



PROVOKING THOUGHT AND DIALOGUE ABOUT THE WORLD

Building South Africa

“How often in history do you turn around and say, ‘OK, the society we’ve had is not good, hasn’t worked, let’s throw it out the window and begin a new one.’? How often does that happen in history? We’ve got a tremendous opportunity here,” said South African Chris Albertyn. After years of struggle against apartheid, South Africans now have the chance to rebuild not just their nation but nearly every aspect of the society. “We’ve been rightfully concerned, primarily concerned, with the democratization of this country,” adds Albertyn. “Now as that hegemony that stuck us all together, that reason for our solidarity, is not going to be there..., we have to begin to look at other issues.”

Most political, societal, and economic issues were subsumed under the struggle against apartheid in South Africa for decades. Now, the transitional government led by Nelson Mandela faces a lengthy list of crises

Common Ground, the foundation’s nationally-syndicated public radio program, recently aired a four-part series on the post-apartheid struggles facing South Africa. Common Ground Producer Keith Porter prepared this article based on his travel and research for the programs. Tapes and transcripts of the series are available. See page 10 for more details.



Keith Porter

So Much To Do. For South Africans, including this woman in a Soweto squatter settlement, the real work of nation-building has just begun.

and near-crises including economic development, militarization, environmental disasters, and the ongoing impact of racism and apartheid.

Development

The government has chosen to deal with the primary economic concerns through a \$10 billion “Reconstruction and Development Program” (RDP). This is the government’s massive blueprint for building houses; raising living standards; and delivering education, healthcare, and virtually everything else denied the black majority for so long.

“I expect to see the changes very soon,” said Paulus Ngcobu,

regional secretary for the Congress of South African Trade Unions in the province of KwaZulu/Natal. “They [the government] have promised that we are going to have so many houses. You are going to have your house electrified. You are going to have roads, et cetera. Now the workers want to see the affirmative action taking place in the factories. They want to see themselves climbing the ladder.”

Expectations are high. In the three months since Mandela’s inauguration, there have been strikes and

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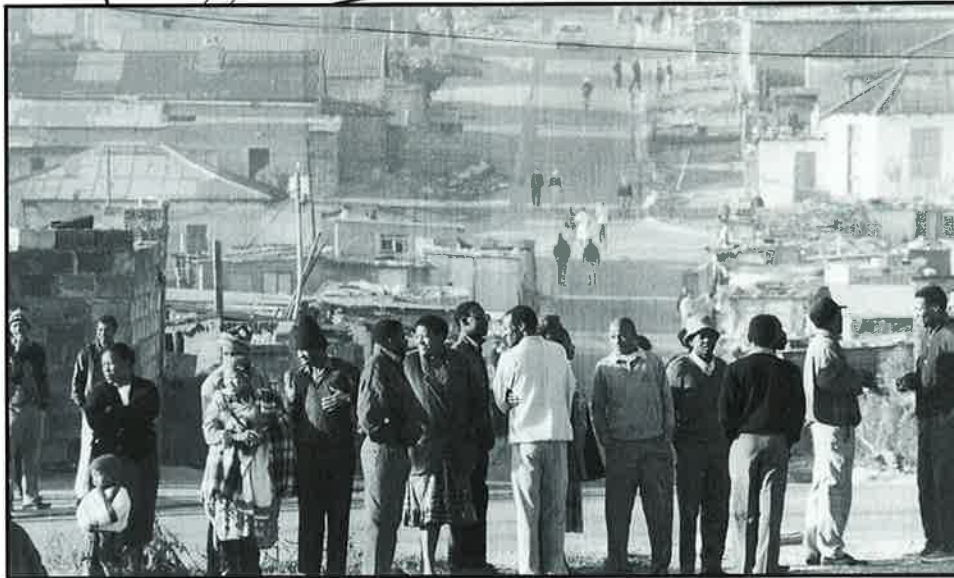
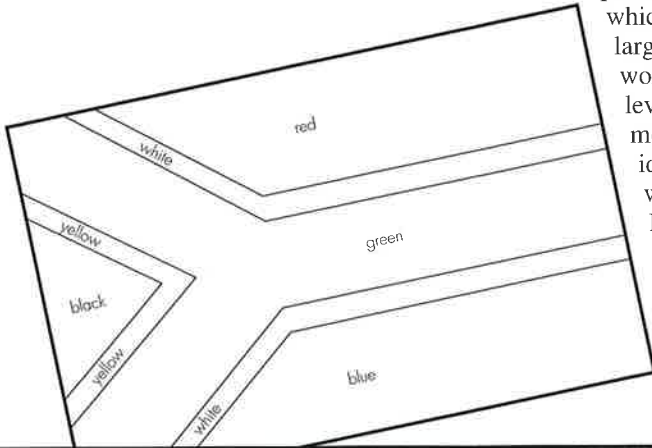
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UN nears 50

