

interact

The magazine of **PROGRESSIO**
CHANGING MINDS • CHANGING LIVES

Live Simply

Show your solidarity
and help tackle poverty

In this issue:
Water in El Salvador
Indigenous rights in Namibia
Deforestation in Somaliland



editorial

Live Simply

Solidarity is one of Progressio's key values, and it is one of the key messages of *Populorum Progressio* ('On the development of peoples'), a document written by Pope Paul VI in 1967 which calls on all people of goodwill to work for human development and fight injustice.

This year, 2007, is the 40th anniversary of *Populorum Progressio*. To mark the occasion, a number of Catholic organisations have joined together to promote its message of solidarity. Under the *livesimply* banner, the organisations are calling on people in the UK to consider the impact that our lifestyles are having – and the impact that our actions can have – on the lives of people who struggle in poverty in our globalised world.

This issue of *Interact* explains why the *livesimply* message is important to Progressio – and what you can do to show your solidarity. Throughout the year, Progressio, along with other organisations in the network, will be promoting *livesimply* by highlighting the links between our lifestyles in the global North, and the lives of people in the global South. We will also be asking you to join with us in taking action that can help tackle the injustices that keep people locked in poverty.

Pope Paul VI wrote: 'the development that leads to peace can come only when all peoples help each other'. As *Interact* shows, Progressio seeks to work together with people around the world to help them find solutions to the problems they face. I am sure that, in the year ahead, in our work and with the *livesimply* message, we can continue to rely on your solidarity and support.

Cover picture: *A window to the world: a welcoming face in Ossorua, East Timor.* Photo: Nick Sireau/Progressio.

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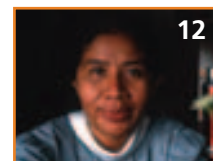
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Unit 3, Canonbury Yard
190a New North Road,
London N1 7BJ
tel +44 (0)20 7354 0883
fax +44 (0)20 7359 0017
e-mail enquiries@progressio.org.uk
website www.progressio.org.uk

Progressio Ireland

c/o CORI, Bloomfield Avenue
Off Morehampton Road
Donnybrook, Dublin 4, Ireland
tel +353 (0)1 6144966
e-mail progressio@eircom.net
Charity reg. in Ireland no. CHY 14451
Company reg. no. 385465

Editor Alastair Whitson

Sub-editor Anne-Marie Sharman
Executive Director Christine Allen
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Coming in off the streets

AFTER THE YEARS OF CONFLICT in Somaliland many children have to cope on their own, as they have no adults to care for them. The severe drought we are suffering means they are being forced into towns to try to earn a pittance and survive. In the town of Berbera there are at present about 500 street children struggling to survive. They have not had any schooling. The boys mainly shine shoes for 200 Somali shillings (about three US cents) a pair, or sometimes wash cars, while the girls wander about begging. They are often driven to steal in order to eat.

I very much want to help these vulnerable children become aware of HIV and AIDS and learn how to stay healthy. Sexual relations outside marriage are forbidden by Islam and by tradition, but these children no longer have a family framework to support and guide them as they become young adults. We don't actually know whether they are sexually active, but it is important that they know how to avoid transmission of the virus.

A local community development organisation, the General Assistance

and Volunteers Organisation (GAVO), has worked with the street children, providing literacy classes and practical training. GAVO also runs a community programme to raise awareness of HIV and AIDS and in December we organised a one-day workshop to explore how to adapt this for the street children.

A team of 10 youth volunteers spent a day searching for participants, visiting the places in and around Berbera where the street children congregate, notably the market places, the beach by the Red Sea, the tea shops and *qat* selling points (*qat* is a leaf that is chewed for its stimulant properties). We ran the meeting in an interactive and friendly way, encouraging the 37 children and young people who came to contribute and get involved. We wanted to find out about their lives, tell them about how GAVO could help them and begin to address the issue of HIV and AIDS.

The children told us how they had become street children – some are orphans, others have run away from home to escape abuse and violence. Most (80 per cent) have been in Berbera for 10 years, but others have

only just arrived. They sleep outside, possibly under cardboard, near where they search for food during the day – the markets, the beach. Only four of these children had learnt to read and write – skills they have forgotten.

Many of them chew *qat*, sniff glue or petrol and smoke to forget their hunger for a while – all of which carry health risks. One boy stood up to show the plastic bottle from which he sniffs Arabic gum to alleviate his stress. They know that if they fall ill they are likely to die and some are aware of HIV and AIDS.

Only boys came to the workshop, and we must find ways of making contact with the girls who live on the streets. We are also planning courses for GAVO's trainers, so that they can incorporate HIV and AIDS education into their work.

My vision is that GAVO will be able to empower these children and young people to face up to the challenges of HIV and AIDS.

Rogasian Massue is a Progressio development worker working with GAVO in Somaliland.

Sharing and learning in Latin America

IN OCTOBER 2006, Progressio brought together 47 people from across Central and Latin America to a seminar in the Dominican Republic on civil society participation and local development, writes *Belisario Nieto*.

This initiative was to enable members of local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Progressio development workers and others to share their experiences and thus enable all of us to learn from each other.

Many countries in Latin America are only now beginning to know peace and rebuild their communities, after 30 years of dictatorships and civil wars, but

Belisario Nieto speaking at the Progressio seminar.



there are fundamental disagreements about the way forward.

The international financial institutions – World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Inter-American Development Bank – favour technocratic solutions to achieve economic stability and growth, cutting social expenditure and allowing countries to increase their foreign debt. They support civil society participation but wish to stay in control – something obvious from the very low participation in elections.

The NGOs and development agencies, including Progressio, favour a truly participative approach, developing inclusive democratic processes and empowering people to make choices for themselves. We work with local communities on their issues – poverty, the role of women, the environment, water. We train municipal election candidates and work with municipalities to involve the local people in decision-making.

Organising this event was challenging. We had to find a way of running the seminar that

ensured real participation, exchange of ideas and learning. We wanted representatives from Progressio's Africa, Middle East and Asia programme there to contribute to cross-regional organisational learning. This meant overcoming language barriers and added to the expense. Christian Aid, One World Action, Trocaire and the European Union supported us financially.

Participants from El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Peru, Ecuador and the Dominican Republic came to Santo Domingo. The economist and urban planner Yves Cabannes, who has a wide experience of the region, talked about the strengths and weaknesses of local development in Latin America. We tackled three main themes: how to produce municipal development plans that serve the local communities; how to influence national plans for the poor; and how to motivate a significant democratic participation.

This is one more step towards enabling people to take control of their lives.

Belisario Nieto is Progressio's Programme Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Chega! Enough!

PROGRESSIO JOINED with other groups in November 2006 to press the UK government for action on the key recommendations of a landmark report on violations committed in East Timor.

