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Our Mission

End Poverty Now is an organization that is dedicated to the long-term battle against abject poverty. End Poverty Now represents a group of dedicated individuals, mainly students, who want to make a difference in the world through working to address the causes and relieve the effects of poverty. For more information on how to get involved with End Poverty Now, check out our website at www.endpoverty.ca.

To contribute to the production of the newsletter, e-mail

newsletter@endpoverty.ca.

What's New at EPN

Hello everyone!

Thank you for tuning into our November newsletter! Exciting things are happening at EPN. In part, EPN is expanding as we embrace the addition of **new staff and volunteers** including:

Nermeen Elkady- Public Relations Officer
Hilary Ferguson - Newsletter Officer
Jason Wong - Alternative Media Officer
Stephanie Anne Moynihan - Bilingualism Officer
Alicia Bruce - High School Outreach Officer
Kurtis Lockhart- Research Officer
Philip Marks – Webmaster

We would like to thank outgoing Laura Nhem and Rose Burns for their significant contributions as newsletter and EPN's alternative media respectively. Also, we would like to thank Johnson Fung for his continued dedication to EPN's website. Your work has been and continues to be integral to our organization.

EPN is enthusiastically embracing new opportunities for expanding our efforts. Among these, we are excited to announce our collaboration with **Crowning Glory**, a campaign of dentists who sign on to donate a dollar from each crown to support poverty alleviation efforts through End Poverty Now.

Also, we are excited to announce that **Yorkhouse School** in Vancouver, BC is using End Poverty Now's Poverty 101 curriculum in their classroom. This curriculum is a five-lesson-plan session on global issues, poverty and positive action students can make. If you are interested in learning more about EPN's curriculum, please email schooloutreach@endpoverty.ca.

In addition to this, EPN is proud to have endorsed **Make Poverty History's G8 Civil Society Platform** as can be found online at <http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca/g8/platform>. This platform, as an effective plan set forth by organizations across Canada, is a vehicle for improving the G8 governments' policy prescriptions behind the Millennium Development Goals.

Our team keeps growing across Canada and there are always opportunities to get involved. As always, we are looking for writers, designers and students interested in starting chapter groups at their school. Please email info@endpoverty.ca for more information!

Jennifer Sault
Executive Director

Special Thanks

Thank you to the EPN team who has been extremely busy during this past month.

Thank you to our writers and our editor Nina McCurdy.

Laura Nhem, Newsletter Officer



World Food Day and World Food Summit are on the Horizon Amidst Escalating Hunger

By David Rozon

In spite of food programmes and massive aid, hunger across the globe has increased in the last two years. Rising prices, weather conditions, and war have contributed to one of the worst health conditions the planet has seen in the last century. For example, drought spells in Eastern Africa have devastated crops in the region, adding to the damage caused by war and displacement. Currently, approximately 20 million people in the region rely on food assistance to survive, mainly because prices for food staples in the horn of Africa have mostly doubled in the last two years and continue to rise. Somalia, for obvious reasons, has been hit the worst, with close to half of its population requiring “emergency livelihood and life-saving assistance.”

Eastern Africa exemplifies the decrease in food security within poor countries and states ravaged by war. Sadly, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has declared that an estimated 840 million people worldwide (almost one-sixth of the world’s population) are starving or malnourished. Despite the facts we know about global hunger, it remains a “silent crisis,” to quote FAO director Jacque Diouf, because it hardly infiltrates the media or our daily mindset. Thus, the FAO is pushing the importance of World Food Day (October 16th) more than ever, as well as its upcoming November World Food Summit in Rome, where it will call for an end to hunger by 2025 through further agricultural investment.

