.
- (17) Neuheisal, p. 6.
- (18) Carolyn Breedlove, Educational Exchange: Five Sister Cities Programs, Washington, D.C., Sister Cities International, p. 19.
- (19) Mag Poff, "Technical Assistance: the Roanoke/Kisumu Experience," Sister Cities International 25th Anniversary Magazine, Washington, D.C., Sister Cities International, 1982, p. 33.
- (20) Charles Z. Wick, "This Concept Has Never Been More Important Than it is Today," Sister Cities International 25th Anniversary Magazine, Washington, D.C., Sister Cities International, 1982, p. 20. Emphasis mine.
- (21) M. Peter McPherson, "Continued Progress in the Third World is of Growing Importance," Sister Cities International 25th Anniversary Magazine, Washington, D.C., Sister Cities International, p. 33. Emphasis mine.
- (22) Sister Cities International, "Sister Cities Develop Together," Sister Cities International Technical Assistance Program, Washington, D.C., Sister Cities International, 1982, p. 4.
- (23) Ibid.
- (24) Peace Corps Partnership Program, PCPP Magazine, Washington, D.C., Peace Corps, p. 1.
- (25) Ibid, p. 3.
- (26) Ibid, p. 4.
- (27) Peace Corps Partnership Program, PCPP Volunteer Handbook, Washington, D.C., Peace Corps, p. 2.
- (28) PCPP Magazine, p. 3.
- (29) Ibid.
- (30) PCPP Volunteer Handbook, p. 8-10.
- (31) Peace Corps Partnership Program, "Peace Corps Partners Know Where it Goes..." Brochure, Washington, D.C., Peace Corps.
- (32) Dr. Pierre Pradervand as quoted in Jeff Atkinson, "Community Action News," Community Aid Abroad Review, Spring, 1986, p. 2.

(33) Community Aid Abroad, "Don't Waste Your Charity on People Like These" Brochure, Fitzroy, CAA, 1985.

(34) Two such examples of CAA's activities with highly politicized groups are their affiliation with AWARE in India, and their involvement in development projects in rebel-held areas of Ethiopia--a zone in which very few development organizations are working.

(35) Community Aid Abroad, "1985 CAA Projects," Fitzroy, CAA, March/April 1986, p. 8.

(36) Community Aid Abroad, "Don't Waste Your Money on People Like These" Brochure, Fitzroy, CAA, 1985.

(37) Community Aid Abroad, "1985 Annual Report," Fitzroy, CAA, 1986, p. 18.

(38) Community Aid Abroad, "Don't Waste Your Money on People Like These" Brochure, Fitzroy, CAA, 1985.

(39) Community Aid Abroad, "Overseas Aid: Review Fails to Tackle Basic Faults," CAA Action Information Sheet, Fitzroy, CAA, October, 1984, p. 3.

(40) IDEX "Proposal to the Public Welfare Foundation," p. 1.

(41) Ibid.

(42) Ibid, p. 3.

(43) Ibid.

(44) International Development Exchange, Promotional Poster, Palo Alto, IDEX, 1985.

(45) International Development Exchange, "Linking Communities in Development" Overseas Brochure, Palo Alto, IDEX, 1986.

(46) International Development Exchange, "Linking Communities in Development" Domestic Brochure, Palo Alto, IDEX, 1986.

(47) IDEX "Proposal to the Public Welfare Foundation," p. 3.

(48) Ibid, p. 6.

(49) CAA "1985 Annual Report," p. 2.

(50) Paul Strasburg, Interview with Jill Tucker, Washington, D.C., September 19, 1986.

(51) Packenham, p. 122.

- (52) SCI, "Sister Cities Develop Together," p. 4.
- (53) Ibid.
- (54) Kurt Vonnegut as quoted in Dr. Rose Lee Haydn, "Global Education is an Answer," Sister Cities International 25th Anniversary Magazine, Washington, D.C., Sister Cities International, 1982, p. 52.
- (55) Richard Oakland, "Sister Cities Build Trust--Business, Too!", Public Management, Washington, D.C., International City Management Association, April, 1986.
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- (58) Dennis Goulet and Michael Hudson, The Myth of Aid: The Hidden Agenda of the Development Reports, New York, IDOC, 1971, p. 22.
- (59) T.S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton," Four Quartets, New York, Harcourt, Brace and World, 1943.
- (60) SCI, "Sister Cities Develop Together," p. 4.
- (61) IDEX, "Linking Communities in Development" Overseas Brochure.
- (62) CAA, "Don't Waste Your Money on People Like These" Brochure.
- (63) Lappe, Collins and Kinley, p. 13.
- (64) Gran, p. 345.
- (65) Michael Ventura, This World, Los Angeles, August 24, 1986, p. 20.
- (66) Pakenham, p. 123.
- (67) Ibid, p. 154.
- (68) Ibid, p. 358.
- (69) Ibid, p. 359.
- (70) Gran, p. 8.

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