The 2,500-page report by East Timor's Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation, entitled *Chega!* (Enough!), was presented

A derelict building in Dili – a reminder of East Timor's turbulent past.

to the Timorese parliament a year ago. It documents widespread and systematic violations of human rights perpetrated by all parties in East Timor between 1974 and 1999, immediately before and during Indonesia's occupation of the territory.

The report includes a number of findings and recommendations concerning the UK's role in the conflict. In particular, it calls for a UK contribution to reparation payments to victims of the conflict and greater control over the arms trade. To date there has been no formal response from the British government.

For the All-Party Parliamentary Human Rights Group, the Indonesia Human Rights Campaign TAPOL, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and Progressio, the lack of justice for past crimes in East Timor was a

contributing factor to the serious unrest that destabilised the country earlier this year. The failure to address impunity is likely to undermine efforts to stabilise the country.

'Despite the fact that crimes of the gravest kind were committed in East Timor no Indonesian officer has been held responsible,' says Charmain Mohamed of Human Rights Watch. 'This lack of accountability makes it hard to build a society based on respect for human rights and justice.'

As Dr Purna Sen of Amnesty International stated: 'The people of East Timor are still waiting for justice.'

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The full report and an executive summary is available at:
<http://etan.org/news/2006/cavr.htm>



Women living with HIV call for action

ON WORLD AIDS DAY, the International Community of Women Living with HIV and AIDS (ICW) reminded us that women are both specifically susceptible to HIV infection and are subjected to harsh discrimination if they become HIV positive.

In a statement issued on 1 December 2006, Mary Robinson, ICW Patron, said: 'Millions of girls are dying on our watch. The escalating rates of HIV positive girls and young women present the world with a critical moral dilemma and responsibility that demands increased leadership and that employs as little rhetoric as possible. What we need now is practical organisation and action.'

Statistics on current HIV trends from UNAIDS (the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS) show that, in many parts of the world, women are more likely than men to be living with HIV. In nearly every country, the number

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For more information about ICW, see www.icw.org

Nick Sireau/Progressio



Women attending a community meeting on HIV and AIDS in Uganda.

of women living with HIV continues to grow, with over one million new infections among women since 2004.

The women living with HIV are calling on everyone to help in the struggle against AIDS by fighting the silence and ignorance around sexual relations, gender stereotypes and domestic violence. They ask us to work for effective sex education for young people and for a fundamental shift in the attitudes that result in the disempowerment of women, especially those who are living with HIV.

Progressio to work in Malawi

PROGRESSIO is to open a new programme in Malawi in 2007. Since deciding to wind down its programme in Namibia, because of operational and fundraising constraints, Progressio has been investigating where it could open another programme, taking account of local needs and organisational capacities. The board has agreed on Malawi.

Malawi is located in southern Africa, bordered by Mozambique, Zambia and, to the east, Tanzania and Lake Malawi. It is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a United Nations Human Development Index rating of 151 out of 165. More than 65 per cent of the population live beneath the poverty line and 14 per cent of the population are living with HIV and AIDS.

After independence from Britain in the 1960s, Malawi was under the dictatorship of Hastings Banda. He was ousted at the beginning of the 1990s, with the assistance of a church-led popular movement. Civil society is slowly coming to terms with the freedoms and responsibilities democracy brings. There are many active civil society organisations in Malawi, working with and supported by international agencies which provide funding as well as technical and capacity-building support.

Progressio will now conduct in-depth assessments into likely areas of cooperation and look for premises, with the aim of having development workers placed with partner organisations in the country within a year.

Access to safe water is a human right

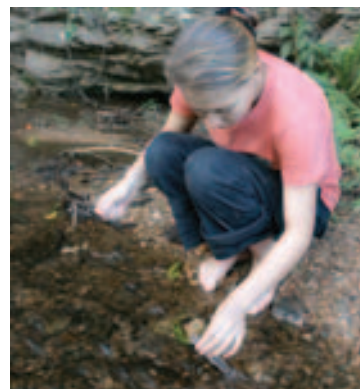
LAST NOVEMBER (2006) Progressio Ireland, the Latin America Solidarity Campaign and Debt and Development together hosted a roundtable in Dublin to discuss possible advocacy work on global water issues. Many organisations and individuals attended and made presentations, including documentary film-makers, Irish government representatives, NGOs and academics.

Globally, 2.6 billion people lack access to sanitation and over one billion lack access to safe water. As a result almost two million children die every year of water-related diseases. Moreover, by 2025 it is predicted two out of three people will be living with water shortages.

Lack of access to water for domestic needs and growing crops is a political, not an environmental failure – it is the poorest who suffer, those who have no political power or voice.

The meeting was held on the day the United Nations launched a major report on water and poverty, *Beyond scarcity: power, politics and the global water crisis*. The report calls for access to safe water to be recognised as a basic human right and for a global action plan to achieve the Millennium Development Goal targets on water and sanitation.

Progressio Ireland and other organisations agreed to explore ways of influencing developed country governments to increase their commitment to water issues in their overseas aid budgets.



Nick Sireau/Progressio

Testing water quality at a Progressio-supported project in Honduras.

Biofuels: a disaster in the making

OVER A HUNDRED organisations and individuals, including Progressio, signed a document in December 2006 calling for the immediate suspension of all subsidies and other forms of inequitable support for the import and export of biofuels (fuels made from organic materials such as plants or manure).

They point out that the international trade in biofuels is having a negative, and worsening, impact on food sovereignty, rural livelihoods, forests and other ecosystems. Large-scale, export-

oriented production of biofuels requires large-scale monocultures of trees, sugarcane, corn, oilpalm, soy and other crops, and these are already the main cause of rural depopulation and deforestation worldwide.

Non-governmental organisations in the countries of production reject initiatives to produce the crops for biofuels 'responsibly', as they believe that the negative social and environmental impact is inherent to large-scale monocultures. Existing standards, regulations and enforcement

mechanisms in the current and potential production countries are insufficient to prevent this.

Local production and consumption of biofuels does, however, play an important role in sustainable livelihood strategies, notably for rural women in developing countries. Certain small-scale and strictly regulated sustainable forms of biofuel production can be beneficial. But these must be carefully monitored with the communities concerned, and introduced together with measures to maintain and enhance the local economy and environment.

Promoting people's rights



AS THE UK commemorates the 200th anniversary of the abolition of slavery this year Progressio asks for your help to secure basic human rights for Haitians and Dominico-Haitians working on the sugar plantations of the Dominican Republic.

A Progressio photographic exhibition last December highlighted workers' appalling living and working conditions which both the photographer Gianni Dal Mas and priests working in the plantations have described as 'slave-like'.

Following the exhibition, Progressio made a three-year commitment to promote the rights

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For more information and to see pictures from the exhibition, go to www.progressio.org.uk/haiti

of Haitians and Dominico-Haitians in the Dominican Republic.