World Food Day (WFD) began in 1979, with October 16th being chosen as the date since it marks the day the FAO was created in 1945. Since then, WFD has led to many symposiums and conferences on hunger, pooling resources from different disciplines in order to formulate feasible and effective plans to combat world hunger. It is a day for educating the public about food security across the globe (the availability and accessibility of food to fulfill basic nutritional needs), raising funds for programs and organizations dedicated to eradicating famine, and creating applicable solutions through debates and forums. This year the FAO will host a week-long conference focusing on how to deal with hunger during economic crisis. However, a highlight will be an unprecedented call and plan from the International Alliance Against Hunger (IAAH) to stop starvation by 2025. Now, it should be noted that hunger and malnutrition fall into two different categories. Hunger essentially means starvation or famine. Malnutrition, on the other hand, is the improper amount of caloric intake or required nutrient, protein, and vitamin absorption. Malnutrition, I believe, also includes sanitation, as in the quality of food and water that is accessible. Thus, no one is claiming we will have a perfectly fed world by 2025, but the goal is to phase out the lowest and worst case of food security. That being said, IAAH’s objective is still ambitious and inspirational. In fact, they already want to develop plans to feed the world fifty years from now, when the global population will reach 9.2 billion (an increase of about 50%). In addition, IAAH wants to create ways to maximize our use of resources and energy and explore policies that governments should adopt in order to reduce poverty, which is usually the number one cause of malnutrition and hunger.

Following World Food Day in October, the FAO will host a World Food Summit in Rome, held on November 16-18. The deplorable increase in hunger because of the economic crisis has prompted Mr. Diouf to organize the summit and create a realistic agenda for action. The summit aims to finalize a “more coherent and effective system of governance of food security at both national and international levels”; “find ways to ensure that farmers in both developed and developing countries can earn incomes comparable to those of secondary and tertiary sector workers in their respective countries”; and “to mobilize substantial additional public and private sector investments in agriculture and rural infrastructure.” There have been two other summits of this kind (one in 1996 and another in 2002), but this one seems urgent, with Mr. Diouf inviting heads of state across the globe to ratify a document personally written by Mr. Diouf. This document admits that none of the objectives to ensure food security across



World Food Day and World Food Summit are on the Horizon Amidst Escalating Hunger (continuation)

the globe set out in 1996 have been met, despite mounting efforts from governmental and non-governmental agencies. It reads: "While the previous Summits have contributed to keeping food and agriculture on the international agenda and making commitments to fight world hunger effectively, the decisions made were not followed by actions commensurate with achieving the goals set." Moreover, Mr. Diouf declares that because of the economic crisis, the number of people across the globe that are either starving or malnourished is expected to increase by 104 million by the end of 2009. Mr. Diouf believes that hunger is caused by the lack of development and investment in agriculture over the last twenty years, and the focus on bolstering agricultural growth will be the main premise of the summit.

Personally, I am somewhat curious about investment in agriculture, because I have found that there has always been big money involved in agricultural projects - just not to the advantage of small farmers. However, Mr. Diouf's appeal is calling for "comparable" benefits to all farmers and this seems to be one of his primary concerns. We'll have to wait and see who attends the summit and what resolutions result. Please look for World Food Day events in your area where you're sure to find more information on food security and how you can contribute.

From the grassroots: From Burundi to McGill-Finding New Inspiration

by Jennie Natenshon, Member of the Grassroots Committee

Coming to McGill was a difficult transition for me. Aside from the usual fears of being away from home for the first time, making new friends and adjusting to city life, I felt a little lost and without purposeful direction. My senior year of high school one serendipitous meeting with a visiting student named Asvelt had set me on a different path. I found myself motivated and inspired, working to raise money and awareness for a healthcare clinic in Burundi called Village Health Works. Asvelt's brother runs the clinic, so together we were able to get involved right at the grassroots level. We were always planning, scheming and dreaming up our next move to help make the clinic viable, sustainable and strong. Being at McGill, and so far away from the work I had done, I felt distanced. I would talk to my friend Molly and pester her about how helpless I felt. Finally, I think more to quiet my whining than anything else, she brought me along to a Grassroots Committee meeting for EPN. All of a sudden, I felt that helplessness fade away as Jen, the director, quickly and efficiently started the meeting, getting everybody's updates on the various projects they were working on and the different organizations they were in contact with. Like the connections I felt with the clinic in Burundi, the projects were all grassroots initiatives focused on sustainability and community organization. People were honest, voiced their opinions in a respectful and intelligent way, and everyone seemed so focused on finding the best ways to support these projects. I could see, and appreciate, the connectedness of our goals.