Sustainable
Development

Educators confer

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AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

One Person, One Vote
Some voters waited hours to cast a ballot in the first all-race election. In April, the new South African flag (top) was raised.

labor disputes involving automobile, health care, and mine workers. "The signs that greater adversarial labor relations may be in the offing are ominous," according to Japie Jacobs, special economic adviser to the minister of finance.

Militarization

"It is going to be very difficult to unroll the process of militarization which we are a product of in South Africa," said Jacklyn Cock, author and professor of Sociology at the University of Witwatersrand. "I'm talking about a long historical social process that involved mobilizing resources for war. At the political level...the [South African] security council was dominated by military and police people who came to hold political power in the country. This process of militarization happened at an economic level

through very high defense expenditure and the development of a powerful arms industry, which became the 10th largest arms industry in the world. It happened at the level of ideas, through promoting what I've called an ideology of militarism which accepted that violence was a legitimate solution to conflict."

"Now the challenge facing us," said Cock, "is to roll back this process. We've done it

politically through our first democratic election, but the struggle now is to roll back this process at the economic level and at the level of ideas."

The new government must decide what to do with the arms industry. Arms exports provide millions of dollars to the South African economy. But weapons sales—especially those to nations such as Iraq and Rwanda—raise international protest and internal concern.

Perhaps more pressing for the government is dealing with the huge and ever-growing size of the South African Defense Force (SADF). Often used to quell anti-apartheid protest, the SADF has now incorporated the armed forces of the former black homelands and members of the African National Congress armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe. While feed-

ing and housing this army of more than 125,000 troops is a large expense for the government, cutting soldiers loose would merely exacerbate the shortages of housing and jobs.

"We need a new, different, alternative approach to security," said Cock. "What threatens our security is no longer those concrete military threats, it's environmental deterioration and issues of poverty and social justice. Large defense expenditure on these large armies is like dismantling a house in order to erect a fence around it."

Environmentalism

One of the issues Jacklyn Cock wants the society to focus on is the environment—but not in the way it has been traditionally defined in South Africa. "We have no mass-based environmental movement," she said. "Environmentalists or conservationists are seen to be people who are more concerned with animals than with people, more concerned with protecting the Black rhinoceros, which is an endangered species, than with poverty and the needs of people."

"The concept of the environment is stigmatized," Cock adds. "It's interpreted narrowly to mean the conservation of threatened plants, animals, and wilderness areas, rather than the conservation of the

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natural resources on which all economic activity depends. Part of what I and others are involved in now is trying to redefine that notion of the environment, to link questions of health to questions of development in order to mobilize people around quality of life issues, as well as the narrow conservation issues.”

Under apartheid, environmental questions were often decided with only the well-being of whites in mind. “When the South African government was deciding where to site our nuclear waste facility, they mapped the entire country and drew lines outside a 50-mile radius encompassing every white residential area, according to Cock. “Those lines defined the so-called “empty spaces” where the nuclear waste facility could be sited. In the end it was sited in a place in Namaqualand, very near a local Namaqua community.”

Chris Albertyn, an environmental activist, doubts that the new government fully understands the importance of the environmental concerns. “The African National Congress is paying, on the whole, lip service to environmental issues. [This is] mainly a factor of people not really recognizing the ecological links and the relevance of environmental and environmental justice issues. I think that your movement in the United States can really assist us a lot here in South Africa in terms of making those social justice links a lot clearer,” said Albertyn.

