



END POVERTY NOW

www.endpovertynow.ca

WELCOME

A Message from our Executive Director Bobbi Bidochka:

“After taking on the position of Executive Director I have come to learn not only that we have an exquisite collection of dedicated staff, but also the potential to grow is vast and inspiring. End Poverty Now is ready to take on the challenge of poverty alleviation with full force. We are bursting with talent and drive, but we need your help. We need your involvement, your volunteerism and your contributions.

For the upcoming year, we will be expanding our chapters, extensively fundraising and creating awareness for the critical endeavor of alleviating poverty. On November 3rd, 2011 we are holding our Stop and Smell the Violets Dinner & Silent Auction fundraiser and we invite you all to attend; this fundraiser is essential to finance our Grassroots Projects. In December, we will initiate our Holiday Donation Campaign, as well as embarking on combining the Week to End Poverty with the STOP (Students Taking on Poverty) Conference in spring 2012. This week of poverty education and participation will engage the youth in thinking about poverty alleviation and putting solutions into action. I encourage everyone to



volunteer (email internal@endpovertynow.ca) and invite your friends and family to do the same. Join our facebook page and send people to our website (www.endpovertynow.ca) so they can discover all the important ways to contribute to End Poverty Now. InReach is an essential aspect to the operations of End Poverty Now and your participation is not only desired, it is necessary. Thank you all for the contributions you have made thus far, let us make this year the best one yet!”

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GO THE EXTRA LENGTH

Understanding Poverty In Brazil

By Maja Nazaruk
Director of External Affairs



Trying to understand poverty in Brazil is a tricky thing. I am writing from my experience living in the region of Rio Grande do Sul, the Southern most province of Brazil, where I stationed as a language and literature teacher at a Federal University for five months.

The reason for stating the trickiness of the situation is because of the high prices in Brazil, which give the misleading illusion of wealth. I have been personally very surprised to pay 30 reais (25\$ CDN) for my basket of laundry, 15 reais for lunch (11 CDN\$) and 17 reais (14\$ CDN) for a bottle of wine in a tiny beach resort called Cassino, where my apartment is located.

I have spent more money in Brazil than I could ever dream of spending in Canada and I do not know how locals manage to sponsor such activities. The problem with Rio Grande do Sul is that it is located in an enclave 5 hours away from the capital of the province, where there is no competition nor sales, like in bigger city centers. Regular city dwellers must travel outside to shop which is done by going to Chui (the duty free shops in Uruguay) and Sao Paolo-if they find means to transportation. Friends say: 'We live good. We have food and money for good clothes.'

I experienced the high material lifestyle of the Brazilian wealthy class, when I traveled to Porto Alegre

a few weeks ago to visit a friend who is a business professor at the University there, who is used to travelling to Italy, Portugal and Morocco on her vacation. Valet parking at a Uruguayan restaurant where I ate roasted lamb, fish lunch with crevettes at the market cost 70 reais for two people. My brains were fried by the difference in lifestyle between what I experienced in Cassino-the modest lifestyle of struggling families for honourable values, and this hard core material lifestyle,

"The situation is not as bright for many people, who are marginalized and excluded from society"

marked by 'things you own'. I experienced generous hospitality, located in hanging condos covered with archaic greenery in the city hills, with remarkable glass window views on the city center. These people did not know poverty. They were talking of retirement at the age of 45, had cleaning ladies, chauffeurs and cooks.

But I also noticed the favelas (slums) on my way to the University and I can imagine that the situation is not as bright for many people, who are marginalized and excluded from society because of unequal access to education and jobs. I have

met many men whose fathers have been forced to be the legal guardians and pay the pension to their ex-wives for their children, because they have been out of a job and unable to find work. Brazilian law forces parents to pay when the father cannot secure an income. I am friends with a cocaine drug addict whose mother is paying for his beloved three children. He is waiting for an advert in the newspaper to pan out to obtain a meaningful job. He has been out of work for 3 years.

