



MISSION NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF CANADIAN JESUITS INTERNATIONAL (CJI)
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The Vision and Mission of CJI

The vision of Canadian Jesuits International is of a world of justice, peace and integrity of creation transformed through our commitment to the poor and our faith in a living God in our midst.

As a response to God's love in the world, the mission of Canadian Jesuits International is to support poor and marginalized people in developing countries through the work of Jesuit and other partners and to carry out educational advocacy.

To learn more about Canadian Jesuits International or, to make a donation, please contact:

70 Saint Mary Street
Toronto, ON M5S 1J3

Tel: 416.465.1824
Fax: 416.927.9097

Toll Free (within Canada & USA)
1.800.448.2148

www.
canadianjesuitsinternational.ca

E-mail: cji@jesuits.ca

Jenny Cafiso
Director

Economic crisis hurting AFRICA



Chikuni, Zambia

J. Cafiso / CJI

In March 2009, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) warned that the slow global economy, declining commodity prices and tighter credit markets are seriously threatening sub-Saharan African economies. Two Jesuits in Africa share their views.

The "GEC" and Zambia

Fr Peter Henriot SJ, Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR), Lusaka

There is a new set of initials, an acronym, very popular these days in Zambia: GEC. It simply means "global economic crisis" and it is on the lips of government officials, civil society groups, trade unions, business people, churches and a lot of ordinary Zambians. The GEC is a new fact of life – and it is proving to be very difficult to live with!

That Zambia is experiencing this GEC with a strong negative impact is one more indication of how globalised our world has become. Globalisation – the increase in structural economic, political and cultural relationships around the world – is affecting us all. Zambia, like other African countries, is profoundly affected.

Let me sum up five ways in which Zambia has experienced the GEC over the past year:

First, our economy is very dependent on copper – 70% to 80% of foreign earnings come from copper exports. Due to the slowdown of the economy in China, our main copper customer, the earlier boom here has stalled. A year ago, the price per metric tonne of copper stood at about USD 8000; today it is around USD 4000. Several new mines have cut back production or even shut down, leading to the dismissal of over 10,000 employees. Each employee might be supporting ten others among family and friends – so you can readily see what an impact this global fact has.

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A word from
Jenny Cafiso, Director CJI

D. Conlin

In this issue of Mission News, we look at how our global community is affected by the current economic crisis. At the centre of the storm are the poorest and most marginalised communities the world over, whose voices are usually unheard.

In the cover article by Fr Peter Henriot SJ, we read that the cost of food for an urban family of six in Zambia has grown by over 20% in the past year. I find it hard to imagine what this means for some of the people I have met in Zambia. What does it mean for a grandmother I met in the Jesuit Parish in Chelston, who has been left to take care of all her grandchildren after her own children died of AIDS? The day we met, she asked the shopkeeper to cut a bar of soap in half, because she could not afford the whole one.

CJI and its partners work in communities that strive for survival, growth and eventual self-reliance in the face of difficult social, economic and environmental conditions. The crisis further exacerbates the legacy of unjust economic relationships between nations, especially the outflow of capital and natural resources from many of the poorest ones. Global climatic changes add to the impact by seriously affecting agriculture and other forms of production based on the natural environment.

The ripples of the global economic crisis may be reduced by bailouts or restructured fiscal policies but in most economies in Africa, South Asia and Latin America, this is not an option, and at the community level where CJI works, is not the solution.

Many communities have made progress thanks to their own efforts and to partnership with others. As we hear from Nepal, education brings hope for a better future. Yet, this progress is threatened by the likelihood of changing priorities among wealthier nations grappling with their current economic realities. The result is very concrete in a place like Uganda, where Simiyu tells us the story of people, who can barely afford food or medicine.

The light at the end of the tunnel is a greater sense of cooperation among communities and nations on the margins of the global economic system. The resilient community spirit in Zambia, which deeply moved the participants of the Study Tour, featured on page 5, is perhaps the biggest hope we have today. For this to flourish, we need to move to a relationship of solidarity based on mutual respect, commitment to equality and social transformation.

The “GEC” and Zambia

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Second, foreign aid is somewhat uncertain these days. From multi-lateral donors (for example, World Bank, IMF), and bi-lateral donors (for example, USA, UK, Canada), Zambia can expect less generous grants and more stringent loans. Grants from many private donors – churches, civil society groups, foundations – will understandably be less because their own income is less. Remittances – money sent back home from Zambians working abroad – will be affected if those Zambians’ jobs are under threat.