Racism

In addition to these new concerns, the old problem has certainly not gone away. Far right-wing whites reject the new government, and the ethno-political tensions that so characterized the fragility of the transition process have an ongoing legacy in some regions. “Becoming a nonracial society is a painful thing because you need conversion,” said Klippies Kritzinger, a professor of religion at the University of South Africa. “It is not just a gradual add-some-blacks-and-stir. It’s not like that. You have power relationships that are all bugged up, and there are

people who are powerful and people who are powerless. And you’ve got to get out of that through conversion and through a lot of hard talking into each other’s faces.”

“We have the right to be one nation and the right to be different. It is hard to marry those two concerns,” said Kritzinger. “It is not an abstract game of unity and diversity. So we need little concrete projects that will help people feel at home and that there is enough religious space and cultural space around them that they don’t feel they’re being pushed into a corner or that their culture or their place is being destroyed. And yet, at the same time, not make that a launching pad for racism or separatism all over again. And I don’t think there is any recipe. We’ll have to try and find a way—experiment.”

Hope

Despite these huge obstacles, the euphoria and goodwill generated by the three-day, all-race election process in South Africa last April seem to have given the government some breathing space in dealing with the problems and to have given the people a shot of confidence. The elections are often described by South Africans as a touchstone of hope and optimism. “It was a miracle, and I mean miracle in its true sense. It was an incredible experience. It was like Pentecost happening a bit early,” said Sheena Duncan, a prominent South African church leader.

“[The election] was a very, very exciting process,” said Jenny de Tolly, president of the anti-apartheid group Black Sash. “People would first of all come and say, ‘Ah, what’s this going to get me?’ And then you’d talk through the whole issue of what a vote can actually mean. And I must admit that some of my most rewarding days in this organization have been in those interactions because suddenly people with no rights, no recognition of their humanity and their value suddenly realized, ‘Hey, this is recognizing me as a person, and they want my opinion.’”

The ability to conduct elections in a strife-torn country where most of the population had never voted, under the intense scrutiny of the entire world, and with near universally accepted results indicate that South Africa should not be underestimated in facing the current challenges. In fact, this single achievement may hold answers for the rest of the world.

“The most extraordinary thing we have achieved here is a negotiated settlement to what was a bloody conflict. I think maybe that’s what the world could learn from South Africa,” concludes de Tolly. “I’ve seen, in the past five years, institutions and people learning how to go into situations of conflict and negotiate to a place where you can have two winners. And I think if the world can learn that lesson from us, then that’s something pretty special we can give.”

—Keith Porter



Rich and beautiful.

South Africa is a resource rich and, as this picture of the Cape of Good Hope shows, beautiful country. But the extreme concentration of wealth in the hands of minority whites presents massive economic and social problems.

Keith Porter

The UN: Frustrations and Hope



The same plane crash that triggered the savage civil war in Rwanda and led to the massacre of 100,000 people in Burundi also threatened to unleash in it the same firestorm of violence that killed 1,000,000 in Rwanda. The world community, looking for a coping mechanism in Burundi, turned to the United Nations.

Stretched thin by the commitment of resources and people in 17 operations around the world and with a tepid mandate from member states, the UN could manage to scrape together a peacekeeping team of only two people. The enormity of the task might have overwhelmed them; but the two peacekeepers worked diligently, not only separating combatants but also devising unique ways to facilitate reconciliation between Hutus and Tutsis. They encouraged the government to make infrastructure improvements in areas where massacres occurred, organized events intended to build confidence between Hutus and Tutsis, and coordinated negotiations between the ethnic leaders. As of this writing, a fragile peace still exists in Burundi, although many fear that a civil war could be set off at the slightest provocation.

Overburdened

The Burundi case illustrates both the frustrations of and hope for the United Nations today. The UN is often called upon at the last minute to mediate a conflict stemming from long-festered animosities exacerbated by fundamental economic and political inequities. In Somalia and Yugoslavia in addition to Burundi, the UN faced conflicts that had simmered for generations.

Adding to the frustration, the UN is short of money. Overall, member states owe \$3.3 billion in unpaid peacekeeping and regular dues. It was only recently that the largest recalcitrant contributor, the United States, appropriated \$1.2 billion to pay off its \$950 million overdue peacekeeping bill. But in the next breath the US Congress refused to provide \$300 million in Defense Department funds to cover the US share of more recent UN peacekeeping operations in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia, and along the border between Kuwait and Iraq.