Lizzette Robleto, Progressio's advocacy coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean, says: 'We need to increase understanding and generate action by key decision makers on policies that may affect the legal, economic, social and judicial conditions of Haitians and Dominico-Haitians in the Dominican Republic.'

To help Progressio do this, please use the postcard included with this *Interact* to ask his Excellency Leonel Fernandez of the Dominican Republic to comply fully with the 2005 Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruling that children born of Haitians and Dominico-Haitians in the Dominican Republic should be granted nationality.

Uncertain times in horn of Africa

SOMALIA AND SOMALILAND face a period of uncertainty after the victory of Ethiopia and its ally, the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG), over the Islamic Courts in January 2007, writes Steve Kibble, Progressio's advocacy coordinator for Africa and the Middle East.

Ethiopia wants to withdraw quickly, but the TFG, with weak armed forces and minimal local support, cannot rule Somalia without outside assistance. African Union peacekeepers are not ready and a period of instability appears inevitable.

Somalilanders are watching the situation with particular concern, as the TFG is led by Abdillahi Yusuf, who as a former leader of neighbouring Puntland has attacked them in the past. Equally an Islamic Court leader, Sheikh Aweys, was found guilty in absentia of planning Islamist attacks in Somaliland.

It remains to be seen if the TFG will leave Somaliland alone, or attempt to engage in dialogue with Somaliland in an effort to combat political Islam.

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For updates on the situation in Somalia as it affects Somaliland, see the Progressio-sponsored website www.somalilandfocus.org.uk

DID YOU MAKE any new year's resolutions? I recently read a newspaper report that said most resolutions never get past the end of January. Well, if you didn't make any resolutions, or feel you might not keep the ones you made, why not check out the *livesimply* promise bank?

The idea is that we promise to do something different about aspects of our lives that will have an effect way beyond January. I do hope you will get involved and tell your friends about it.

'Living simply so that others may simply live' can seem a trite thing to say, but it's easy to forget about the impact of our lives on the lives of others.

Livesimply is a new campaign, but the inspiration behind it is 40 years old.

When Pope Paul VI wrote the encyclical *Populorum Progressio* the huge inequalities between rich and poor were just breaking into the public agenda. Then it was revolutionary for a Pope to express concern for a more just world. He did not write about charity, but of the need for structural change – a challenge to society and to all of us as individuals. Most challenging of all, his words were a reminder of the importance of people. The heart of his message was that all people should have life in all its fullness, not merely be economic units. He called for people to be able to be artisans of their own destiny, not powerless in the face of global forces.

Today there are many active campaigns challenging poverty and global inequality. But the importance of human dignity for everyone remains



Let us each choose a new year's resolution that will really make a difference to others, writes **Christine Allen**

Live simply so that others may simply live

crucial. Wherever human rights or human dignity are violated – by poverty, injustice or oppression – change is necessary. It is no accident that, when we became *Progressio* a year ago, we chose to echo in our name the values of the church's social teaching.

Progressio seeks justice for all, especially for the poor, something requiring real change in policy and practice. We want change leading to development for the whole person – respecting human dignity, not just delivering an economic result. These values underlie and inspire all our work – the way we address our issues and the way we work with our partners overseas.

To celebrate a document written 40 years ago doesn't mean we are limited by it. Such an encyclical today would need to include references to inter-faith

dialogue, environmental concerns, gender equality and HIV – all key issues for *Progressio*. But the underlying principle – concern for the fullness of life for the human person – is as critical as ever. In too many places, people are seen only as economic units, passive recipients of decisions with little or no control over many aspects of their lives. Progress isn't about earning more or having more. It is about *being* more.

Despite great strides in tackling poverty, the requirement for change at

All people should have life in all its fullness, not merely be economic units

structural and individual levels remains. Faced with the sheer size of issues like global poverty, injustice and environmental degradation, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. Making small changes might seem fruitless but they are a start. Large global movements, such as last year's Make Poverty History campaign or the environmental movement, are all made up of individuals taking action. And that's why the *livesimply* promise bank asks others to get involved too, and for us to hold one another to account.

Livesimply is a campaign by the main Catholic organisations, but it isn't relevant only to Catholics. *Progressio* is part of the campaign, and we work with people of all faiths and none for a more just world, so we call on everyone to make a promise – one that will last longer than one month!

Christine Allen is Progressio's executive director.

Nick Sireau/Progressio



A family in Aileu, East Timor.

Church steward
in Nuwara Eliya,
Sri Lanka.



Populorum Progressio: STILL RELEVANT TODAY?

The evil of unequal wealth and power is still present, 40 years after Pope Paul VI denounced it, but we can make a difference, writes **Joanne Green**

CONFLICT, unjust trade rules, power imbalances, famine, investment in arms rather than basic services, inequality, debts that can't be paid and a belief that new technology can solve all our problems – does this list seem familiar? It sounds like a description of our world today but, in fact, these are all issues that Pope Paul VI identified 40 years ago in his papal letter *Populorum Progressio* ('On the development of peoples'). He wrote:

'Inequality in the sharing of our wealth is not the only scandal crying out for justice. Now, increasingly, the scandal

'Genuine progress must be complete. No one can be left out. No part of anyone can be left out.'

is inequality in the sharing-out of power. In many lands a few rich people still dominate the rest. While they enjoy a civilised existence, the rest stay poor.'

Growing inequality

The analysis, challenges and teaching of *Populorum Progressio* are as relevant now as they were then. In some ways we have made progress. For example, we are seeing the cancellation of some poor countries' debts and large-scale poverty reduction in China and South-East Asia.

These steps forward keep alive our hopes that humanity is willing to fight against evil and able to overcome it. But the depth and complexity of existing challenges threaten to overwhelm us. For in other

areas the situation has deteriorated.

This is especially the case with regard to the arms trade, environmental degradation and inequality between individuals and nations. In addition, global trade rules remain heavily weighted in favour of wealthy nations, despite all the campaigning.

Rich countries

Pope Paul VI faced a very similar situation in 1967. He lived at a time when the perspective was in some ways quite a hopeful one. Decolonisation was well under way and new global institutions had been established to steer the world towards greater peace and prosperity. But, as he details in his letter, there was also terrible iniquity and great inequality:

'Today, in many lands, countless men and women are starving. Countless children

suffer from malnutrition. Many die young... Whole regions are condemned to hopelessness.'

Pope Paul responded to this by calling for what amounts to a paradigm shift on the part of rich countries and their leaders. He calls for a new definition of progress, one that is based on the equal value that God accords every person and the recognition that material gain and economic growth is not the goal but a means to an end and therefore should not be pursued *ad infinitum*.

Every day politicians, the media, private companies, and even our friends and family, all tell us explicitly and subliminally that we need more. The message is that, if we have more, if we buy this product or take this holiday, we will be happier. Yet numerous studies show that, beyond a certain level of material wealth, we become less contented.