Third, trade between Africa and Europe and North America is being impacted. Products from Europe, like machinery, are likely to be more expensive. Zambian exports – flowers, luxury fruits, vegetables – are finding fewer markets because of declining demand. Workers in the horticultural sector are losing employment; there has been an estimated 40% loss of jobs in this sector in recent months.

Fourth, local food prices are fluctuating. When the price of oil shot up several months ago, petrol prices jumped dramatically, and so did food prices because of transportation costs. But even with the oil price dropping, food prices have stayed high. The monthly Basic Needs Basket survey of the JCTR (see www.jctr.org.zm) shows that food for an urban family of six has increased in cost by almost 20% in the past year.

Fifth, in Zambia, we don’t only speak about an economic recession caused by the GEC but also a social recession. By that we mean that poor people – estimated to be about 65% of the population of 12 million – are suffering even more, as prices increase and government assistance tightens. This is when globalisation shows a human face and a sad face at that.

These five trends all have considerable effects on Zambia, which in many instances are growing daily. The next time you hear of “GEC”, think of the people of Zambia and of the rest of Africa.



Students at Canisius High School, Chikuni, Zambia

J. Cafiso / CJI



Wanyonyi F. Simiyu/AJAN

Millions of Africans, like this mother and her child in Kampala, have been hard hit by the global economic crisis.

Wanyonyi E. Simiyu SJ, a Kenyan Jesuit regent, recently went to Kampala to meet families supported by the Jesuit Solidarity Fund. His visits to the people's homes with Fr John Legge SJ, director of the Fund, left Simiyu deeply moved.

The places that the beneficiaries of the Jesuit Solidarity Fund call home are not easy to access. Reaching these so-called houses is a nightmare; they are crammed in the hills of Kampala without well-paved roads or proper sewage systems. But Fr John knows these places well.

The Fund is a lifeline that meets the basic needs of very poor people, dispensing house rent, money for food or medication, and school fees. Many are living with HIV or have been orphaned by AIDS. Life appears to be a constant struggle for survival, never more so than now, as Uganda feels the pinch of the global economic crisis.

Like the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, Uganda has been hard hit, even if forecasted national growth is higher than IMF projections for the continent. Uganda faces inflation and a drop in exports, commodity prices and foreign inflows, including aid; worrying news for a country that depends on international funding for half its budget for healthcare. Not surprisingly, funds for the recently launched national strategic plan to fight AIDS are uncertain.

The high-level economic turmoil trickles down into the daily lives of people: delays and disruptions in treatment, shortages in medical staff, increasing costs of transport and food. Are antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) and other health services freely accessible to people living with HIV? For some, they are relatively easy to access but for others, they remain remote. An HIV-

positive mother explained to us how difficult it is to get better health services for her child, also positive. The doctor had told her to buy medicine from a particular pharmacy in the city but she had no money to do so. Fr John sources some medicines from the Joint Medical Store, which is run by faith-based-organisations.

My heart is torn as I listen to the beneficiaries. "Fr John, we don't have food. Things are so expensive now in Kampala. Traders are increasing food prices almost every week." Fr John searches his pockets to see if he has some Ugandan shillings for this mother and her two children. Oh, yes, there are 10,000 shillings, equivalent to USD 5. "Everybody on the list of the Fund has this problem," he says. As I see him reaching out to her, I wonder, how can this woman take heavy ARVs while hunger haunts her?

Most women supported by the Fund are widows. Although many are weakened by disease and hunger, they work very hard at low-paying jobs – sometimes earning just USD1 a day – to send their children to school. But their salary is not always enough, especially for secondary education. "My children have been sent away from school because I can't pay the fees," another woman told us.

The Fund cannot meet all the needs but it can offer moral and financial support to people doing their utmost to raise their children in very tough circumstances. This is deeply appreciated, as testified by the words of one woman: "Fr John helped me to find new meaning in life. Were it not for him, perhaps I would be dead or abused on the streets, as I was when rebels raped me in northern Uganda. I daily offer prayers for Fr John and those who help him to help us."

Economic crisis & Africa: UGANDA

NEPAL: education is the answer

Fr Bill Robins SJ



Fr Roy Sebastian SJ

Meet Alexander. He's a nursery school student at Moran Memorial School, Maheshpur, Nepal. Each school day his grandfather, Zecharias, brings Alexander and his older brother, Alister, to school by bicycle.