To make matters worse, member states are unwilling to grant the UN the political authority or tools to accomplish its mandate. The secretary-general is often constrained by the interests of the permanent members of the Security Council. The UN has difficulty recruiting well-trained troops, and the organization lacks reliable command and control mechanisms.

Despite a reluctance to adequately equip and support the UN, member states are quite willing to dump intractable, unwanted problems on its shoulders. Without money, the organization is forced to address fundamental issues by patching together a program which is often far short of ideal. In some ways, the UN seems set up for failure.

However, even in these seemingly impossible situations the UN is sometimes able to make a positive difference in large or small ways. In Burundi, for instance, the peacekeepers staged informal meetings between ethnic factions. In the former Yugoslavia, UN forces attempted to bring an air of

Snapshots: The UN is a work in progress.

normalcy to a battered Sarajevo by staging a soccer game between peacekeeping troops and civilians.

On a larger scale, sometimes the UN is asked to go well beyond peacekeeping or peacemaking. In Namibia and Cambodia, the UN organized elections and helped to develop a consensus which improved prospects for making those countries governable. The successes—small and large—help to balance the failures.

What Next?

The future of the UN is being determined today. Will it be dominated by failed military missions resulting from impossible circumstances, little cash, and insufficient political will? Or will the UN's future be marked by innovative ways to resolve conflict, buoyed by support from the world community? Those were questions faced by a group consisting of UN officials, ambassadors to the United Nations, scholars, and members of nongovernmental organizations at a Stanley Foundation conference intended to examine the "State of the United Nations: Decline or Regeneration in the Next Fifty Years." The discussion centered on articulating a mandate for a renewed UN.

General agreement on the United Nation's major purposes and activities was seen as a critical first step. The conferees identified several: 1) norm-setting—norms establish standards for acceptable behavior, and the UN has played an important role in that regard in the international realm; 2) making the world a more secure place—this involves crisis intervention using the tools of collective security, peacekeeping and peacemaking, but it also encompasses cooperative steps to reduce the prospects for conflict; 3) spearheading the drive for economic

and social progress; 4) capacity-building—helping nations and peoples to live independently, securely, and more prosperously; 5) providing a global forum for ideas, particularly a forum which could be expanded to include the historically disenfranchised. Given that the UN will always have limited resources, however, it is important that there also be widely agreed-upon priorities for action.

To achieve the institutional mandates set out at the conference, the UN will be forced to overcome several serious impediments. Perhaps the biggest obstacle is the fact that the United Nations is a nation-state-based organization in an era where money, ideas, and people are increasingly less subject to state control. Many question whether the UN can effectively act as a voice of the people while being comprised exclusively of government representatives. Other hurdles include the lack of effective coordination among the UN and specialized agencies and other bodies, as well as a lack of money. Any vision for a revitalized United Nations will require the UN to overcome significant barriers.

Finally, more to begin a dialogue rather than to achieve consensus, participants at the Santa Fe conference suggested several possible ways to improve the United Nations to enable it to effectively deal with crises in the future.

- **Fundamentally reconfigure the United Nations**—To some, the current structure is not suited to this new era. A newly constituted UN might include: 1) a "global directorate" consisting of major powers and other representatives charged with acting on security issues; 2) a representative parliament consisting of

national parliamentarians or directly elected representatives; 3) firm commitment to verifiable principles covering human rights, arms control, and other areas.

- **Make long-term reforms to the United Nations**—Many reforms required to revitalize the UN could be wrenching, take time, and require political will. The UN should develop ways to compel contributors to pay arrears, find additional forms of financing, and consider global taxation. An economic security council could be established and the international legal system should be strengthened. An international civil service should be created.
- **Near-term changes that could improve the UN**—Nations could enhance the UN's capability to respond militarily and could strengthen arms transfer control measures at the UN. The UN should permit greater input into its organization by increasing coordination within its system, permitting greater input from nongovernmental organizations, and creating stronger relations with regional organizations.

Implementation of these proposals will require a change in attitudes toward the United Nations. The push for change may not come from inside the organization or from national governments, both of which may be satisfied, for different reasons, with the status quo. Impetus for change may instead come from the transnational movements for progress. And it may also come from ordinary citizens who believe that when war threatens to bring a massacre to Burundi the UN should have more than two lonely souls to send in.