Elevating the wants of the individual over the needs of our local communities and global neighbours has not brought us personal satisfaction. But, more importantly, our way of life is accelerating the destruction of the natural resources of the world. In so doing, we are contributing to destroying the lives of the people in developing countries who rely on these resources.

Climate change

Climate change is a case in point. We cannot escape the fact that rich countries are largely responsible for the current and predicted climate change and variability. We are beginning to realise and acknowledge that those who are suffering the most from this are poor individuals and communities in developing countries.

The global impact of climate change is spreading. We are already witnessing increasing frequency and severity of droughts and floods. But there are also slower, more insidious

alterations, and these are hitting the poorest hardest, and will continue to do so in the future.

Progressio partners are seeing the way in which changes in the climate are making life harder for poor communities. As one example, because of rapidly melting glaciers in Ecuador, aridity is increasing, as is soil loss, desertification, ecosystem degradation, the disappearance of species and the loss of agricultural land. As a consequence, the indigenous communities with whom Progressio partner organisations work are experiencing unexpected frosts and longer drought periods.

Up in Smoke? Latin America and Caribbean, a report from the Working Group on Climate Change and Development, of which Progressio is a member, states: 'The older generation say they no longer know when to sow, as rains do not come as expected. Migration offers one way out but represents a cultural nemesis and the human and social price to pay is high.'

Acting in solidarity

In 2005, the Make Poverty History campaign asked world leaders to eradicate poverty by increasing aid, introducing trade justice and cancelling debt. Thousands of people took to the streets and wrote to politicians demanding change. Great progress was made but much more is needed.

We can act in solidarity with poor people by pressuring politicians to take action on these issues and other factors that result in poverty and environmental degradation. But we also need to live in solidarity with the poor in the world. To do this, we must reflect on our own lives and make changes to areas that negatively impact on poverty and the environment. We need to live simply and sustainably, so that all people, not just a chosen few, can benefit from

Livesimply is an initiative of a network of Catholic organisations to mark the 40th anniversary of the publication of *Populorum Progressio*.



The network's message is that: 'God calls us to look hard at our lifestyles and to choose to live simply, sustainably and in solidarity with the poor. In this way we can help create a world in which human dignity is respected and everyone can reach their full potential. This would be true progress, worth more than economic growth alone.'

See www.livesimply.org.uk for more information.

the creation and resources God has provided to us.

Living in solidarity

The *livesimply* project, which was launched in November 2006, builds on the success of Make Poverty History by asking people to be the change they want to see by living simply, sustainably and in solidarity with poor people.

The values that Pope Paul VI wrote about with such passion

'What is more human? The end of want; everyone having enough; the end of social ills of every kind; more knowledge; more culture; respect for the dignity of others; the spirit of poverty (Matthew 5:3); cooperation for the common good; the will for peace.'

40 years ago still drive our work at Progressio today. We believe they are perhaps even more relevant now than they were then, which is why our new name was inspired by *Populorum Progressio* and why we are supporting the *livesimply* project.

Joanne Green is Progressio's advocacy manager.

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The quotes from *Populorum Progressio* are from the abridged translation, *This is Progress*, available from Progressio for £2.50 or download free from www.progressio.org.uk

WHAT YOU CAN DO

As the *livesimply* campaign gets underway, **Alastair Whitson** suggests practical steps we can all take to make a difference, in solidarity with the world's poor

MOST OF US take our comfortable lifestyles for granted. We only think about the water in our taps, the heat in our homes, the food on our plates, when it doesn't work or isn't there. But as well as enjoying the good things, we need to appreciate where they come from and what has brought them to us. Many of the things we enjoy use up too much of the earth's resources and contribute to

keeping the rest of the world's people poor, disadvantaged and marginalised.

The *livesimply* message taps into a growing realisation that our lifestyles in the global North cause many of the problems experienced by people in the global South. Here, in the North, we are now aware of the impact our energy use is having on the climate. We are concerned about how our food is grown and where it

comes from. And even more important, we are starting to ask questions about what needs to be done, and what needs to change, to make the world a fairer and better place. We can see this in the widespread support for the Make Poverty History campaign, as well as in the growing popularity of fair trade products.

The *livesimply* campaign gives an added focus to these concerns. If we have the luxury of making a choice to live simply, we should not be doing so just to ease our consciences, but in order to make a difference. What we are doing is not just about us, it is really about others, especially the world's poor, and we need to make sure that we act, spread the word, and make the connection.

Alastair Whitson is Progressio's acting head of communications.



SPEAK OUT

Everything in our world is interconnected. Our lifestyles, the decisions we make (or fail to make) about food, energy, trade, can have a direct impact on other people's lives around the world. So if we start to change the way we do things at home, it will lead to changes in the way things are done elsewhere. We can also bring pressure for change by speaking out, encouraging others to think about the choices they make, urging others to make changes and challenging our leaders to take action on our behalf.

FOOD

How was your food produced? Agrochemicals could be polluting the water supplies of people living near the farms. The food could be grown or raised on land owned by a multinational corporation, while local people have no access to land on which to grow food to eat or sell for a livelihood. And how did your food get to you? It could have come four miles down the road from a local farm, or been flown 4,000 miles in the hold of a cargo plane. And at what cost? Producing it could be undermining sustainable lifestyles, damaging the environment, using scarce water resources, exploiting poorly paid farm labourers.

What you can do

- Buy local, seasonal (and preferably organic) food from local greengrocers, farm shops or farmers' markets; or subscribe to a vegetable box scheme.
- When buying food produced overseas, buy fair trade and/or organic.
- Buy from small, independent and ethical producers and retailers.
- If you shop at a supermarket, ask them what their policy is on stocking local food and fair trade produce – and keep pressing them to do more.
- Read the Progressio Comment *Food sovereignty* by Ernest Cañada (£2 plus p&p from Progressio, or download free from www.progressio.org.uk).
- Donate to charities like Progressio that support sustainable agriculture projects.

ENERGY

Climate change might mean warm winters for us, but it means devastating floods, crippling droughts and increasing 'natural disasters' for people elsewhere in the world. We are the polluters, we have created the problem, but they suffer the consequences. It is our moral duty to take responsibility for the solution. We need to reduce our energy use and tackle our addiction to cars, cheap flights and cheap holidays. If everyone makes their own individual efforts, it sends out a message to policy-

makers, who are already starting to respond to the public mood on climate change.

What you can do

- Reduce your energy use – fit low energy light bulbs, turn down your heating, turn off your television and your computer.
- Switch to a renewable energy supplier – and tell your old electricity supply firm why you are switching.
- Use your car less – walk, cycle, use public transport. Fly only if there is no alternative – take a

boat or a train.

- Write to your MP about the need for real action on climate change.
- Support climate change campaigns run by environmental organisations.
- Read the Progressio Comment *People and the environment on the edge* by J Timmons Roberts and Bradley C Parks (£2 plus p&p from Progressio, or download free from www.progressio.org.uk).
- Donate to charities like Progressio that work to reduce people's environmental vulnerability.