Zecharias grew up in India, in West Bengal, on the east side of the Mechi River, which marks the Nepal-India border, just a score of kilometres from the school. As a young man, he moved here to work on an expanding tea estate. He has four children. The two youngest are completing high school at Moran Memorial. His eldest son, Prakash, married Jacintha. They live in company housing on the estate, where they raise their two sons. Each earns 580 rupees (about CAD

8.30) per week. Housing is free but without running water, other than a shared hand pump, or power supply. Their salaries allow for simple food and clothing and little else. Children can look forward only to work on the estate, eventually replacing their parents, and ensuring a constant supply of workers for this labour-intensive industry.

Many workers on the estate brought their Catholic faith with them. A decade ago the Jesuits were able to come and meet their pastoral needs. The parish priest, Fr David Ekka SJ, is responsible for about a thousand families scattered over the eastern half of Jhapa District. We provide the sacraments and good religious instruction but we cannot ignore other needs. How can we help people free themselves from this cycle of labour and poverty?

Education is the answer. A decade ago, Alexander's older cousins had nothing but tea estate work to look forward to. Their language and culture are different from those of the people who control the district. Although these tribal people have lived in Nepal for generations, none had Nepalese citizenship. Therefore none had the tools to break away from the tea estate. The status quo was fine for the estate management. Political changes have come, however. All the tribal people born in Nepal now have citizenship and are

looking for a more active role in Nepalese society. Good education can give them the skills they need to move ahead.

Alexander and his friends are able to study as well as anyone else, but where? The Nepal government provides basic education, but the standards are low, and there is discrimination against these tribal people. Children generally will not study for long in such conditions. Moran School, named after Fr Marshall D. Moran SJ who opened the first Jesuit school in Nepal in 1951, is trying to meet this need. The school provides education from pre-primary level through grade ten, the end of high school here. Each year, this private school needs about 5,000 rupees per student to operate. None of our students' parents can afford that. We ask for 100 rupees per month tuition and the parents also provide books, stationery and a simple uniform. The Jesuits raise the rest of the funds. All the students in the school are poor, from either the tea estate or surrounding villages.

I've been helping in the school and parish over the past two years and have enjoyed sharing faith and knowledge with these people. It's consoling to watch Alexander and his friends grow, on their way to becoming free and responsible adults.



The weekly Sunday evening rosary. Prakash is in the foreground, wearing a blue t-shirt; Fr Bill is sitting at the back.

Fr Roy Sebastian SJ

CJI Study Tour: CANADA – ZAMBIA

Nine people travelled to Zambia between 20 July and 8 August 2008 on a Social Justice Educational Study Tour organised by CJI. The tour was designed to help Canadian educators deepen their understanding of international social justice and to enable them to use what they learned with their students and the people they work with.



Twalumba

Sr Joyce Lorentz SSND

One of the many gifts of our Study Tour was Ignatian-centred reflection on our experience. Each time we were thus guided, our hearts were full: “All that we can offer You God, is thanks”, or as they say in Zambia, “Twalumba!” A proverb I heard in Zambia, “The dawn brings a lot”, proved true. Each day brought us to a new awareness of the awful, yet awesome, reality. The reality was awful: Zambia, mostly rural, is one of the world’s poorest countries. The reality was awesome: the people themselves are Zambia’s richest resource. They welcomed us warmly and joyfully, sharing generously with us – sometimes of what little they had materially, but always, of the wealth in their hearts.

As I savoured the memories of my Zambian experience, I wanted to do something concrete to “give back” to CJI. I decided upon a Christmas card initiative. With the permission of CJI, I used photos I took in Zambia to create a Christmas gift card enclosure, which pledged to make a donation to CJI, for the women and children of Chikuni, in lieu of giving the recipient a gift. On the inside of the gift card was a write-up about how the people in that particular photo relate to one of the issues we came across, for example, HIV and AIDS, income-generating activities done by home-based care groups, education or organic farming.

I was touched by how people read the different gift card enclosures, looked at the pictures, and chose particular ones for their intended recipients. Hopefully, not only were the people of Chikuni helped, but the givers and recipients of these cards became more aware of some of the realities of our brothers and sisters in Zambia.



The right to fish

Eva Lados

If you give a person a fish, he eats for a day. If you teach the person to fish, she is able to feed herself and her family. This is what I thought I would find during the tour: dedicated people metaphorically teaching the most needy to fish. To be sure, I did find that. I found people gleaming with pride as they demonstrated the axe-building skills acquired through the Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre (KATC) blacksmithing programme; organic crop-growing farmers who shared the skills they had learned at the KATC; children cheerfully posing at their classroom desks. What struck me most of all, however, was what I believe to be at the core of social justice. I learned that teaching a person to fish is not enough. Not assuring that the person has the right to fish is to miss the boat completely. The projects we visited promote this right, not least the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR), which undertakes research and advocacy on social and economic policies to promote more equal distribution of wealth, services and political representation.