—Bruno Pigott

"The future of the UN is being determined today."

Participants at the Stanley Foundation's 29th United Nations of the Next Decade Conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico, included present and former UN ambassadors from nine countries, UN officials, and a mix of academic experts and journalists. The discussions are off the record, and individual participants cannot be quoted. But the foundation widely circulates the ideas discussed at the conference as a way to make the UN more effective. See page 10 to order a conference report or a cassette from the Common Ground program entitled "Intervening in Civil Conflicts" (#9429) and "Evaluating the UN's Progress" (#9434).

Where Worlds Collide

Borderlands around the globe share many characteristics that set them apart from the interior.

Twenty-year-old Dora Ella Martínez has a dream for her two daughters. When they're old enough, she wants them to go to school in the United States. That's why Martínez took the extraordinary risks in traveling alone, pregnant and penniless, from the interior of Mexico to the US side of the border. She had heard that if her children were born in the United States they would have a right to go to school here. And, they would have what she has often had to do without—a roof over their heads and enough to eat.

Martínez tells the story of her journey and her hopes for her children in the sweltering midday heat that saturates the offices of El Paso's Annunciation House, a privately run shelter for the endless flow of immigrants and refugees from Mexico and Central America. Her story is repeated thousands of times in the borderland by people trying to escape

"Because of changes in US labor law," notes border writer Debbie Nathan, "women have an easier time finding jobs on the US side than men." "But while men can be subject to abuse as they try to make their way to the border, the dangers multiply for women," says Delia Gomez, executive director of the El Paso-based Las Americas Refugee Asylum Project. Gomez recounts many stories about Central American women "arrested in Mexico, forced to turn over all their possessions, then raped, and then deported anyway." Or, of some who hire a *coyote* (people-smugglers, to use author Luis Alberto Urrea's definition), who may be left stranded in the desert, physically abused, even raped. Or, of others whose children are threatened or whose relatives back home are imperiled.

This summer, the Stanley Foundation's *Common Ground* radio program featured a two-part series about women in the US-Mexico borderland—the problems confronting the most marginalized people in American and Mexican society and some of the organizations and initiatives addressing those problems. This series focused on the border cities of El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico.

The Lure of the Border

Borderlands around the globe

share many characteristics that set them apart from the interior. The mixing of people from various nations creates a "laboratory of social, cultural, political, and demographic experimentation," writes Austin-based journalist Joe Holley. This phenomenon is heightened in the twin cities found

all along the US-Mexico border. These symbiotic urban complexes, stretching from San Diego and Tijuana to Brownsville and Matamoros, have undergone tremendous population and economic growth since the middle of this century. Though often illegal, the cross-border flow of people and goods has steadily increased as the global economic system becomes ever more internationalized. The tariff-free trade zone that the two countries established in 1965 has been the main economic draw. Some 1,500 factories known as *maquiladoras* have sprung up on the Mexican side of the border since then. Unfortunately, many of these assembly plants moved from the United States to Mexico so they could pay rock-bottom wages (e.g., \$5 a day in Mexico as opposed to the US minimum wage of \$4.25 an hour) and have to conform to far fewer environmental laws. Once in the area, US wages and images of a high standard of living lure them across the border. This is in addition to the prospect of safety for those people fleeing great danger in their native lands.

It's ironic that as countries negotiate free trade agreements, legalizing the free flow of money and goods, the movement of people is becoming more restricted. One of the most striking examples of this seeming contradiction occurred in El Paso as the United States was finalizing the North American Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico. El Paso and its twin city, Ciudad Juárez, are separated only by the parched Rio Grande. The region's 2,000,000 people have worked and socialized rather easily for decades. Now the Clinton Administration has made permanent a border patrol program to keep illegals out. "Operation Hold the Line" adds nearly a thousand new agents along a 20-mile stretch of border around El Paso and will erect fences with electronic surveillance equipment. But Ruben Garcia, the director of Annunciation House, believes that



Ellen Dorsey

Hopes. A FEMAP nursing school offers career opportunities to Mexico's poorest.

overwhelming poverty and build a better life for their children, or who have fled civil war and government repression south of the US border. Like Martínez, many who are making the treacherous journey are women, often with children, traveling alone.

won't keep the most desperate individual out. In the case of Dora Ella Martínez, Garcia comments that, "You have a woman saying 'I won't settle for my children being hungry. I don't care what borders you put up....' If you look at it from that perspective, how many people in the United States would not make the same statement?"