In the country as a whole, about 35 per cent of the population lives in poverty, on less than two dollars a day. But in Brazil's rural areas poverty affects about 51 per cent of the population.

Being poor in Brazil means confronting disadvantaged conditions including being excluded from the ability to participate in educational programs, as well as inadequate water supply and sewage systems. It has to be clear that no one has good water supply in Brazil except for my friends in Porto Alegre. Good showers, good sanitation services are scarce in general. In Rio Grande do Sul where it is really cold in summer months, a hot shower is almost a scarcity. People have to warm up their bathrooms to take a shower, because the temperature goes below zero. There is no central heating, just small units which may or may not warm up your house.

The difference in social class is responsible for the economic inequality which marks the Brazilian people. Brazil's situation is akin to China's where a small elite holds on to the majority of resources. The fact remains that poverty levels are unacceptably high for a country with Brazil's income level.

**CALENDAR OF
IMPORTANT DATES**

September
8th - International Literacy Day
11th - World First Aid Day

October
2nd - International Day of Non Violence
17th - International Day for the Recognition
of Poverty

November
3rd - Stop and Smell the Violets
9th - World Freedom Day
20th - Universal Children's Day



**ALMOST HALF THE
WORLD'S PEOPLE CAN
HELP TO END POVERTY
NOW**

**3 BILLION OF THE WORLDS
PEOPLE LIVE IN POVERTY.
OF THESE, 1.3 BILLION LIVE
IN EXTREME POVERTY**

Statistics From Worldrevolution.Org



Maternal Mortality

By Katherine Ong
Newsletter Officer

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Of the 10 MDGs set in 2000, MDG5 Improve Maternal Health, is the one that has seen the least progress. The target of this goal is to reduce maternal mortality by three quarters by 2015, however it is unlikely that the goal will be reached by 2015. Despite maternal mortality being a preventable cause, each year, 500000 women die in childbirth or from pregnancy related deaths. With almost all (99%) of these maternal deaths occurring in low income countries.

There is a clear link between poverty and maternal mortality which has been evident for over a century. A woman is 97 times more likely to die in pregnancy

in a developing country than a developed country.(2) In Peru 49% of its population live in poverty and it is here where one of the highest rates of maternal mortality in the Americas prevails.

Deep inequalities and discrimination within Peruvian society leave millions of the poorest rural and indigenous women without the access to life saving maternal health services, with one of the major barriers being the understanding of the indigenous language. On top of this pregnant women in Peru are dying because they lack access to education, access to obstetric care and information on maternal health. Resources to deal with emergencies within the health care centre itself are also scarce.

This means poverty and inequality are inextricably tied together in the root causes of maternal mortality. In order to address the MDG of improving maternal health, programs and policies must address these two headings, **POVERTY** and **INEQUALITY**. Resources for maternal health care must be allocated to these poorer regions; barriers (such as cultural and economic) must be removed; and sexual health information must be accessible. Maternal health care must be taught to everyone. This is just the beginning and although the target for 2015 may not be reached in time, significant progress can be made.

(2)"A woman's lifetime risk of maternal death is 1 in 7300 in developed countries versus 1 in 75 in developing countries." World Health Organization, "Maternal Mortality."

FAST FACTS

- Every minute at least one woman dies from complications related to pregnancy or childbirth
- For every woman who dies in childbirth around 20 more suffer injury, infection or disease approx 10 million women each year

Statistics from UNIFEM Maternal Health



HOPE DOES NOT KILL

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By Beki Ngwenya
Grassroots Committee Member

“Why have we not managed to change our situation at home?”, a man on board a crowded bus asked his friend. “It is because we Zimbabweans are no longer able to trust anybody, let alone trust ourselves” replied the second man. The two men are part of several Zimbabweans that travel frequently to neighbouring South Africa to buy goods for re-sale back home, where commodities are either not available or too expensive. “At least, we are very patient people, and very strong”, replied the first man. “No, patience is perhaps our greatest weakness, we have allowed our country to go down, right under our nose”, his colleague exclaimed. This is a typical debate amongst Zimbabweans as they argue about how to come out of the socio-economic challenges that have besieged the southern African nation. It has left over 80 % of the urban population out of formal employment, with one of the highest inflation rates in the world.