TRADE

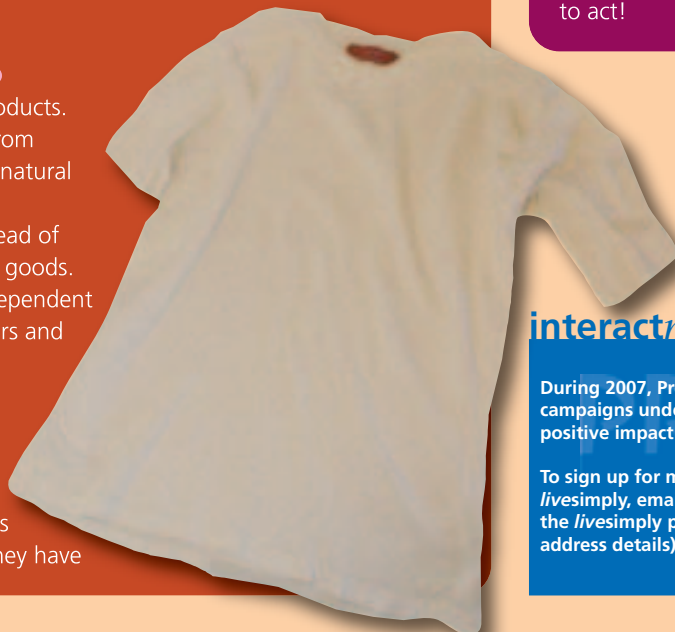
Money makes the world go round – but how much of what you spend goes to the people who actually make what you buy? And what is the cost to the environment – is the wood in your furniture from a sustainable source? Are the chemicals used to produce your clothes damaging people's health and polluting the environment? Are people being exploited in sweatshops? Are the products you buy fairly traded, or are they keeping poor people and poor countries locked in poverty?

a code of conduct? Ask to see it and challenge them to demonstrate they are following it.

- Make sure your investments are ethical – that is, not supporting exploitative or environmentally damaging industries or the arms trade.
- Campaign to change world trade rules with the Trade Justice Movement (of which Progressio is a member) – see www.tjm.org.uk
- Donate instead of spending – and if you are a taxpayer, don't forget to Gift Aid it, as your donation will be worth more.

What you can do

- Buy fairly traded products.
- Buy clothes made from organic cotton and natural fibres.
- Reuse or repair instead of replacing consumer goods.
- Buy from small, independent and ethical producers and retailers.
- Ask companies that you buy from how they guarantee the conditions under which their products are produced. Do they have



MAKE PROMISES

Progressio wants as many people as possible to get involved in the *livesimply* campaign. One way to do this is by making a promise at *livesimply's* online promisebank. You make a public commitment to do something or change something about your life that will positively affect poor people. The idea is that people make a promise on condition that others also promise to do it – such as promising to buy fair-trade and/or local, seasonal produce provided 30 other people pledge to do so, or promising not to take any personal plane flights if 20 others make the same promise. The more people make promises, the more impact we will have. Go now to www.livesimply.org.uk/promise to sign up to an existing promise or make your own promise – don't wait for others to act!

interactnow

During 2007, Progressio will be initiating actions and campaigns under the *livesimply* banner that can have a positive impact on the lives of people in the global South.

To sign up for more information from Progressio about *livesimply*, email livesimply@progressio.org.uk or write to the *livesimply* project at Progressio (see page 2 for address details).



*Maria Lourdes Martins Cruz
(Mana Lou).*

FAITH IN ACTION

Catherine Scott remembers her time with Mana Lou, an inspirational Christian leader in East Timor

ONE OF THE MOST inspiring people I have met on my many visits to East Timor since the early 1990s has been Maria Lourdes Martins Cruz, better known among the Timorese as Mana Lou. Mana Lou originally trained in the 1980s to be a Canossian Sister – but she left before her final profession and founded *Maun Alin Iha Kristu* ('Brothers and Sisters in Christ': a religious order whose members live and work within the wider community).

I first met her in 1994, when I was invited to go to her retreat centre in the mountains of Dare, overlooking the coastal plain and Dili (the capital of East Timor). The centre is an oasis of prayerful and green-leaved peace and tranquillity in a land that has rarely enjoyed either.

Living with the poor

Mana Lou's aim was simple: to train young women to work with and bear witness to the

poorest of the poor in remote East Timorese villages, and to teach practical skills such as healthcare and animal husbandry. It is a vision to which she is still dedicated today.

In the beginning, Mana Lou's initiative was sometimes criticised, notably by the local Catholic clergy. They accused her of trying to be a priest, but she remained faithful to her vocation and has become a true Christian leader.

Bringing peace

The Indonesian military recruited collaborationist East Timorese as militias to back the occupation forces and attack the majority of East Timorese people who were pro-independence. In September 1999, almost 80 per cent of the East Timorese population voted in a popular consultation to end Indonesian rule. The militias then drove some 200,000 people across the border into Indonesian (West) Timor in a carefully executed contingency plan devised by their paymasters.

Mana Lou risked her life trying to bring these militias to their senses and back to God and their homeland. She worked with the Besi Merah Putih, a militia that had terrorised the Liquica area, and had massacred a large number of people in the Catholic church in the town in April 1999.

'The militias knew that I always talk about Jesus,' she told me simply. 'They encouraged others to listen. Some told me that at first they felt angry. But they said: "then our minds and hearts opened, and we understood that we had been the victims of politics".'

There were some tense moments, she remembered: 'At one point, as I stood up to lead a meeting, I was being

threatened by three bare-chested militia members on motorbikes. They were revving the engines and I was scared. Another militia leader, who had been a catechist, grabbed the microphone. "My brothers," he stated solemnly, "remember Mana Lou is not a political woman.... God sent Mana Lou".' So instead they embraced her.

Action and simplicity

The international Catholic peace organisation Pax Christi awarded Mana Lou a peace prize in 1995. The award began a process whereby her order and her work became more recognised and accepted by the local Catholic hierarchy. Today she is involved in the pastoral training of East Timor's young seminarians and her centre in Dare is flourishing.

When I ask Mana Lou whether she would have liked to be a priest, she shrugs off the question as an irrelevance. Hers is a practical faith – emphasising actions over status. She never loses sight of her fundamental mission to serve the poor at home, her brothers and sisters.

She is frequently invited to speak and attend conferences and seminars, often abroad. She declines most invitations, opting instead to live out in action and simplicity her vocation to help others. It is these qualities – constancy, simplicity, strength of purpose and determination – which make her so special – truly a 'foundress' in every sense of the word.