With nothing to lose, in many cases the immigrants continue to arrive and settle where they can on the border. Their numbers have created infrastructure nightmares, especially on the Mexican side. It's estimated that 2,000 people arrive weekly in Ciudad Juárez, where half the population already live below the poverty line. Officials there cannot or do not come close to providing adequate shelter, running water, or sanitation facilities. On a single day this past summer, 20 people, mostly children, died from drinking contaminated water. The situation on the US side is hardly better for the border's poorest people. According to Sister Maribeth Larkin, lead organizer for the El Paso Interreligious Sponsoring Organization (EPISO), approximately 75,000 El Paso residents live in *colonias*, neighborhoods which don't have running water, sewer systems, or other basic services we consider part of the standard of living in the United States. Nearly 300,000 people face this situation on the Texas side of the border, Larkin estimates. She says people in the *colonias*, primarily Hispanics, bought property in these neighborhoods from unscrupulous developers who promised that the basic infrastructure would be forthcoming.

What's Working

EPISO and many other organizations are making a dent in the poverty that defines the lives of so many border residents. In one of its many projects, EPISO has secured, through community organizing and statewide campaigns, \$400 million for water and sewer systems in the US *colonias*. Through grassroots organizing, the group works to empower exploited or disenfranchised citizens.

Among the most exploited are women, who are also often reluctant to become advocates for their cause. And yet, in the border region, many women have broken through. Debbie Nathan, author of *Women and Other Aliens*, notes that, "Because of the national or class culture and because people are poor, it's very compelling and moving to see women working with these situations and taking leadership positions." She says, "The most progressive stuff is being done by women: (they're) organizing around environment, labor, and health issues."

Immigrant garment workers, for example, are learning about their rights through organizations like La Mujer Obrera (Woman Worker) in El Paso. These women, says Director Carmen Ibarra, now know what government agencies they can complain to if they are not paid for overtime work, or the factory they work in has no restroom facilities, or they are sexually harassed. Ibarra says the garment industry was one of the best industries to work in when she arrived in El Paso over 23 years ago, but the abuse of women permeates the new sweatshops that have sprung up since the major factories moved over to Mexico. Now some of these women are fighting back.

Women are finding strength through numbers on both sides of the border. Eight years ago, The Mexican Federation of Private Health and Community Development Associations, known as FEMAP, started a community bank program, which caters almost exclusively to the poorest women. These women would never qualify for a traditional bank loan because they have no collateral. But in the community bank, 15-20 bank members are selected for a start-up loan ranging from \$80-\$450. Their enterprises may involve anything from selling individual bottles of Coca-Cola on the street to opening a secondhand clothing store. Each bank works as a group: meeting regularly, supporting each other's work, and sometimes using peer



Ellen Dorsey

pressure—as the entire bank assumes responsibility for paying back the loan. Members are also required to save 20 percent more so they can eventually continue on their own. Eduardo Gonzales, the director of FEMAP's economic development program, says the payback rate is 90 percent. Anna de Regno's secondhand store has been so successful that she has graduated from the community bank to FEMAP's microenterprise program. Where they once had to make do with her husband's \$45 a week salary from a Juárez *maquiladora*, de Regno says she's now able to pay all the household bills with the \$300 she clears weekly from her business.

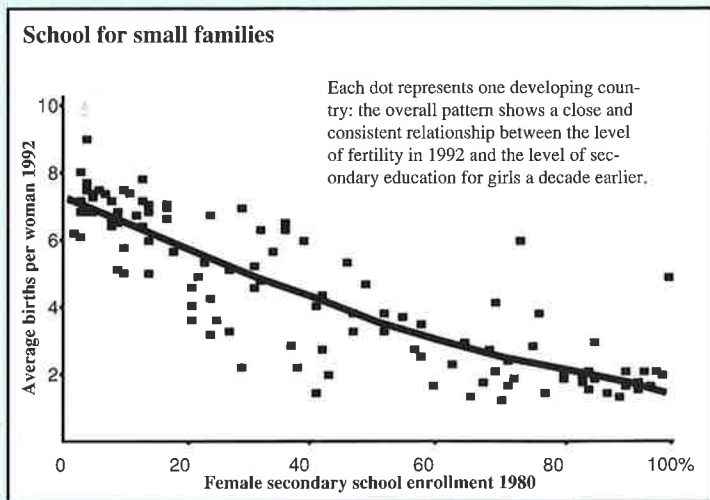
Because FEMAP's community bank program has worked so well, it's being used as a model on the US side of the border. Just across from Juárez in Anthony, New Mexico, the Women's Intercultural Center is starting its first ever community bank. The eight bank members just received their first loan this summer and hope to replicate FEMAP's success.

