

Gala Dinner  
CIVICUS Nelson Mandela  
Graca Machel Innovation  
Awards 8pm Hall 2



CIVICUS World Assembly, Glasgow, May 23-27, 2007

# TERRAVIVA

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Morag Livingstone



# Free Democratic Values

► Harmonie Toros

**S**ocialist International President and former foreign minister of Greece George Papandreou accused the United States of discrediting democracy and dealing a second blow to the world's Social Democrats who are already reeling after the Soviet Union discredited socialism.

"Socialism was discredited by the Soviet Union and now we are seeing that with this particular US administration, democracy is being discredited by the United States," the leader of Greece's opposition Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) told TerraViva at the CIVICUS World Assembly yesterday.

Washington's actions should not, however, be used by others "as a reason to undermine democracy" in their countries, Papandreou warned. "The fight against terrorism ... should go hand in hand with strengthening democratic values and strengthening human rights rather than undermining them."

To underline his words, Papandreou showed no hesitation when he was invited by youth delegates to sit on the floor in the cage set up to remind the world assembly of the scores of civil society activists in prison across the world.

The left has a particular role to play in furthering a progressive agenda that addresses the "underlying problems," creating a sense of justice and dignity for citizens, he said.

"Without that, people feel there are double standards. And - particularly if double standards mean that the strong can do what they want and the weak have to submit - then that is the best way to throw fuel on the fire and to push citizens to either become apathetic or to go to the other extreme and become violent," said Papandreou.

To stop this trend, the world's left must shed its "narrow dogmatic views" of the past and "rekindle the basic values we have. Basic values are solidarity, basic values are democracy, basic values are human rights, basic values are empowerment, education, security - in the

**"Socialism was discredited by the Soviet Union and now democracy is being discredited by the United States".**  
George Papandreou

sense of not simply police, but in the sense of the social environment."

This work, he said, must be done in conjunction with NGOs.

Papandreou came Glasgow to advocate closer cooperation between political parties and civil society in a keynote speech at yesterday's dinner.

This includes bringing civil society into all aspects of the workings of a political party - from having a say in setting the party platform to giving representatives of NGOs a position in party institutions.

"NGOs can help us become more accountable by saying you are not doing your job," Papandreou added.

In turn, political parties can also help civil society. "We can tell our members, 'why don't you become members in Amnesty International or Greenpeace?'" he said.

Sylvia Borren, executive director of Oxfam Novib, welcomed Papandreou's words and urged for "an adult relationship" between political parties and civil society. "We must work together, having different roles and continuing to have a critical autonomy."

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## A Hope for Civil Society after "Black Wednesday"

The sexual assaults on the "Black Wednesday" demonstrators in Cairo marked an intensification of the already daily threat of humiliation for women activists. But there is widespread unity across Egyptian civil society on the issue.

During its current session from May 16-30, 2007, the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights will review the merits on the case raised by twenty-four Egyptian human rights organisations against the Government of Egypt – my government, my country.

The Government of Egypt is accused of violating nine articles of the African Charter in failing to prevent and prosecute sexual and violent assaults on women demonstrators and journalists on 25 May 2005, a day referred to by human rights defenders in Egypt as "Black Wednesday".

On that day, a referendum to amend article 76 of the Egyptian Constitution turned a new page on the authorities' choice of tactics to silence political dissent and intimidate activists.

Opposition forces, including supporters of the Kefaya (Enough) movement and other civil society activists, were holding a peaceful demonstration outside the Press Syndicate in Cairo to protest proposed changes to the Egyptian constitution.

The small group of protesters was surrounded by hundreds of members of Central Security (riot police), National Democratic Party (NDP) supporters, State Security Intelligence officers and other Interior Ministry officials. When the protesters refused orders to disperse, the riot police began to forcefully separate the crowd. Interior Ministry officials looked on as NDP supporters began to explicitly target women protesters and women journalists. They were surrounded by crowds who violently attacked, beat, undressed and sexually assaulted them; publicly humiliating them.

The incidents of "Black Wednesday" represent an extreme example of the regime's occasionally brutal suppression of citizens' rights to association, assembly and expression. The authorities' response to citizen participation in political life constantly oscillates between oppression and tolerance.

On that same "Black Wednesday" authorities allowed a delegation of the Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies (ICDS) to monitor the integrity of voting at stations across Cairo. In 2000, the government forcefully closed ICDS and sentenced 27 members of staff to various prison terms for attempting to monitor the 2000 parliamentary elections.

While the regime's attempts to weaken and silence critics targets activists from both sexes, it uses different strategies to intimidate women. Women activists are systemically blackmailed with public disclosure of "immoral" behaviour (be they real or fabricated) if they refuse to discontinue their political activities or to serve as informants for the State Security Intelligence Service. In a conservative society where doubts cast upon a woman's honour may have dire consequences for her well-being, such tactics have potential to prevent women from exercising their civil and political rights.

What the government did not anticipate when they employed this strategy to discourage women's participation, was the public outcry and rare show of unity among divergent political and social forces within Egypt. Unlikely allies – including members of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Centre of Socialist Studies, numerous human rights organisations, the Press and Journalist Syndicates and women's grassroots movements such as "The Union of Egyptian Mothers" and "The Street is Ours" – spoke in one voice to call for the resignation of Interior Minister Habib al Adly and the prosecution of the perpetrators of the events.

Even though the public prosecutor suspended the investigation into the women's complaints in December 2005 under the pretext that the perpetrators were not identifiable, various forces within civil society continue to support the victims' case and to advocate on their behalf.

When all domestic forms of litigation were exhausted, four of the victims decided to resort to the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights. It admitted the case in December 2006 and, in doing so, rejected the government's arguments regarding the lack of sufficient evidence to establish its liability. Regardless of the outcome of the hearing this month, "Black Wednesday" has proven to be catalytic in uniting Egyptian civil society. The events also proved instrumental in increasing the momentum of and support for the women's movement in Egypt.

As an Egyptian, as an activist and as a woman, the sexual assaults on the Black Wednesday demonstrators sicken and sadden me as they mark an intensification of the already daily threat of humiliation of women. Still, the unity of civil society across the political spectrum on this issue presents a new hope for the future of Egypt. This might be a feeble hope that still has to materialise, starting at the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights. Yet, it is hope nonetheless.

Diana Eltahawy, Civil Society Networks Coordinator, CIVICUS



Too many leaders are trampling freedom

# Politics of Fear

"The walls and barriers of the world in 2006 are reminiscent of the divisions that existed at the time of the Cold War. Like in the Cold War times, the agenda is being driven by fear, instigated, encouraged and sustained by unprincipled leaders."