Like many other African countries, Zimbabwe is well endowed with mineral resources. The country had a better economy than most neighbouring states in the early 80s, dependent mostly on the mining and agricultural sectors. The crisis in Zimbabwe is unique in that the country is not involved in any civil or national war, except that it has been under political dictatorship since 1980 under the presidency of Robert Mugabe. In 2008 the ruling party and the opposition merged, to form a government of national unity. However this ‘marriage of convenience’ is

currently in a political stalemate that is not allowing the country to progress economically or otherwise.

The current political environment is not conducive for development as political uncertainty or instability discourages investment. ‘When two bulls fight, it’s the grass that suffers.’ The polarisation between the political parties, has been and continues to be associated with violence and skewed appropriation of resources along party affiliation lines. Like grass, ordinary Zimbabweans have continued to suffer from effects of poverty particularly vulnerable groups such as women and children.

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Zimbabwe has one of the highest literacy rates in Africa. Over 85% of Zimbabweans can read and write. Most of the problems that they have are because of poor policies, mismanagement and corruption. In 2000 the ZANUPF government sanctioned the land invasions which saw people invading white owned commercial farms. Agriculture was the backbone of the Zimbabwe economy and after the land invasions Zimbabwe has serious food shortages.

The health situation is even more appalling, If one is admitted to hospital they have to bring their own medical supplies, including even a simple drip. Death rates in hospital have been worsened by the lack of medicine, and qualified medical professionals who have emigrated to neighbouring African countries and overseas. Most people in the civil service still earn very low salaries, with the average salary about \$150 a month, a figure way below what one will need a month.

The school dropout rate has increased tremendously as parents cannot afford to pay school fees. Prostitution and substance abuse is rife. A decade ago youth clubs and community centres offered sports and community activities such as theatre that kept the youth positively occupied, however these have 'disappeared' due to lack of funds to sustain them. Skills training centres that offered hands on skills and were used to keep unemployed youth off the streets closed due to lack of funds.

“..like the rest of Zimbabweans, ‘hope does not kill’, there is the die-hard spirit to simply believe that one day things will be alright.”

Like most African countries the AIDS pandemic has not spared the Zimbabwean people. There are a lot of AIDS affected orphans and child headed families. AIDS is killing the most productive age, leaving young children and the elderly with no one to look after them.

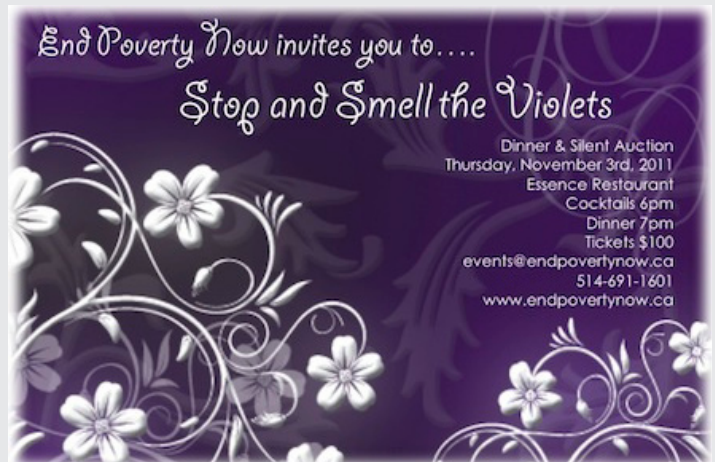
For Bulawayo residents, like the rest of Zimbabweans, ‘hope does not kill’, there is the die-hard spirit to simply believe that one day things will be alright. Zimbabweans keep on persevering and finding alternative means of economic survival. They have been long suffering and have not resorted to violent protests nor started a civil war as a means of changing government. Unfortunately for many they may never have a chance to live in a democratic Zimbabwe nor live under a different President. Very sad for the poor, some have no clue why they have been trapped in poverty and