My experience with Asvelt and Village Health Works was so incredibly personal, I had forgotten that there were other energies and ideas that I could draw on to strengthen my understanding of issues of poverty, social equity, and development. Although I came to join the committee quite late in the year, I got a taste for of the kind of work that EPN is committed to. My work started with Village Health Works, and I know now it won't end there. I haven't worked directly on a project proposal yet, but I'm excited to learn more about the process and look forward to receiving new proposals and working on new ideas. EPN and grassroots has reminded me of the power of the global community we all live in. By staying connected, by reaching out here in Canada and abroad, we are creating pathways towards sustainable development and the ending of poverty.



The International Day of Climate Action

by Nick Bond

If we provide enough pressure, we may be able to stop the bleeding.

As readers of this newsletter are well aware, many issues are facing the world's poor, each unique in the risks posed and the solutions required. From war and disease to drought and famine, the challenges faced by millions in the struggle against poverty can seem daunting. Yet as we work to tackle each of these issues, a much more powerful foe is becoming increasingly well defined on the horizon. With impacts that will magnify many of the factors already facing the world's poor, and also create a wholly new set of ecological hardships, climate change is going to be the most significant global challenge in human history.

Within the past few years, the study of climate change has gone from a fringe science to mainstream consciousness as humans everywhere begin to recognize that this could well be the first truly global crisis. The shift to create such widespread understanding and acceptance of climate change has everything to do with solid scientific evidence and the hard work of grassroots organizations to bring the issue to the forefront.

One such organization, 350.org, is in the midst of planning the first International Day of Climate Action set to happen this October 24th, 2009. The organization claims that it will be the world's most widespread day for climate action ever, and likely one of the most widespread days for united political action of any kind. The group has taken the stance that there is a significant and immediate need for unified action because humanity no longer has the luxury of time. And as it turns out, there are participants from every walk of life in nearly 120 countries worldwide that agree.

On the International Day of Climate Action, over 1500 organized events are scheduled to take place across the world in order to increase public awareness of the importance of mitigating the effects of climate change. In Canada alone, over 100 events have already been organized. The 350.org movement was founded by American author and environmentalist Bill McKibben along with a very committed team of colleagues. It is an expansion of the organization's 2007 *Step it up* campaign which saw similar events take place in each of America's 50 states.

The name of the 350.org organization concisely explains their key mission, goal, and objective. In a recent peer-reviewed paper, leading NASA scientist James Hansen uses significant empirical data to prove that in order to achieve long-term global climate stability, the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere should not exceed 350 parts per million (ppm). Unfortunately, with the Earth's atmospheric CO₂ currently at around 385ppm, the objective is no longer to simply stop the growth of carbon emissions, but to substantially decrease our use of fossil fuels and rates of deforestation.

"We'd like to make this number (350ppm) the most important number on Earth, on the theory that changing the conventional wisdom will change the possible political outcomes," says McKibben. "Unfortunately we can no longer solve this one light bulb at a time or one house at a time, important as those efforts are. The math simply doesn't work - the scale of change needed is too big, [and] the time too short. Our only hope is a large global agreement that resets the human relationship with fossil fuels – and the only way to get that is with real pressure."



The International Day of Climate Action (continuation)

With world climate talks set to happen in Copenhagen, Denmark, this December, the mid-fall timing of the International Day of Climate Action is no coincidence. It is the hope of 350.org, event holders, and participants that the momentum built will still be fresh in the minds of global leaders as they work to establish a replacement for the soon-to-expire Kyoto Protocol.

It's fairly well accepted that the world's poor will suffer most from the effects of climate change. With limited mobility and considerable dependence on their land and natural resources, significant changes to their natural ecosystems will have a profound negative effect on this group. Following the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report issued in the spring of 2007, the panel's chairman (and vocal 350.org supporter) Dr. Rajendra Pachauri was quoted as saying "it is the poorest of the poor in the world, and this includes poor people even in prosperous societies, who are going to be the worst hit." The report makes it clear that countries must commit to take collaborative actions to minimize the effects of climate change, and the 350.org organization provides an excellent start.