A wall is being built in Baghdad; a fence/wall already exists in Israel and the Occupied Territories; another one is coming up in the border between Mexico and the USA; another is in place between Ceuta and Morocco and between Melilla and Morocco; and a barrier on water is being built by Frontex patrol boats.

These walls and barriers are reminiscent of the divisions that existed at the time of the Cold War. As in the Cold War times, the agenda is being driven by fear; instigated, encouraged and sustained by unprincipled leaders. For this reason, fear is at the centre of the Amnesty International Report 2007.

Fear can be a positive imperative for change, as in the case of the environment, where alarm about global warming is forcing politicians belatedly into action. But fear can also be dangerous and divisive when it breeds intolerance, threatens diversity and justifies the erosion of human rights.

Today far too many leaders are trampling freedom and trumpeting an ever-widening range of fears: fear of being swamped by migrants; fear of "the other" and of losing one's identity; fear of being blown up by terrorists; fear of "rogue states" with weapons of mass destruction.

Fear thrives on myopic and cowardly leadership. The politics of fear has been made more complex by the emergence of armed groups and big business that commit or condone human rights abuses. Both in different ways challenge the power of governments in an increasingly borderless world. Weak governments and ineffective international institutions are unable to hold them accountable, leaving people vulnerable and afraid. History shows that it is not through fear but through hope and optimism that progress is achieved. Yet leaders promote fear because it allows them to consolidate their own power, create false certainties and escape accountability.

Protecting the security of states rather than the sustainability of people's lives and livelihoods appears to be the order of the day. In developed countries, as well as emerging economies, the fear of being invaded by hordes of the poor is being used to justify ever tougher measures against migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, violating international standards of human rights and humane treatment.

Driven by the political and security imperatives of border control, asylum procedures have become a means for exclusion rather than protection. Across Europe, refugee recognition rates have fallen dramatically over the years, although the reasons for seeking asylum – violence and persecution – remain as high as ever.



Migrant workers fuel the engine of the global economy, yet they are turned away with brutal force, exploited, discriminated against and left unprotected by governments across the world.

If unregulated migration is the fear of the rich, then unbridled capitalism, driven by unethical globalisation, is the fear of the poor. The rewards of globalisation remain heavily skewed, leaving large swathes of humanity marginalised and vulnerable.

Although the rich are getting richer every day, they do not necessarily feel any safer. Rising crime and gun violence are a source of constant fear, leaving many governments to adopt policies that are purportedly tough on crime but in reality criminalise the poor, exposing them to the double jeopardy of gang violence and brutal policing, like in Brazil.

While these sources of insecurity continue to plague the world, the most powerful governments invest their energy and resources in the "war on terror" which itself undermines the very values of human rights that could provide real security to all.

The "war on terror" and the war in Iraq, with their catalogue of human rights abuses, have created deep divisions that cast a shadow on international relations, making it more difficult to resolve conflicts and protect civilians. This was repeatedly demonstrated throughout 2006, with the international community too often impotent or ineffective when confronted by major human rights crises, whether in forgotten conflicts like Chechnya, Colombia and Sri Lanka, or high profile ones in the Middle East.

This collective failure of leadership is playing out on a tragic scale in Darfur, where over 200 000 people have died, more than ten times that number have been displaced and violence is spilling over into Chad and the Central African Republic. The

UN Security Council remains hamstrung by distrust and divisions between its most powerful members, and Khartoum runs rings around them.

In an inter-dependent world, global challenges, whether of poverty or security, of migration or marginalisation, demand responses based on global values of human rights that bring people together and promote our collective well-being. Human rights provide the basis for a sustainable future.

Civil society is playing its part, from successfully campaigning for a treaty to control the sale of conventional arms to helping end the decade-long conflict in Nepal.

Political leaders must take a leaf from the book of civil society and recognise that only a common commitment based on shared values can lead to a sustainable solution. Things can be different: new leaders and legislatures such as in the USA, France and the UK have the opportunity to change direction and to replace fear with hope. There are also opportunities to forge alliances with countries like Brazil, India and Mexico. The new UN Secretary-General should take a leadership role in the protection of human rights.

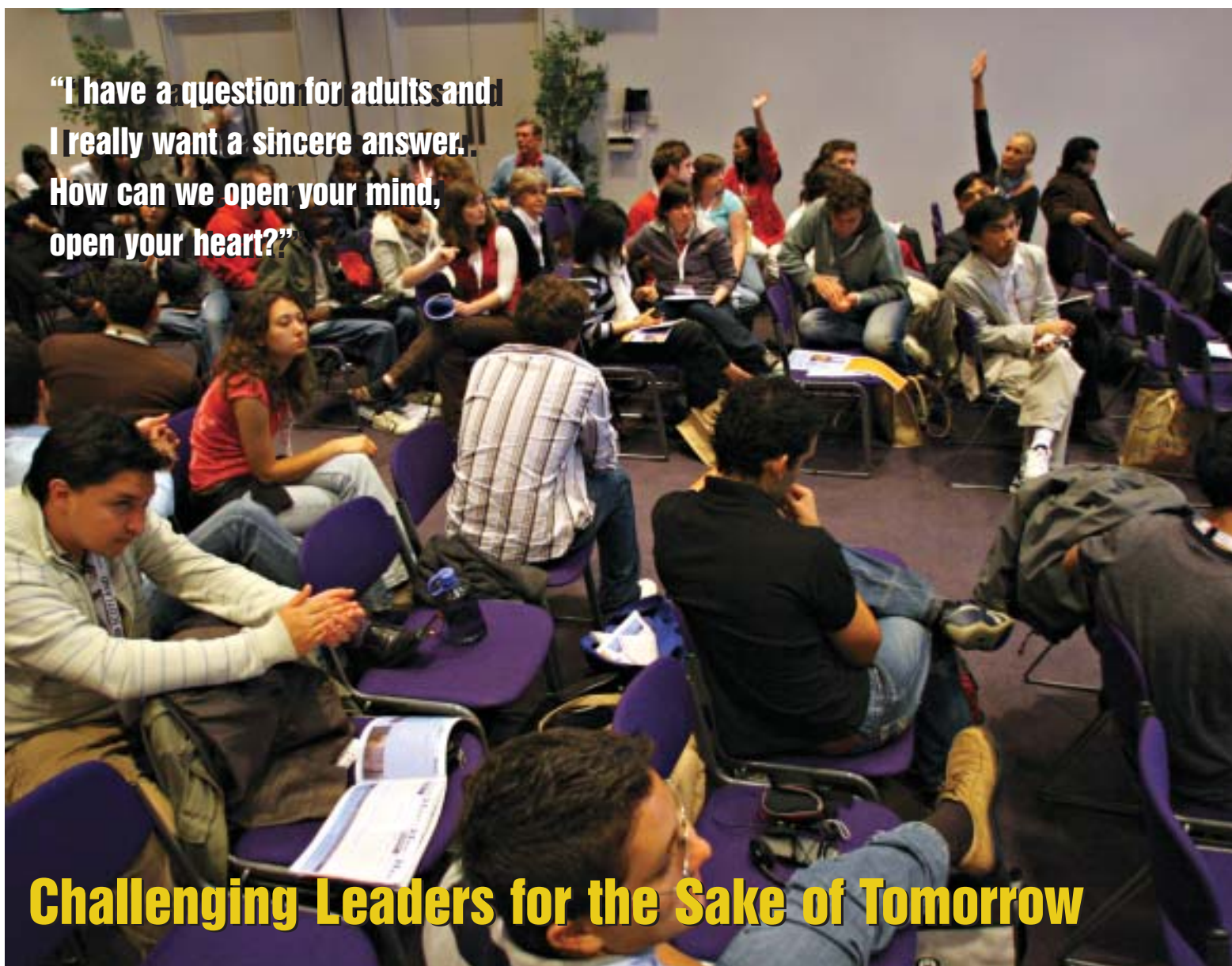
If they are serious they will focus on closing the detention camp in Guantánamo Bay, promote a comprehensive approach to Darfur that will focus on protecting civilians and push for a human-rights based solution to the conflict in Israel and the Occupied Territories.