—Mary Gray Davidson

Twins. Mother and new babies recover at a FEMAP hospital in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico.

To order the two-part radio series about women on the border see page 10.

Consider This...



At the World Conference on Population and Development this September, emphasis was placed on empowering women as a means to slowing population growth. That point is supported by this chart, showing the role played by the education of girls.

Educators Conference

Global education means different things to different people. To some it means teaching about other cultures. To others it means teaching from an entirely different perspective—looking at issues like the environment or population from a global rather than strictly local or national perspective. For still others, it means encouraging learning that employs not only reasoning but also emotional and even spiritual tools.

In spite of this definitional vagueness, a community of people identifying themselves as global educators has emerged in the past two decades. They have largely coalesced around an operational depiction of global education drawn out in a 1976 article, *An Attainable Global Perspective*, by Robert Hanvey, an independent educational writer and social studies curriculum consultant. However, in 1993, Hanvey precipitated a controversy of sorts within the community when, at a national meeting, he publicly questioned his own earlier assertions about global education.

Hanvey's comments prompted the Stanley Foundation to convene two conferences to explore the future of global education. The first involved 16 individuals who are primarily well-established scholars in the field. The second, comprised of 50 participants, was younger, more racially and ethnically mixed, more gender balanced, and was drawn from both schools and less traditional learning environments.

Demographics were not the only differences, however. The discussions were markedly different. Most of the former group approaches global education in an analytical way that is geared toward influencing traditional disciplines, while the majority of the latter is more inclined toward an experiential approach to learning and teaching.

While the community may be somewhat divided, global education need not be set back because of it. In a report written to summarize the two meetings, global educator Jan Drum writes, "While there was no general agreement about strategies for the future of global education, the conferences did produce a number of proposed new projects." She continues, "Certainly most people who attended the events will continue their work. ...But will they take the time to come together? Under what circumstances might they do so?"

Perhaps those questions are being at least partially answered. Since the conferences, at least one regional network of global educators has taken root, and others may follow.

—Jeffrey Martin

Courier



Cindy O'Dell

Not the World Cup. Students play a game using an earth balloon. The game is part of the Summer Special organized by the Stanley Foundation each year in Muscatine, Iowa. The program is a kind of living laboratory for teaching global perspectives.

The New Economy

The concept of a national economy is obsolete and national sovereignty is about to fall next. That's the view of Hazel Henderson, a futurist and economist who is critical of traditional economic thinking. Henderson addressed the citizens conference on sustainable development held in Davenport, Iowa, last July.

National leaders keep trying to stimulate GDP growth; but as the industrial and service sectors of the economy become more automated, nations are experiencing simultaneous GDP growth and job loss. In response, national leaders engage in cutthroat competition to obtain and protect jobs for their citizens. But, increasingly their citizens understand that there is little their leaders can really do, Henderson asserted.

"The new economic model," she said, "is being built in communities where enterprising



Hazel Henderson

individuals are building local economies that in many ways are self-supporting and unaccounted for in national statistics." In some cases, even in the US, communities have gone so far as to issue their own currency for dealing with local businesses.

But local communities also need international agreements to regulate global activities. As the new model emerges, she says, "We are doing the local to global thing."

—Jeffrey Martin

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Sustaining Sustainable Development

At 5:30 on Friday morning, July 22, 1994, 35 people piled into cars and a chartered bus in Davenport, Iowa, for a three-hour ride into Chicago. They were headed to a meeting of the President's Council on Sustainable Development. The council would give them about 20 minutes to make a presentation. Then, they would head back to Davenport to participate in a conference aimed at making sustainable development a more accepted and practiced concept.