Catherine Scott is manager of Progressio's Africa, Middle East and Asia programmes.

interactnow

Read more about Mana Lou in *Independent women: The story of women's activism in East Timor* by Irena Cristalis and Catherine Scott, available from Progressio price £11.95 (order online from www.progressio.org.uk)

The fight for water

Villagers in El Salvador are acting together to protect their water and lobby against water privatisation, writes Nick Sireau

TO THE NORTH OF SAN SALVADOR, on the way to the volcano just outside the city, lies Apopa, where members of the community are struggling against the might of an electricity power plant run by Najapa Power and owned by a rich and powerful Salvadorean family. The plant is near a groundwater zone – a crucial area for the community's supply of water – and it's slowly polluting it.

Sara is one of the leaders of a local group that's part of the Apopa Environmental Action Network. She explains the problem: with no environmental checks in place, the electricity plant is spewing out petroleum waste, which seeps into the water table. This water then flows into the springs that feed the town, leading to widespread health problems.

The more the network complains, the more aggressively the owners of the

plant respond. Sara now takes a different route each time she travels because she knows she's sometimes being followed. She's received death threats. They even

'In a hundred years, we'll have finished off all the rivers in our country'

attempted to bribe her: she was offered US\$1,000 to provide information on the Environmental Action Network's plans.

A land abused

The Apopa Environmental Action Network is linked to UNES (Unidad Ecologica Salvadoreña – the Salvadorean Ecological Coalition), a Progressio partner organisation. UNES works with such networks to strengthen their



Carlos Flores of UNES and (right) Progressio development worker Marcos Sanjuan.

campaigning capacity and advise them on their struggles. It's crucial work, for the availability of water in El Salvador is worryingly low – 2,870 cubic metres of water per person per year, compared to 38,668 for Nicaragua.

Pollution, excessive mining, deforestation and a lack of a consistent plan for national water management are behind this. Mining uses massive amounts of water and pollutes, deforestation leads to soil erosion and prevents the water from seeping through into the water table, and the lack of a national plan means that watersheds are not cared for and water sources dry up. Communities are left with devastated land for their farming and water needs.

Progressio's development worker with UNES is Marcos Sanjuan from Barcelona, a specialist in geography and water resources. He's working on an advocacy project to lobby the government to stop plans for privatising the water supply and sewerage.

The government argues that privatising the nation's water management and distribution will help increase the population's access to water by bringing in much needed investment. But, according to Marcos: 'There are many experiences in Latin America and around the world that clearly show how privatisation failed to improve access to water. On the contrary, irregularities,

'[People] don't value water. [They] don't see it as an element of the ecosystem to which our life is linked.'

price abuses and ignoring the poorest parts of the population has been common.'

Rivers run dry

At a conference on water resources at San Salvador's national university, UNES's Dr Angel Ibarra explains: 'When politicians and businesses talk about water, they're talking about the business aspect of water. The electricity companies are interested in the hydroelectric aspect and the money that will create. When we talk about water, we're talking about the ecosystem that generates the water. That's because unless we care for our water resources, there will be none left.'

He backs his argument with some impressive facts. El Salvador has three times the average level of global rainfall each year. Yet it doesn't manage its water properly: when it rains, there are floods, and when it stops, there are droughts.

The rivers are drying up. The river Lempa is currently a permanent river: it flows all year round. By the next century, however, it could be running only in the rainy season. The same is likely to be true for the river Quezalpa, sometime between 2020 to 2045. And the river Torola could become a rainy season river by 2037 or 2048 at the latest.

Angel Ibarra says: 'In a hundred years, we'll have finished off all the rivers in our country'. The only one that won't be drying up is the river that runs through San Salvador, the Rio Arenal – but that's only because the levels of waste dumped into it keep on rising.

Valuing water

For Marcos Sanjuan, this comes down to a distinct lack of awareness of the importance of water. 'We don't value water. We don't see it as an element of the ecosystem to which our life is linked. We just make a mess,' he says. He wants to promote a new culture of water, one that respects it and cares for it.

That's why UNES, along with other organisations, has submitted to parliament a new law on water for El Salvador that would establish a holistic water management system, prohibit the privatisation of water, impose a moratorium on new dams on the river Lempa, which upset the natural flow of water, and refuse concessions for mining companies.

But a new law is only one step along the way, says Carlos Flores of UNES. Just as important is the campaigning work of local communities to protect their water. He tells the story of how the villages in Santa Isabel Ishuatan, in the west of El Salvador, stood up for their rights with support from UNES.

The 14 villages in the area get their water from the river Acachapa. A year ago, the mayor of Santa Isabel agreed to sell water to the neighbouring mayor, even though many people in Santa Isabel still have no access to water themselves. There was no consultation with Santa Isabel's villagers and, soon afterwards, workmen started building the pipeline to carry the water.

The villagers of the Santa Isabel region

began to question their mayor, but he refused to talk. They held meetings to discuss the water issue and organised marches to raise awareness and protest. Advised by UNES, they sent letters to the Ministry of the Environment requesting a study of the environmental impact of the pipeline.

Direct action

But there was no answer, and still the mayor refused to speak to them. So eventually, frustrated by the lack of progress, the villages decided to take direct action. On 1 November 2005, 500 villagers, led by the local parish priest, marched to the construction site and

'We don't tell the communities what to do. We accompany them on their journey. It's up to them to decide which way they take it.'

took apart 26 pieces of piping, which they then deposited outside the door of the mayor's office.

But the work on the pipeline continued, so in February 2006, the villagers struck again. This time, the mayor launched a lawsuit against them, but the judge, who was sympathetic, only asked them to pay US\$10 in damages, which they never did.

Still the work on the pipeline continued and this time the mayor ordered the riot police in to protect it. In April 2006, a hundred villagers marched on the project and one villager, who had nothing to do with the protest, was arrested. So the villagers decided to change strategy: they would now sabotage the pipeline at night and launch a lawsuit against the mayor.

The problem is still not resolved, but for Carlos the important point was that the community organised itself and decided to resist the corruption of the local authorities. This is what UNES is about, he says: 'We don't tell the communities what to do. We accompany them on their journey. It's up to them to decide which way they take it.'

Nick Sireau is the former director of communications for Progressio. He has recently taken up the post of director of SolarAid.

THE SAN are the ancient nomadic peoples of southern Africa. They have lost the land where they were hunter-gatherers and, to survive, many are now farm labourers. They suffer extensive discrimination, notably with regard to education and health services.

Most of the farmers are large landowners and life on their properties is usually very difficult for the San. They endure a life of poverty, subsisting on very meagre incomes, lacking even the most basic essentials – on the very edge of life.

As part of my efforts to improve access to education by San children, I worked with the San communities on Tsinshabis Farm Six, in Mangetti West, Namibia. Two of us lobbied the farm owner and he allowed a pre-school to be built on his farm. We also obtained agreement for children from other farms to attend.