Just as global warming requires global action based on international cooperation, the human rights meltdown can only be tackled through global solidarity and respect for international law.

Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International.

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**"I have a question for adults and I really want a sincere answer. How can we open your mind, open your heart?"**



Morag Livingstone

## Challenging Leaders for the Sake of Tomorrow

# A Youth Revolt

► Harmonie Toros

The dozens of youth delegates looked around but the head count was quick: There were no more than 10 "adults" in the room.

"We have to ask them: Where the hell are you?" charged Janet Jobson, a youth delegate from South Africa.

"Why don't we all go out and just grab them and force them into dialogue?" said Susan Mwape of Zambia, lurching from her chair ready to lead the revolt.

Youth expressed disappointment and anger at yesterday's mini plenary on "Youth Challenging Today's Leaders for the Sake of Tomorrow". They felt ready to challenge, but few were there to take them up.

David Woolcombe, president of Peace Child International and one of the few 'elders' in the room, did his best. "What challenge? You have leaders conducting illegal wars, illegal occupations of countries. Where is the youth challenge?" he questioned.

"And why should we take any interest in you? We have experience of parenting, we have experience of leadership, we know more than you do. Why should we take an interest in your opinion?" he asked provocatively.

Because "we believe that young people are the only game in town. If I was running any development agency, I would spend every cent on young people. Because you deliver," said Woolcombe, answering his own question.

He also offered some tips on how young people can improve their skills to further their aims.

"Young people are not very good at reporting or monitoring," he said. "You need to be more professional about your work."

Marina Mansilla, a 24-year-old from Argentina, agreed. "We need to understand your jargon. I mean look at the title of this panel. How cheesy!"

While strengthening their lobbying skills, the participants of the two-day Youth Assembly that ran parallel to the World Assembly gathering more than 100 youths from over 60 countries, already had a few requests lined up.

The Youth Assembly next year should not be separate from the World Assembly, they said, but should be rather in the form of a "crash course" for the youth to learn the skills and issues to fully participate in the debates with the "adults."

Of the actual assembly, 30 percent of the participants should be young people. Furthermore, the perspective of young people should be taken into consideration in the CIVICUS agenda and the needs of young people should be taken into account by organisers.

"Just as any marginalised people, we have particular needs," stressed Mansilla.

The tone rose in the room when the youth delegates complained that their recommendations had no place at Sunday's final plenary which aims to wrap up the world assembly.

"We are not just asking, we are demanding," cried May-I Fabros from the Philippines. "We are not begging, we are demanding!"

Kumi Naidoo, secretary general of CIVICUS, was there to reassure the crowd.

He first offered a welcome apology for the lack of adults, stressing that a problem in scheduling had forced organisers to put the youth panel and the panel on children's rights simultaneously.

He also told the youth delegates that their recommendations would be included in the final

summary of the conference.

"This is a legitimate part of the summary," Naidoo said.

Woolcombe was less accommodating: "You say you wished more adults were here, I'm actually glad they weren't. I don't think you had very much to say," he charged.

"We are sitting here on a planet that is slowly frying itself, that is slowly melting its icecaps. It's not my generation that is going to have to suffer from that, it's your generation and your children. I hear nothing about climate change this morning," Woolcombe said. "I want to hear what you have to say, not how you want to say it."

The youth did agree to nine points they feel are crucial issues that need to be addressed: intolerance and discrimination; education; ecological crisis; health care and services; HIV/AIDS; lack of economic opportunities for young people; lack of recognition of rights of young people; poverty; lack of access and irresponsible use of technology.

Added to those were post-its placed by participants on a tree drawn out on a large piece of paper.

"Need to engage with more youth artists," wrote one young delegate.

"Every plenary and mini plenary in 2008 should have some youth emphasis and involvement," wrote another signed by "Adult aged 67."

Turning frustration into emotion, Huong Dang, a 19-year-old from Vietnam took the floor.

"I have a question for adults and I really want a sincere answer. How can we open your mind, open your heart? Because we really need your help. I really don't know how to open your heart."

## Women Demand Effective Role at Local Level

► Zoltán Dujisin

Increased support for women operating at local government level would help them become more visible and gain positions at decision-making levels – which would, in turn, inspire more women to participate in the critical sector.

This is one of the issues which emerged during the Mini-Plenary "Local Government: Making Accountability work at Grassroots Level".

"If you want to put women there to be part of effective change, they need a certain level of support," Hazel Brown, coordinator for the Network of NGOs of Trinidad & Tobago for the Advancement of Women told TerraViva.

"As with every other government system, the local realm is male dominated in the way it operates. This is why we train women and support them in order to be effective as women in the local government system," she said.

Brown told TerraViva that the need for increased participation is not a consequence of women's complete absence from policy-making, but rather of their lack of visibility: "Women have been there, but their contribution hasn't been valued, and that's necessary to inspire more women to go into local government."