condemned to suffer this long, while they hear that the country was ‘liberated’. Perhaps the reason why things have stayed the same in Zimbabwe is that the masses lack unity, aggressiveness and a sacrificial willingness to risk their lives to ‘fight’ for total freedom from their ‘liberators turned oppressors’. For now people continue being patient and crack jokes about their socio-economic situation. They somehow progress with their daily life, persisting and ‘hoping’ in faith against **POVERTY**.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- Director of Internal Affairs
- Sponsorship Officer
- Fundraiser Volunteers
- Research Officer

Please see our website www.endpovertynow.ca or email internal@endpovertynow.ca for further details.





Go the Extra Length

By Annemarie Aagaard
Director of Grassroots

It is 4.30 am when I wake up to prepare for 2 days of biking from Montreal to Quebec City – about 250 km in total. I can hardly believe the day has finally arrived. When I signed up for the Ride to Conquer Cancer it was minus 30 degrees outside and I was definitely not in shape after eating way too well over the Christmas holidays. But when a friend of mine announced that he had signed up I was not in doubt that I had to join! I have personally experienced losing close family members to cancer and so have several of my close friends, and I could think of absolutely no excuse to why I should not do this. The truth is, I actually did think about excuses at first. Why is that? I feel that this is something we as people very often do. We come up with all sorts of excuses to why we cannot do something – always looking for the easy way out to save ourselves the effort. I became very well aware of this when signing up and everyone seemed so impressed! Yes, it is quite a long ride but not at all an impossible task with a little bit of motivation and effort.

At the start line I am amazed by how big this event actually is; 1836 participants who altogether fundraised \$6.7 million that went directly to cancer research and support of cancer patients. There was an amazing atmosphere; people having breakfast, fixing last minute things on their

bikes and getting ready for the first day of the ride and 125 km. I am the odd man out on my small bike team of 3 – the only woman among two guys with all the latest and most professional bike equipment. I just have my city bike - it is a decent one with 21 gears and is less than a year old, but it looks heavy and out of place next to theirs. But I did not sign up to race to the finish line. I signed up to support the fight against cancer.

I am pretty soon to find out though, that my teammates have been looking forward to going fast on their racing bikes - a lot faster than my capabilities and city bike! So after a couple of hours I am starting to struggle in keeping up with them and to doubt my ability to complete the ride altogether. I had been training quite a lot for the ride and thought I was in fine shape! I am not sure at the moment and one knee starts to hurt. But I do not intend to give up so quickly – I fight and want to make it to camp! The last hour is difficult but I finally reach camp after 7 tough hours on the road. What a relief to see the camp and all the small blue tents ready to host us for the night!

The first riders start getting up at 5 so I wake up as well. I am feeling a bit discouraged this morning realizing that my knee is still a bit sore. I worry that I will not be able to finish the ride today. But at least

End Poverty Now is a registered charity. All donations are tax deductible.