Later, having received several messages from Farm Six, I returned with Kleofas Geingob and Elfriede Gaeses from the Outjo field office of WIMSA (the Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa). The journey took us nearly nine hours in very hot weather. As we drew near, we could see that the people lived in small settlements about 10 kilometres apart.

Hardship

At the farm, we were taken to the San Headman. We sat on stools and tins. I sat on a tree root. We could see elders, young people and women, all dressed in torn and worn out clothes. Many of the faces were creased and wrinkled not with age but due to hardship. People joined us and welcomed us.

Talking of their life, they said the good times were in the past. Strangers had come, marked the ground with pegs, pronouncing it their territory and declaring the San to be trespassers on their own land. They could no longer hunt or harvest from nature. Life is very difficult, shelter is makeshift and I wondered how they survive the very cold winters.

They wanted to tell me that the government had taken over the farm and was enforcing a resettlement program for the San communities living there. They feared they would be removed to an area that disadvantaged them still more, where basic services like water, electricity, transport, schools and health facilities would be lacking.

Back from the edge

The San people in Namibia are learning how to speak up for themselves, writes **Solomon Jillo**



San people digging for water.

They had identified an area they felt would be better for them, and had spoken to the local politician, but were convinced that their request was not going to be acted upon. They clearly knew what they wanted from the government but were afraid to ask. They felt helpless. They wanted me to assist them. I encouraged them and we have agreed that, with support, they are ready to speak up for themselves.

Mobilisation

We decided that two WIMSA field officers would train and help the group. Kleofas and Elfriede, who were with me on the first visit, have returned, mobilising the San communities on Farm Six and giving practical assistance.

They helped community members to obtain birth certificates and identity cards. They took people to the government offices in Tsumeb, the nearest administrative centre, where they obtained orphan grants for the orphaned children, old age grants for the older people and disability grants for two disabled people. They helped 10 people to open bank accounts in Tsumeb.

We have linked up with the Legal Advice Centre, who will provide support. And we have asked the nearest clinic to Farm Six whether they could provide a mobile health care service. Those in

Strangers had come... declaring the San to be trespassers on their own land

charge have agreed, provided they can arrange transport.

We also spoke to the San about human rights and the land rights of women and children. We promoted the importance of education for all – we want to persuade the adults to attend literacy classes so that they can at least sign their name. But, as our work at Farm Six shows, addressing the long term education issues goes hand-in-hand with empowering the San people to deal with the many immediate areas of discrimination that threaten to overwhelm them.

Solomon Jillo is a Progressio development worker working with WIMSA in Namibia.

In a poor country such as Somaliland paying for gas and electricity is beyond the reach of most of the population. Many people therefore rely on charcoal for their fuel needs. As the population increases the demand for charcoal is ever increasing and charcoal production becomes more and more profitable. It is also illegal. **David Tanner** reports on the social and environmental consequences.

a burning issue

David Tanner/Progressio



An area illegally claimed for charcoal production. Wealthy individuals organise groups of 10-15 men who are provided with a truck to access the remote countryside and spend several days producing charcoal. First an area of land is selected and branches of acacia trees are cut and arranged to form an illegal fence to pen off the selected area. Cutting the wood destroys the forest cover and the fence blocks off the traditional feeding areas and paths of nomadic pastoralists who move their goats, sheep and camels across vast areas of the Somaliland countryside.

All large acacia trees are cut down within and around the fenced off area, leaving a barren, vegetation free landscape. Larger acacia trees help bind the soil, trap water and provide vital shade for young plants and shrubs. Once the trees are cut down smaller vegetation dies away rapidly and the land remains barren for years. A further problem is that, with tree roots no longer helping to bind the soil, it becomes more susceptible to being washed away during the rainy season, increasing the siltation of rivers and coastal estuaries. The Somaliland government has very limited manpower, few vehicles and limited resources and is unable to patrol and manage the vast areas of uninhabited countryside, so that the odds of illegal charcoal producers being caught are very low.



The charcoal crew then construct a kiln in which to slowly burn the acacia. Prepared thick branches or logs of acacia are piled up and covered with soil. Thinner branches are then piled and burnt around the base and on top of the kiln to slowly heat and ignite the covered logs. The soil limits the access of oxygen for the burn and results in a very slow burning of the covered wood, and therefore good quality charcoal. This process takes several days. Here Ahmed Ibrahim, programme director of the local environmental organisation Candlelight, explains the process.

After several days the charcoal crew clear away the soil, break up the burnt charcoal logs and branches into smaller chunks of charcoal suitable for burning in small furnaces or ovens, and load them onto their lorry. Several areas may be cleared and several kilns built and burnt simultaneously over a week or so before the lorry is filled with charcoal and driven into the capital Hargeisa. There have been several cases where herders have appealed to local leaders to negotiate with the charcoal producers to stop their illegal activities. The herders are increasingly realising that not only does charcoal production block off their traditional grazing areas but that the effects are long term, as there will be no vegetation on which their cattle can graze for years to come.



Charcoal for sale in Hargeisa.



Camel herders with their animals at a waterhole. A ban on livestock trading imposed on Somaliland by key Middle Eastern trade partners, supposedly due to Rift Valley fever, means that local herdsman have turned to making charcoal as an alternative income-generating activity. In an attempt to fight against this trend and the increasing use of charcoal, the local environmental organisation Candlelight is undertaking several activities. These include the production and promotion of ceramic bricks which are mixed with charcoal and 'super heated', thereby reducing the amount of charcoal used by up to 50 per cent; reforestation projects; and terracing selected plots of land to help reduce the level of soil erosion. Alongside these initiatives, communities are protecting a variety of small, forested areas. One such project in a local mountain range, undertaken in consultation with local pastoralists, has resulted in the rapid re-growth and recovery of the local forest and flora to such an extent that recently the pastoralists were allowed to reutilise the area for grazing their livestock.

David Tanner is Progressio's programme coordinator for Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Progressio is currently exploring potential partnerships with local organisations to help communities address environmental issues in Somaliland.



Joyce Foliás, from Dickson village, Lilongwe district, Malawi, is HIV positive, along with her youngest daughter Yankho. Her eldest daughter, Ndazona, is not infected with the virus.

Compassion in truth

Catherine Scott describes a church service in Malawi that brought home to her the reality of HIV and AIDS for people in Africa

I WAS IN Malawi on the occasion of World AIDS Day in December, and found myself invited to a remembrance service for those who have died of AIDS in Africa's poorest country, where over 14 per cent of the population are living with HIV. I accepted, little realising what a moving experience it would be.

Around 100 people had turned up – not a full church, but a good cross section of ages, with lots of young people, and both lay and religious. Three priests entered, swathed in Advent purple, with the Mass celebrated by the secretary of Malawi's Bishops Conference, Father Joseph Mpingansjiva.

Candles had been distributed, and as we sat down to pray, a power cut prompted us to light them straight away.

'The church has HIV and AIDS.... We are all either HIV Positive, HIV Negative, or HIV Ignorant'

This seemed a fitting symbol.