Learning through letters

Amy Kieffer

I wanted to share my Zambian experience with my grade 7 and 8 students in a more lasting way than simply sharing my photos and a few stories. The village of Chikuni impressed me as I met so many witnesses of hope, people committed to building up their community. So, with the help of Fr Dhana at Canisius High School, a letter-exchange began between my students at Immaculate Conception School in Formosa, Ontario, and students at Canisius, Chikuni Girls’ School and Chikuni Basic School.

We wrote our first set of letters. The students were a bit dubious, wondering if they would have anything in common with teenagers who lived half a world away. Some questioned whether they’d even get a return letter. All reservations disappeared the morning we received our first replies. The energy in the classroom was electric – students eagerly pored over the letters, reading and rereading about their pen pals and excitedly sharing bits of information. Many recognised that their new friends shared similar interests. The learning that occurred through one set of letters was amazing. Now my students eagerly await their next set of letters, looking to build a relationship with a friend in Zambia, which somehow doesn’t seem all that different or far away after all.



The next issue of Mission News will feature more contributions from participants of the CJI Study Tour.

CJI mourns loss of former director



CJI celebrates the life and mourns the loss of Fr George Leach SJ who died suddenly of heart failure on 12 April 2009 at his home, Favre House, in Toronto. Born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on 11 July 1937, Fr George was a Jesuit for 51 years. He served as Director of Canadian Jesuit Missions (now Canadian Jesuits International) from 1975 to 1979, on its board from 1997 to 2002, and always remained deeply

committed to the CJI mission. We ask for your prayers for him and for his family. To read more about Fr George, please go to <http://www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/news/georgeleachs.jasp>

New program coordinator at CJI



CJI welcomes Ikem Opara as program coordinator. Ikem grew up in West Africa and has studied, lived and worked in Toronto for the past ten years. He majored in Political Science at the University of Toronto and has worked with Canada World Youth, Pathways to Education programme and Peacebuilders International. We welcome Ikem to our team and look forward to working with him.

Canadian Jesuits International Statement of Operations August 1, 2007 – July 31, 2008

Receipts:

Canadian Contributions	\$ 1,504,848
Grants	19,405
Interest Income	29,326
Investment Income – realized	454,324
Decrease in market value – unrealized (Note 1)	(838,963)
Pension Income	70,200
Sundry	21,996
	<hr/>
	\$ 1,261,136

Expenses:

Programs	\$ 1,086,099
Administrative	131,791
	<hr/>
	\$ 1,217,890

Excess of revenues over expenses for the year 43,246

Note 1: Accounting principles now require that investments that are held for trading must be reported at their market value. The change in the market value is to be reported as income or expense on the financial statements in the year in which that change occurs. In the past fiscal year the investments experienced a decline in market value and this decrease was reported as an expense in the fiscal year.

Sri Lanka Appeal



Peter Balleis SJ/JRS

A sister who works with JRS tries to help people displaced by war in Jaffna, northern Sri Lanka, to trace missing relatives.

The Jesuits in Sri Lanka need international support to reach out, through the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), to thousands of people displaced by civil war in the north. While backing international calls for a cessation of hostilities in Sri Lanka, JRS is asking for support for its emergency response to the multiple needs of the displaced people. CJI is responding to this appeal and asking people to send donations. Please send your donation to CJI (Sri Lanka Appeal) or go to our website <http://www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca>

Heartfelt thanks to two board members

CJI held its first Board of Trustees meeting of the year on 25 April. At the meeting, the board made good progress on developing project guidelines and approved the budget for the upcoming year. It was a landmark meeting as we said goodbye to two of our members who have served on the board for the last five years: Sudharshana Coomarasamy and Fr David Shulist SJ have made invaluable contributions to the development of a new direction and strategic plan for CJI. We are extremely grateful to Sudha and David for their service and commitment to CJI and wish them all the best.

River of Awareness

Stephen Sims, who has had two six-month sojourns with CJI in Darjeeling, has recently published a book titled *River of Awareness*. For more information, please go to: www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca

We need your help

Canadian Jesuits International (CJI) needs your help to continue supporting poor and marginalised people in developing countries worldwide. You can be part of the CJI mission by making a one-time or a regular monthly donation. Or you could dedicate a donation in memory of or in honour of someone.

Please send your cheque to:

Canadian Jesuits International (see details on cover page)

– Donate on-line at –

www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca

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