The movement is exceptionally well organized, yet maintains a hands-off attitude towards the organization of events. This provides one of the more appealing reasons to get behind this movement. The website doesn't provide any strict guidelines for holding an event, encouraging only that the organizers "be creative and have fun with it." However, if necessary, it does include event ideas and useful promotional multimedia to get the word out. Some event types that will be taking place include rallies, marches, 350 bike riders riding in formation, church bells ringing 350 times, campus events, trash clean-ups, service/volunteer actions, and public art installations.

The organizers of 350.org have been very proactive in promoting their cause, with McKibben himself making a recent appearance on The Colbert Report to discuss the campaign. Anyone who believes that the world needs to take a unified stand on climate change has no excuse not to organize or participate in an event given the amount of support and information made available by 350.org.

Only recently has the deep-rooted human ambition of endless growth and expansion come into question on a large scale. The environmentally destructive nature of using fossil fuels to power this aspiration was for decades thought too minor to have any real impact on the planet. However, as we see resources becoming more scarce, climate changes becoming increasingly noticeable, and many of Earth's ecosystems quickly deteriorating, our planet is suddenly feeling a lot smaller and more fragile. A breaking point on our planet does exist and we are inching ever closer to it. What exactly lays beyond that threshold is not known for sure, but based on 40 years of science, reviewed and approved by thousands of people educated in such matters, the grass will likely not be greener on the other side.

In his view of the future, McKibben says "I've really given up trying to figure out if I'm an optimist or a pessimist. I get up in the morning and I go to work as hard as I can to try to change the odds. Others can bet – I'll try to nudge the odds in the right direction."

For more on the International Day of Climate Action, visit www.350.org.



Book and Movie Suggestions

Crude: The Real Price of Oil (Documentary)

Joe Berlinger, 2009

Illustrious filmmaker Joe Berlinger traces the back-story to one of the most infamous legal cases across the globe: the \$27 billion “Amazon Chernobyl” lawsuit against Texaco. With a plethora of voices compounding this documentary, one experiences the spiralling sensation of a real-life legal thriller. Berlinger painstakingly captures the humanity of a people facing literal extinction through environmental peril.

Garbage Warrior (Documentary)

Oliver Hodge, 2008

This film follows the visionary architect Mike Reynolds as he divides his time between legal battles and building sustainable housing projects across the planet. Reynolds has made a career of making energy independent homes, or “earthship biotecture,” by reusing common garbage.

The End of Poverty? (Documentary) Coming out November 9th, 2009

Philippe Diaz, 2009

According to what may be the most important documentary of 2009, poverty is not an accident. Why is there more poverty now than ever before, despite the organizations and programmes that have been introduced to reduce poverty? In exploring our current phenomenon, this film unveils the war of resources that has created a unilateral flow of wealth in our global economy.

How YOU can contribute to the newsletter

End Poverty Now is always looking for articles to include in our monthly newsletters. It can be a story, an informational article, the profile of an organization or a person, etc. The possibilities for writers are very broad. If you are interested in writing an article for us or having something you already wrote published, the deadline for submitting your subject is the 1st of every month and the article should be sent by the 20th.

Also, there is a new **Book and Movie Suggestion** section of the newsletter. Therefore, if you have read a book or seen a movie or documentary that talks about a poverty related issue and want to recommend it, anyone can send us a short description (about 50 words) of what it is about. Don't forget to include the title, the name of the author, director and/or producer and the year it was released.

We are currently looking for volunteers who are willing to contribute regularly to the newsletter. Here are the positions that need to be filled:

- **In the Spotlight** section : The volunteer will need to write an article of about 300 words monthly about a person that is involved in the community. He/she will be responsible for doing the research and contacting the person.
- **Put this in your agenda** section : The volunteer will be responsible for finding different events (conferences, fund raising events, etc.) that are taking place across Canada so we can post in our newsletter. He/she will simply need to mention the name of the event, their website, the city and the date.
- **Editing:** The volunteer will take care of editing articles and/or various text.

Please contact us at newsletter@endpovertynow.ca for more information.