The grievances are universal, the activist added: "Whether we talk about the United States, Tokyo or Bangladesh, we all face the same problems of under representation and this is why we share and review our strategies to learn from each other."

The plenary offered an additional opportunity for women's rights supporters to exchange experiences. Joao Paulo Lima e Silva, Mayor of Recife and President of the Brazilian National Front of Mayors, spoke of his organisation's role in promoting women participation at the local level.

"Brazilian women have organised themselves in various sectors demanding local public policies and popular participation in areas such as gender violence and labour discrimination," the Mayor told TerraViva.

However, he added, participation alone would not suffice: "I agree there is not enough stimuli for their participation, and their problem is real and comparable to that of racial discrimination, but more than that is needed: Women have to be represented at the decision-making level."

To counter this global trend, he pointed to Brazil's "annual women's conference, preceded by conferences in administrative regions, in which women discuss their difficulties and establish the orientation of public policies".

And the Brazilian message was heard: "This was a very interesting proposal and we will try that one too," promised Hazel Brown.

# Facing the Challenges of Accountability

► **Brendan O'Brien**

The accountability challenges of cross-sector collaboration faced by civil society activists and campaigners came under the spotlight yesterday at an Accountability Workshop at the 2007 CIVICUS World Assembly.

Alejandro Litovsky, AccountAbility organiser of the workshop, noted that “globalisation is advancing and states are retreating” from their traditional role of providing welfare and services to citizens. Instead, businesses are stepping in through privatisation and civil society is now encountering the difficulties and controversies that this causes.

AccountAbility, headed by Simon Zedak, was set up in 1995 to address issues of corporate social responsibility and has now evolved to apply similar principles to the operations of civil society organisations.

The major problem that the organisation has uncovered within civil society is that there is no agreed framework on mechanisms of accountability within and between civil society organisations, government and business and so co-operation becomes a problem.

Iraj Eghari, of Brazilian advocacy group Alegre, who championed children’s rights to candidates in the last presidential elections put it: “What you find is that organisations are not monolithic and there are competing power relationships within businesses and government, and also civil society.”

## Increased collaboration has brought new challenges of accountability for civil society

Litovsky began the meeting by discussing the conflict between different understandings of accountability. Panellist Elisa Larroude, from the Brazilian Getulio Vargas Foundation, agreed that civil society organisations must agree terms of reference: “There is a problem in defining accountability. I use the word accountability in English and the word is not the same in other languages. It is just absent from some vocabularies and so it is absent from some cultures.”

Human rights activists and campaigners may be tempted to point fingers at the business sector but Larroude contends that civil society organisations can learn from the corporate world. “Civil

**“There is a problem in defining accountability... It is just absent from some vocabularies and so it is absent from some cultures.”**

society can learn transparency from the corporate world, companies that float on the stock market have to have their accounts totally transparent to stakeholders and when companies buy stock the value of the stock is agreed on by everyone.”

The reality is that businesses and civil society organisations are now working closer together, according to Eduardo Pannunzio of Brazil’s Group of Private Foundations (GIFE), and this can cause difficulties.

“My point is that civil society can be swallowed up by businesses. There was a case in Brazil where a pharmaceutical business was distributing cancer medicine to the voluntary sector. Regulations did not allow the company to combine their products and social activities and so NGOs became involved in lobbying the government to end the legislation,” said Pannunzio.

Pannunzio went on to question the theme of accountability as development: “What matters to people is how they can improve their lives, get better jobs, not who is accountable to whom.”

However, civil society organisations can learn from the practices of the corporate world. Panellist Fransisca Fitri Kurnia Sri from Yappika, an Indonesian advocacy group, cited the example of an Indonesian organisation that set up a telephone line for people who wanted to complain about the local electricity service.

The complaints caused the company to change its practices showing that “you can achieve change through dialogue,” as Ms Kurnia Sri said.



Morag Livingstone

## Exhibit shows devastation of Kenyan drought

► **Zarina Geloo**

Concern Worldwide, an international aid and development organization has brought a special exhibition on the recent drought in Kenya to this year’s CIVICUS World Assembly.

The drought has been described by local people as the worst in living memory. The exhibition documents the impact that environment changes, causing the drought, are having

on the lives of ordinary people and how it is pushing them deeper into poverty.

Azra Sheikh from Concern Worldwide said the drought was a result of the effects of climate change: “There has been a change in the climatic conditions over the years, but last year had the most devastating effect as the people experienced an unprecedented drought.”

For the first time in their lives, the pastoralists – nomads who have borne the brunt of the drought – had to depend on food aid for their survival as their livestock suffered huge losses, she said.

Concern Worldwide has in the last couple of months been helping the pastoralists replenish their food supplies, as well as helping them restock their domestic animals. But she warned this would take anything up to ten years as the animals had suffered severe losses.

The exhibition can be seen next to Concern Worldwide’s stand 120 in Hall Five.

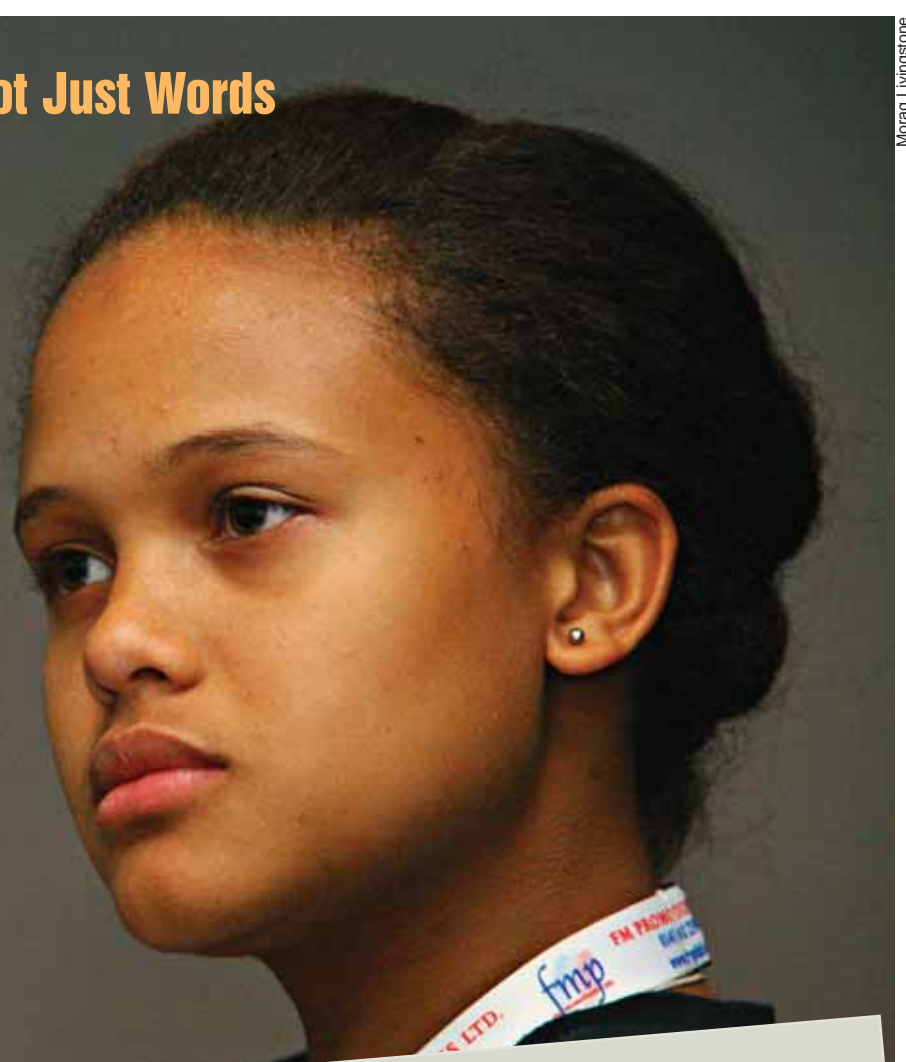
## Renowned pianist Keiko Matsui, an icon of contemporary jazz, played at the CIVICUS World Assembly dinner last night