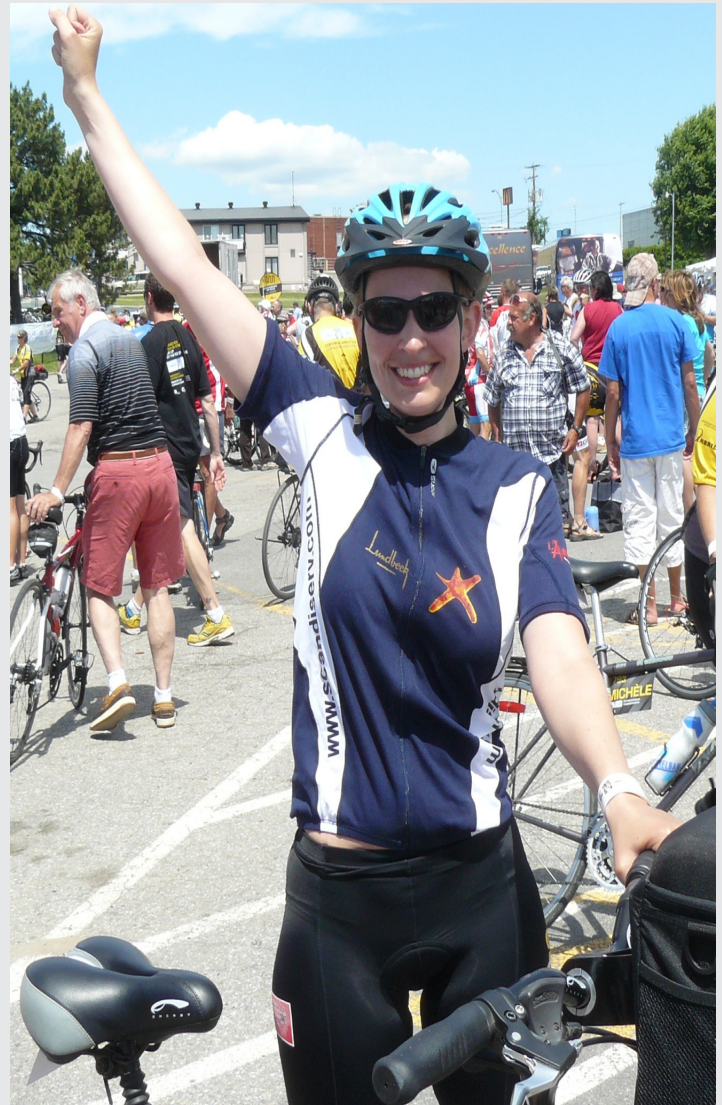
I have to give it a try so I decide to tell my two team mates to go ahead without me. If I am to finish at all I should not try to keep up with their fast pace. It is with mixed feelings I start out on this second day on my own, but soon my mood is completely lifted. I turn a corner and see an older man who stands alone by the side of the road. He is holding up a piece of cardboard that says 'I survived cancer'. To every single rider passing him by, he simply says 'Thank you'. He completely raises my spirits and brings me back on track to why I am here.

From this point on I keep a good steady speed and can now fully enjoy the incredible scenery on the way, all the nice snacks and relaxing grass areas at the pit-stops, and take in the amazing atmosphere that this kind of big event holds. I am happy to realize that I am in fact in pretty good shape and am now able to enjoy it and remember all the people I am riding for – and I feel proud!

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"I decide to go the extra length, to do the extra effort to not always make excuses... This is why i volunteer most of my spare time to work for EPN"
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After about 6 hours on the bike I finally approach the finish line – and what an amazing feeling of accomplishment it is! I must admit that I am very close to shedding a tear as the crowd is cheering me on, I see my husband waiting for me, and my name sounds through the speakers as I finally cross the finish line. It was worth every single sore part of my body and I would not hesitate to go the extra length again.

I decide to go the extra length, to do the extra effort, to not always make excuses and take the easy way out. This is why I volunteer most of my spare time to work for EPN. My workload at the moment is almost equal to two full time jobs and I simply do not have enough hours in a day to complete everything. But the truth is I would gladly spend another 7 hours on a bicycle, or several more Saturday nights working, if it can make someone else's life just a little bit better. I am privileged because I have a choice, and I choose to go the extra length.



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End Poverty Now (EPN) is a non-partisan, nonpolitical, non-religious, non-profit Canadian charitable organization based in Montreal and dedicated to the long-term alleviation of abject poverty. EPN represents a group of dedicated individuals, and is operated on a tri-pillar base that emphasizes Grassroots Projects, InReach and Education.
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If you are interested in writing for the newsletter, please email our editor, Katherine Ong at newsletter@endpovertynow.ca
Visit our website at www.endpovertynow.ca
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