The more than 200 participants at the Davenport conference, "Two Years After UNCED: Exploring Partnerships for Sustainable Development," were representatives of nongovernmental organizations, educational institutions, and individual citizens from across the United States and at least seven other countries. The conference was held July 20-24, but recessed for a day on the 22nd so that some delegates could make the presentation to the President's Council.

The heart of the presentation was drawn from specific working papers that were drafted before the conference, discussed and modified there, and then finalized for the President's Council. The papers cover eight policy areas related to sustainable development.

The President's Council was established in 1993 and is composed of 26 individuals, including cabinet members, corporate CEOs, and the heads of large environmental organizations, among others. Its mandate is to explore and develop policy recommendations "that encourage economic growth, job creation, and effective use of our natural and cultural resources."

Still Working

The Davenport conference is indicative of the energy being put into the sustainability movement two years after it achieved international prominence at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The concept of sustainability refers to the long-term cultural, economic, and environmental health and vitality of the earth's peoples. It is often defined as meeting the needs of

the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The conference was the latest in a series convened by the Citizens Network for Sustainable Development. Cosponsors were the Stanley Foundation and the Iowa Division of the United Nations Association. The Citizens Network began in 1990 as part of US citizen groups' preparation for the Earth Summit, officially called the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Three months after the Earth Summit, network members met in East Lansing, Michigan, and voted to continue to work together on the issues related to the Earth Summit. They laid out priority activities for the network, including conferences to bring together those working on sustainable development for policy formulation, education, networking, and debate.

National and Local Focus

Among the issues debated in Davenport was the early performance of the President's Commission. While pleased that a high-level group had been assembled, many criticized the council for timidity. They said council members do not seem to appreciate that the realization of a more sustainable society requires dramatic change in the way people live and do business.

Having presented position papers to the President's Council, the participants returned to Davenport for workshops on local and regional efforts to give concrete meaning to sustainability.

—Jeffrey Martin



Common Ground

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The Freedom to Travel

Medea Benjamin is codirector of Global Exchange, a nonprofit research, education, and action center based in San Francisco. Among other things, Global Exchange organizes dozens of grass-roots educational trips each year known as Reality Tours. On a recent broadcast of *Common Ground*, the Stanley Foundation's weekly radio series on world affairs, Benjamin spoke with Keith Porter about the group's efforts to ease restrictions on travel to Cuba. The following are excerpts from program #9435. For a complete transcript of this program, see the ordering information on page 10.



Florence McCall

Medea Benjamin

The Freedom to Travel Campaign received an awful lot of attention earlier this year. Tell us what happened, what the goals were, and how it turned out.

Medea Benjamin: We take groups to China, Vietnam, and Cambodia, and suddenly when we started doing trips to Cuba we realized there were all these restrictions to stop us from going there. Even at the height of the Cold War you could go to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. You never had those kind of prohibitions in many other communist countries, why Cuba?

[In Cuba] we saw hundreds of thousands of Canadians, Mexicans, Italians, Germans, and all these other people who were there to just lie on the beach or do whatever they wanted to do, and they had no restrictions to go to Cuba. So we joined with other organizations around the country and created the Freedom to Travel Campaign to challenge the US government's policies on restricting US travel to Cuba. It mushroomed into a huge controversy pitting us against the US government.

And the government eventually tried to stop the trip?

We did one trip in October [of 1993] with 175 people, and the government

took away some of these people's passports when we came back into the country. You could go to jail for 10 years and be fined \$250,000 for merely going to our neighboring island. In the end, they didn't prosecute us—and they returned the passports. Well, they didn't change the law either, so that wasn't good enough. So, we planned another trip that went at the end of June. A week before the trip was to leave [the US Treasury Department] froze our bank account to stop us from going.

What happened?

I think it backfired on the government because we got tremendous press from the fact that here is a nice educational group of people that want to go to Cuba and learn about Cuba, just like they want to learn about any other country and the US government freezes their bank account. It doesn't look good. It doesn't look like a democratic system. We managed to get the US Congress to pass a nonbinding resolution saying presidents shouldn't restrict travel to any country for educational purposes. So we feel the momentum is on our side, but right now our accounts are still frozen and we are pushing ahead.

— excerpted by Keith Porter

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