Morag Livingstone

## Children's Health Needs Actions Not Just Words

# Growing Up with a Legacy of Broken Promises



Morag Livingstone

► Claire Black

It was a session dominated by the legacy of broken promises and the need to hold governments to account and an agreement that there is a desperate need for answers and action on child health issues. And, adding urgency to the debate at the mini-plenary "Accountability for Children's Rights: Why is Health Care for our Children Taking Second Place?" was acknowledgement that the promises made in 2005 at Gleneagles and the spending commitments of the African countries made in Abuja remain unfulfilled.

More than 10 million children die each year before the age of five – a fact described by panel moderator Miquel de Paladella of the Global Movement for Children as a "scandal" as that most of these deaths were the result of preventable diseases.

Renee Van de Weerd of UNICEF stressed the importance of the development of a new kind of partnership between UN organisations, such as UNICEF, and NGOs. She argued that real relationships based on sharing of information and a commitment to work together as partners were vital to improving the services available.

It was a sentiment echoed by Jeff Mecaskey of Save the Children UK. He said: "At a global level, international NGOs have not served their brothers and sisters in the south well enough."

He called for improved relations and a respect for national boundaries on the part of the G8, rejecting the notion of a "neo-colonial management technique".

Against the background of 10 questions posed by Johannesburg junior city councillor Charlotte Bertin (14) - including why do governments ignore global warming and why are women

and children treated like second class citizens – the discussion was focused as much on challenges as solutions.

In a call for shared responsibility and accountability, Abiola Tilley-Gyado of Plan International said: "In Africa children make up more than 50 percent of the population. They're not the future, they are the present."

From Bertin's account, it is a present dominated by the threats of poverty and illness and the frustration of being ignored. Telling the story of the deterioration of a school friend suffering from

AIDS, Bertin put a very human face on the issue of child health.

"Living in South Africa I've seen and heard about many terrible things," she said. "I've seen people die. But as a child it really makes you question things."

So, did Bertin feel that the questions she brought to CIVICUS had been answered? "Yes, many of them were," she said.

"But hopefully they will be answered more by people doing something rather than just talking."

## Spending Wisely

**Intelligent funding not only includes checks on how the money was spent but on how its impact was felt by recipients.**

► Zarina Geloo



Morag Livingstone

CAF Global Trustees executive Olga Alexeeva weighs up her proposals

Funding agencies are no longer content to sit in "ivory towers and lord over" organisations. Instead, there is a growing move to not only looking at how the money was spent but whether the money spent had a 'real impact', participants at the Intelligent Funding: "Greater transparency in funding decisions" plenary session at the World Assembly heard yesterday.

Olga Alexeeva Executive Director of CAF Global Trustees in Russia, Rory Tolentino from the Asia Pacific Philanthropy Consortium, Abiola Tilley-Gyado PLAN Managing Director for International Development, Jan Petter Holtedahl from Norad and Stephen Dunmore director of Big Lottery UK, all agreed that as funders their organisations had moved from prescriptive solutions to more inclusiveness in planning development programmes with their partners.

They also agreed that there was need for greater accountability and transparency in not just the receiving organisations, but also the funding agencies.

Funding needed to be inclusive – meaning all actors had to be represented at the planning stage where priorities were established – said Tilley-Gyado in response to a question from the audience on why projects

for differently-abled people and HIV and AIDs were not being prioritised.

"Intelligent funding means we are not only looking at being accountable but also assessing meaningful accountability – how has this (accountability) helped the beneficiaries of our programmes," said Tilley-Gyado.

Giving an example of meaningful accountability, Holtedahl said that in the aftermath of the Tsunami, there was a focus on visibility, an "upward accountability".

While no one doubted good work was done by the aid agencies, beneficiaries suffered because the focus was on the 'being seen' rather than maximizing the good work for the benefit of the victims.

"There was no downward accountability, how many people were actually helped or was aid going only where there was a chance of visibility," said Holtedahl.

Answering a question from the audience on the unequal power relations between funders and recipients, Holtedahl was very candid: "It was just the way that things were." He said there was an unequal relationship because it was a relationship between (financial muscle) donors and beneficiaries (no financial muscle).

"But these power relations must

be balanced out so that there is more equality. In as much as Civil Society needs donors for resources, the donors also need civil society to implement programmes."

Dunmore said his organisation had changed its focus from measurable outputs as an accountability measure to looking at needs and outcomes.

In response to a question about imposing donor agenda's Dunmore admitted that this could happen: "...we try not to do that but funders have to make the difficult choice about where to put their money. They have the legitimate right to employ a kind of overview and make decisions based on that, which may not always sit well with beneficiaries."

Alexeeva agreed with him saying donors had a right to decide where or what they did with their monies and adhered to their own standards of transparency and accountability which did not always dovetail with recipients.

However, she said it would be useful to have a system of accountability where all the actors (funders and recipients) were obliged to report how much of their funding was going directly to beneficiaries.

"This way funders, recipients and beneficiaries can track the monies and see where and how it is being used most effectively."

### Charlotte Bertin's Questions

- 1 Why is it that governments can find money for wars but not to save children's lives?
- 2 Why are so many promises made, like right here in 2005 by the G8, but are never kept?
- 3 Why could my friend not trust even his own relatives to look after him?
- 4 Why do adults in governments and business act like we are not going to be around in the future?
- 5 Why is it that nothing is being done about the millions of children being sold into slavery each year often by their own poor and desperate families?
- 6 Why is it ok that wealthy families are depleting the world's scarce resources while in other countries children are being cared for by their brothers or sisters because their parents have died of Aids?
- 7 Why are governments refusing to take the threat of global warming seriously?
- 8 Why are women and children treated like second class citizens?
- 9 Why do governments neglect our environment just to make money?
- 10 Why can't all world leaders be as caring, compassionate and inspiring as my hero Nelson Mandela?



Morag Livingstone

## Going Local Works Around the World

# Citizen involvement at local level is a formula for success

► Zoltan Dujisin

**B**ottom-up, down-to-earth, grassroots, concrete results. Many words describe the same idea: local governments should listen more to those they represent because citizen involvement works well.

At a mini-plenary called “Local Government Making Accountability work at Grassroots Level,” panellists discussed specific actions in specific

places while agreeing on common concerns.

With the contribution of an audience from all five continents, the discussion took a pragmatic tone and their local grievances contrasted with some of the abstract interventions that have characterised some events.

“My experience in Africa says that as soon as you hit the ground and work with civil society you quickly build trust with local governments. I’ve never

**“When citizens get organised and talk to local governments, you get tangible results.”**

faced strong resistance from them,” Papa Sene, a Senegalese from the GAIT (Government Accountability Improves Trust), told a panel.

“When citizens get organised and talk to local governments, you get tangible results,” he said, pointing at a Ghanaian example where citizens presented local governments with detailed and “down-to-earth budgets.”

“Some civil society organisations began to collect taxes for the local government, learning how to use money and therefore getting involved in the entire process.”

Across the Pacific, Joao Paulo Lima e Silva, Mayor of Recife – widely regarded as the standard for good local government in Brazil and the nation’s fourth largest municipality – said visible improvements in the city’s health, education, gender policy, and even its traditional carnival were much due to an effort at establishing small local committees that allow citizens to voice their views.

No other participant managed to match the mayor’s list of achievements, but his methods resonated with other speakers.

Rajiv Joshi, member of the Scottish Youth Parliament and many other organisations that help develop public participation said “local people have more understanding and ideas of what local solutions are needed.”

Joshi, probably the youngest but certainly not the shiest member of the panel insisted on the need “to engage with people, because they have the best ideas and the best solutions.”

“It’s important for local people to gather to evaluate the activities of local governments. It’s a principle to let them do this instead of leaving it to people who are elected every four years at the ballot box with a blank check to rule.”

Giving local communities the capacity to engage in local politics through grassroots action was seen as the key to forcing local authorities to respond to citizens and not to whoever is above them.

“Appointments from above in local governments create stronger accountability relations upwards to party structures versus downwards to local populations,” said Carmen Malena, Manager of the CIVICUS Participatory Governance Programme and moderator.

“Grassroots is where it’s at. We really have to work on empowering them,” added Malena, who more than once proved talented in bringing together local views to express universal concerns.

Nobody dared say it’s an easy task to bridge the gap between citizens and local governments: “We have to show engagement delivers results, and help people realize that local government is about things they always complain about, such as garbage collection or getting a doctor’s appointment,” Joshi said.

But “sometimes it’s difficult to engage with them on community planning because they find it a dry topic,” he admitted.

“To pave the ground for cooperation” both citizens and local governments need to be convinced to “work around something convenient to both sides,” added Sene. However, often the main stumbling block is political parties, to whom officials respond more than to citizens. “You don’t need to belong to a party to be a good mayor,” he said.

And he recalled yet another European heritage that was imposed on Africa: “We have adopted, not adapted a political system,” he said as the audience gave him the warmest applause of the day.

## Are CSOs So Much Holier Than the World Bank?

► Sanjay Suri

**I**t might be an unexpected tribute to Paul Wolfowitz that he departed leaving the World Bank a little more civil society-like. It might just happen, going by some suggestions made by John Garrison, senior civil society specialist with the World Bank, made at the CIVICUS World Assembly in Glasgow yesterday.

For a start, the World Bank might just be a little more popular than before. Garrison pointed to the “greater visibility” of the Bank. “The fact that the Bank is now on YouTube and on comedy shows, shows how mainstream we have become. People who had never heard about the Bank are now talking about it.”

Not every civil society organisation is exactly popular, but few have been quite as unpopular as the World Bank. The World Bank is also discovering an in-house freedom of expression more commonly associated with civil society.

The staff association at the Bank had issued an early statement asking for Wolfowitz’s resignation, Garrison said. The Bank has also seen a proliferation of blogging and open debate.

Now a demand is being raised for the leadership to change the selection process. “Sixty bank staff have signed this along with CSOs (civil society organisations) and academics. So for the first time ever, maybe, we are on the same page in terms of the government.”

The World Bank is having a crack at tackling some of its structural problems. A structural review was shared with representatives of government, business

and the civil society in 47 countries. That has produced a range of recommendations.

One is that the Bank should “strengthen country systems rather than relying on donor mechanisms for governance issues,” Garrison said. And there are others: that it should strengthen third party monitoring of the World Bank, harmonise actions among donor agencies, and promote transparency and accountability.

“This is at the implementation stage, and we’re actually seeking comments on this implementation through May 30 through our website,” Garrison said. The recommendations will be finalised next month, and the Bank is expected to start implementing these on July 1.

Whether this will mean that Europe and the United States will give up an agreement to share the top positions on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund is the fundamental question that these envisaged reforms may not address.

The World Bank and other such institutions like the International Monetary Fund “are accountable to their executive boards, and the power on the executive boards is skewed towards the donor institutions,” outgoing CIVICUS chairperson Aruna Rao told TerraViva. “The World Bank is accountable to its largest shareholders. While there is representation from other countries, the power is the dollar. So the largest shareholders wield the greatest amount of power.”

And the departure of Wolfowitz might not turn out to be the opportunity some think, she said.

“It seemed that there was some opportunity with the Wolfowitz scandal to address the question of

larger governance, and not just appointment of the new president. But I think the climate within the U.S. with such a conservative government, and the Europeans not willing to have an open fight with the Americans, means you’re going to get an American president of the World Bank.”

But is that so terribly unlike the position of some civil society organisations?

“I don’t think that is necessarily the case at all,” said Rao. “One aspect is the governance level and the inequity. But how well the Bank is run has to do with the management of the Bank, the checks and balances, and the accountability issues, quality standards, monitoring, evaluation, and in many of those areas the World Bank has very robust mechanisms in place.”

Every year the Bank reviews one-third of their entire project portfolio, Rao said. “And they subject those projects to quite strict quality standards. They have the resources to do that, NGOs certainly don’t have those kinds of resources. Are we as well run? We try to be, we try to build in good methods of accountability, and open methods of governance, but I think we have a long way to go.”

And that includes, she said, CIVICUS. “Many NGOs that are here at the CIVICUS World Assembly, including CIVICUS itself, have much to do in terms of really walking the talk on addressing exclusion issues, addressing women’s rights issues within their programmes, and within the power structure of their own organisation,” Rao said. “There’s a lot, a lot of work ahead for civil society organisations in many of those areas.”



Morag Livingstone

**Elvis is in the building: Jumpsuit-clad impersonator James Murray entertained delegates from CIVICUS and The Gathering with his version of some of the King’s best-loved hits.**

# Transparency has Led to a Lowering of Cost Where Civil Society Found Inspiring Success

► Sanjay Suri

Some retired engineers in the Pakistani port city Karachi figured they'd had enough of corruption in the awarding of contracts. They found support from the Partnership for Transparency Fund - about US\$ 23 000 - to do no more than watch a process of awarding of contracts in a US\$100 million project of the Karachi Water & Sewerage Board.

It worked. In the first US\$8 million round of the project, two to three million dollars were saved. "An investment of just about \$20 000 saved millions in a very short time," Pierre Landell-Mills from the Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF) told a small workshop at the CIVICUS World Assembly on Thursday.

It worked in Karachi - and it has worked again and again.

In Uganda, groups tracked education budgets to see if schools were getting the money intended for them. In Bulgaria, experts were paid little more than hotel costs to watch a telecom auction process.

The result: transparency leading to a substantial lowering of cost.

"Reform usually takes a very long time," Landell-Mills said. "But it is possible with a small amount of money to make a dramatic difference. Small steps can make for big changes."

The Partnership for Transparency Fund has so far given out 60 grants in 25 countries for such work, each grant less than US\$ 25 000 dollars. "Two-thirds of these have been successful," Landell-Mills said.

The watching business is catching on. In Latvia a group is watching the construction of a US\$270 million library building. In the Philippines, civil society groups have begun to keep an eye on projects and contracts following a path-breaking project of pursuing the delivery of school textbooks.

The school textbooks project in 2001 found a 40 percent shortfall in books getting to classrooms. In 2003, the project by Ateneo University found 21 percent of the books were not being delivered to schools that were difficult to reach.

"So we decided to track the delivery," said Dondon Parafina from the university. Not that easy, given that 64 million textbooks - at a cost of US\$52 million would have to be tracked to between 4 500 and 8 000 delivery points.

So other civil society groups joined in - Christian groups, Islamic groups, youth groups they all offered volunteers to do the tracking. The result? Now less than five percent of the books go missing.

And the schools that were hard to reach? "We were told that those places are hard to get to, but when we got there, we found they all have Coca Cola," said Parafina. "So the Coca Cola trucks



The CIVICUS World Assembly has been a platform for sharing

**"Citizens are ready to help. You just have to provide a channel."**



took our books there."

That was asking for controversy - and they got it. "We faced criticism that we are endorsing a particular product," said Parafina. "And we were told Coca Cola is not good for children. But then maybe this was corporate social responsibility, that they let us use their logistical strength."

Success, then, but not success in cracking the

big corruption, those arms deals and oil deals that are worth billions, and where the corruption is proportionately much bigger.

But in the little successes could lie the seed of bigger ones. "We have had a real ripple effect in the Philippines where the small successes are making a big impact," said Parafina. "Similar moves have now begun for public works, for the procurement of medicines, for World Bank funded projects. Our work with the school textbooks has had some unintended consequences."

And the small successes are not so small because they are creating an environment for bigger successes to appear.

The Partnership for Transparency Fund is itself getting bigger. "We are gearing up now for a much bigger programme," Landell-Mills said. The Fund, which has been supported by the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and some other institutions, now expects to receive substantial new grants from Britain's Department for International Development.

"This year we are doing 20 projects. We hope to take that soon to about 40 to 50 a year," Landell-Mills said. And it will happen through working with institutions, and with people within who want to see the right thing done.

But quite the biggest capital for this enterprise is people, said Parafina. "Citizens are ready to help. You just need to provide a channel."

In those recovered school textbooks could lie a lesson, in time, for the untouched players of those arms and oil deals.

## The Tricks of the Trade

► Gavin Yates

Getting your message in the media has been a consistent problem for civil society. Journalists' need for 'sexy' stories in an increasingly competitive marketplace does not sit well with the aims of some NGOs.

At a debate on Media and Campaigning at The Gathering yesterday, those difficulties were aired with a panel of journalists and activists answering questions from an enthusiastic audience keen to develop approaches that would get their message across.

Reeve Alderson, BBC Scotland's Social Affairs correspondent said NGOs need to use a targeted approach to get a story on television. "Know your market and target an individual journalist," he said. Offering an individual journalist an exclusive story about the work of an NGO is always more likely to produce positive results than the "scattergun approach" of sending out releases indiscriminately.

Alderson was joined by activist/journalist Aimira Reques from the Glasgow-based Media Co-op who recommended that NGOs develop their own material in terms of video and audio and use that as a lever to break into the mainstream: "With the use of web-clips it is possible to tell your story and then approach the TV companies."

A member of the audience who works for MOJO Scotland - an NGO that works with people who have been victims of miscarriages of justice - said he believed that the best way of gaining coverage was to use a celebrity patron. He said that in his experience organisations like his own had some coverage but newspapers were sometimes unsympathetic to following up on his clients after their release from prison.

Scotland's recently changed political situation was also covered during the debate. John MacGill, a journalist and political lobbyist, said that the new Scottish National Party minority government gave NGOs the opportunity to target politicians and media at the same time. "If you are sending out a news release that has a political significance, copy it to your MSP (Member of the Scottish Parliament) and this will give you a stronger story if it is raised in parliament."

The issue of media using pejorative language that ill-described the people they worked with was raised. Janette Harkess, the deputy editor of Scotland's largest broadsheet newspaper, the Herald, urged NGOs to complain directly to the media if they felt that poor language had been used or they had been misrepresented.

In Scotland, the relationship between media and NGOs appears to be respectful and healthy but this morning's debate proved that both sides have a great deal to learn about each other.

## PROGRAMME UPDATE - Saturday, May 26, 2007

Lunchtime discussion: Experts at the World Assembly will gather in the lunch venue to discuss Zimbabwe at 1pm

### Engagement Workshop: Youth as Peace builders in Post-Conflict Transition

Venue: Lomond

Abstract: There will be presentations by a panel of youth peace builders from Sierra Leone, Uganda, Indonesia and the Philippines, followed by discussion of their experience and lessons learned concerning the role of youth as peace builders in post conflict transition. Participation by youth and other members of

civil society from post conflict contexts is particularly encouraged

**Organisers:** World Vision UK; Satellite Community Development Organisation, Sierra Leone; World Vision Sierra Leone; Pader NGO Forum, Uganda; World Vision East Africa: Children Forum, Poso District, Indonesia; World Vision Indonesia; World Vision Development Foundation, Philippines; Children and Peace Building Programme, World Vision Asia Pacific Region: World Vision International

**Speakers:** Fatmata Binta Barrie (Sierra Leone); Emmanuel Lagedo (Uganda); Gustaf Melapa (Indonesia); Rehoney Musa (Philippines)  
Accompanying/Supporting adults: Claudius Davies; James Odong; Herrio Hattu; Neren Olarte; Pradeep Mahamuthugala

**Coordinator/facilitator:** Steve Williams

**Researcher/documenter:** Sarah Pickwick

### Plenary III

Olara Otunnu, Former UN Special Representative, Children & Armed Conflict, UN, & President of LBL, Foundation for Children NY, Nigeria

### Gala Dinner

Lisa Fabiani, MSP, Minister for International Affairs, Scottish Executive will be the guest speaker



# FUNDING UPSIDE DOWN

To be intelligent, funding must surely be democratic as well. Yesterday, £200 000 from the National Lottery was awarded to some 20 not-for-profit Scottish groups through popular vote at the Voluntary Organisations Gathering exhibition. The funds are part of a programme called Awards for Scotland. To qualify for an award of up to £10 000, groups had to present projects designed to mark the

200th anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery Act, passed by the British Parliament in March, 1807. The vote took place in several rounds from midday with a breakdance trio from Princes Project, one of the applicants from Glasgow, providing entertainment. The project uses performing arts “to challenge myths that create prejudice within communities” and was also one of the winners.

It is hard to say whether applicants brought in more people – which is not forbidden by the rules – to the vote. Winners included projects such as the Lasajang Community, which will bring Ghanaian musicians to Scotland to share experience and knowledge of the slave trade in Ghana, and the Miscarraiges of Justice Organisation, to “commemorate the loss of liberty and human dignity past, present and future”.

## Few takers for Community Day

► Claire Black

Should people get a day off to volunteer? Not if participants at The Gathering have their way. Reports of a call from the Trade Union Council (TUC) and a number of voluntary organisations in England for the creation of a ‘community’ day received a lukewarm response at The Gathering. Delegates at Scotland’s charity and voluntary sector event expressed mixed feelings about the call for a national holiday to encourage more people to give some of their time for volunteering activities. Robert Rae of trade union Unison

didn’t think the proposal would work: “I don’t think it’d make people volunteer,” Rae said. “A day off is a day off. People volunteer for different reasons but I don’t think they do it for holidays.” Peter Leigh, a volunteer with Voluntary Arts Scotland, agreed. “I can’t see it working,” he said. “It’s a good idea but the way things are these days, no one really wants to do anything.” However, the volunteering and training charity CSV states that 11 million people in Britain would volunteer if they were asked. For Karen Slattery, a volunteer with Concern Worldwide, a new holiday sounds like an ideal way to encourage people to donate their time

to charities and voluntary organisations. “We have a lot of people asking how they can get involved and volunteer for us,” she said, “but it’s hard for them because they work Monday to Friday, nine to five. If you gave them time off they’d be able to do it.” Volunteer Development Scotland representative Morven Brooks wasn’t impressed though. She thought the annual Make a Difference Day – to be held on October 27 this year – is much more successful. “Make a Difference Day is better because it’s targeted on voluntary work, it’s not just a public holiday. It encourages everybody to get involved and even to do team activities.”

### Q&A

## Youth want a Voice to Use

Youth Assembly Steering Committee member Joao Felipe Scarpelini, a 21-year-old activist from Brazil, speaks to TerraViva on the role for youth at the World Assembly



► Harmonie Toros

**TerraViva: What does it mean to be young?**

**Joao Felipe Scarpelini:** It’s really hard to define what it means to be young, because some people say it’s from 15 to 25. People in Africa and Asia say that it is until 30 or 35. In Latin America, in Brazil where I come from, we consider that young people start from 13, so it really varies. But I think that being young means that you have not already established your prejudices. You have less barriers and you are able to try new things. I think it’s a phase in your life when you try everything. It’s all about learning by doing, by living, by making mistakes.

**TV: Why do you think it is important for youth to be part of CIVICUS?**

**JS:** We are 50 percent of the population. If CIVICUS wants to be representative – and they are trying really hard to ensure a gender balance and representation from all countries – then they should be caring about young people. I think it’s important to have young people at CIVICUS not only to have young people represented, but also for learning. It is really interesting for me because I have the opportunity to meet with people that I really admire.

**TV: Do you think it is a two-way process? Do they learn as much from you as you do from them?**

**JS:** I think this is the idea, this is what has to happen. But I must say that I’m a little disappointed in this sense because CIVICUS last year committed to really engaging young people into the structures - and they did. In almost all plenaries we have young people speaking, we have the youth assembly and all the adults say it’s great. But, they don’t really commit to doing anything. We only had 10 adults in our youth plenary. The dialogue is missing.

**TV: What do you say to criticism that the youth is talking more about the need to be heard than what they have to say?**

**JS:** There is a real lack of communication between adults and young people. The main thing we are always saying in all these youth meetings, in all conferences, is: ‘young people want to have a voice.’ But we never say what we want to say with this voice. In the youth assembly, we actually established a list of nine issues we want to discuss. We not only want to have a voice, we want to have a voice and a chance to discuss these topics.

**TV: What are the nine issues?**

**JS:** Intolerance and discrimination; education; ecological crisis; health care and services; HIV/AIDS; lack of economic opportunities for young people; lack of recognition of rights of young people; poverty; lack of access and irresponsible use of technology. These are the points we really want to tackle.