'The church has HIV and AIDS,' announced Father Mpingansjiva. 'We are all either HIV Positive, HIV Negative, or HIV Ignorant.' He spoke gravely about the numbers of deaths, among them his own brother, as well as many other relatives. There are few if any Malawians that the epidemic has not touched in one way or another. There were poems, readings and testimonies, interspersed with the normal Sunday readings, the story of the Good Samaritan among them – the man who was moved by compassion and acted on it.

One by one, members of the congregation got up and read out lists of names of people they knew who had died of AIDS. Some of them ran to 20 or 30 people. With the Taizé chant 'Jesus, remember me, when you come into your kingdom' playing quietly in the background, the congregation planted their flickering candles in a bed of sand beneath the central altar.

It is up to us to prevent AIDS, said Father Joseph. The numerous posters decorating the sanctuary inviting those present to 'take responsibility' backed up his message. His sermon was clear, calm and compassionate.

The church must care for and have compassion for those living with the disease, Father Joseph told us. The church believes that everybody has a right to full information about how to prevent the spread of AIDS. Preferably this would be by abstinence and faithfulness. But our God is not a God of condemnation. Jesus welcomed all as his friends, including adulterers, tax collectors and anyone else considered by the 'in-crowd' at the time to be a social outcast.

'Hundreds, perhaps thousands of people will die of AIDS tonight,' Father Joseph reminded us. 'Not all of them are ready. Many are afraid. Let us pray for their peace of mind, because as Our Lord said to the criminal crucified besides him, "today you will be with me in Paradise".'

Like many of us from our protected and privileged societies in the North, I do not know anyone close who has died of AIDS. The few people living with the disease in the UK have access to the drugs they need to go on living reasonable lives. In Africa the death toll is a silent holocaust – a Tsunami every few days. As I stood in solidarity with these people I heard no sobs, saw no tears. There was just a brave acceptance that this must be faced, the dead mourned, those still living supported, the orphans taken care of – day by day, whatever the cost, all hardships accepted.

We watched the candles burn down as the Taizé music continued. I will not forget this service. I will not forget Father Joseph's face as he spoke that night. This has brought the tragedy and waste of it all home to me more than ever before.

Let us all watch and pray. And let us remember those living with HIV and AIDS and those who, sooner or later, will die – as well as those who love and care for them.

Catherine Scott is manager of Progressio's Africa, Middle East and Asia programmes.

Sharing joyfully

During a stay in India, Fr Gerry Proctor learns the true meaning of living simply

RECENTLY I HAD the good fortune to spend four weeks in India. It was a joy to share in the lives of the mostly rural people who welcomed me into their communities. The generous and extraordinary reception afforded me at every stage of my journey was simply wonderful. *Wonderful* because it was so genuine, spontaneous, and deeply rooted in their different cultures. *Simple* because these people had very little but, from the little they had, they willingly and joyfully shared everything they could with me.

The idea of a campaign to 'live simply' could only emerge in our developed world. The poor of the developing world having no choice in the matter, since economic circumstances force 'simple living' upon them. Their paucity of resources however is not reflected in the generous, abundant gestures of welcome and hospitality that define the poor in whatever part of the world they live. The poor are the very first to live simply, to live sustainably and to live in solidarity with other poor.

Among the tribal Santal people of West Bengal I experienced this reality at first hand. In the village of Chetrapahar I witnessed how the Christian gospel had brought about significant changes precisely in these areas as the people embraced the Small Christian Community project of Krishnagar diocese.

I saw changes in *simple living*, which promotes and facilitates the sharing that leads to real relationships between people, thus forging a genuine community spirit. I observed changes in *sustainable living*, as in the monthly gathering of the community they reflect in the light of the gospel on all issues connected with how they live their lives together and agree actions that will bring about change and improvement.

And I witnessed how they act in *solidarity with the poor*, each family giving just a few rupees that will be used to buy emergency medication, or to assist with the education of a very poor family, or to buy rice for someone in great need.

When we in the North accept the *livesimply* challenge we are only being asked to emulate the example of how the poor themselves live. By choosing a simpler lifestyle we are connecting not only across the miles with peoples from all over the globe who live this way day after day, but also across the generations as we reach back into history and touch again the lives of those first Christian disciples who lived so simply that there was no one in need among them (Acts 4:34).

Forty years ago Pope Paul VI, writing about poverty in his landmark encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, said: 'The present state of affairs must be confronted boldly, and its concomitant injustices must be challenged and overcome' (para. 32). The current *livesimply* project allows those words to ring out once again and challenge us to return to some simple gospel values of solidarity with those in need: the values of joyful sharing, of commitment to life together, of building community, of common ownership, of generosity with one's own resources, of simple living as opposed to amassing goods and possessions (Acts 2:44-46; 4:32-35).

With the hindsight that four decades give us we can see more clearly now that, though this is certainly laudable and indeed necessary as the authentic mark of true Christian discipleship, it is not enough. There are economic and political structures in the way of the poor ever receiving a fair share of the earth's wealth. Prophetically Paul VI said: 'We cannot proceed to increase the wealth



Howard Davies/Panos

Women join hands at a community meeting in West Bengal.

and power of the rich while we entrench the needy in their poverty' (para. 33). And yet this is precisely what has happened in those intervening years. It is vital that as we move to a challenge that focuses on our personal response we maintain the political and social dimensions so well coordinated during the Make Poverty History campaign.

The simple living of the first Christian disciples was a considered response to the experience of encountering the non-accusatory presence of the forgiving

The poor are the very first to live simply, to live sustainably and to live in solidarity with other poor

Victim, which released in their own lives a completely new set of relationships and possibilities. The disciples of today are challenged to make a considered response to this same Jesus and discover an equally radical simple lifestyle commitment.

Fr Gerry Proctor is an MPhil research student at Hope University, Liverpool, studying Basic Christian Communities.

Why not become a Progressio development worker?

– and make a lasting difference to sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and injustice



Justin Mucheri (from Zimbabwe) and Eliezer Wangulu (from Kenya) are working with organisations in Somaliland to help them fight the spread of HIV and AIDS.

Being a development worker can be challenging and hugely rewarding. You might be working with small-scale farmers in the Caribbean to find markets for their products, setting up HIV and AIDS counselling services in Africa, strengthening women's organisations in Central America, supporting local community organisations in the Middle East, or working with women's groups in East Timor.

Whatever the placement, you are likely to be working with some of the world's most marginalised communities, striving for local empowerment and building their capacity so they can improve their situation.



Marvin Zavala (from Nicaragua) is working alongside small-scale farmers in Honduras to help them farm their land in a sustainable way.



Sanne te Pas (from Holland) is working with the women's organisation Las Dignas in El Salvador, researching gender violence.

For further information on how to become a Progressio development worker, contact Progressio's recruitment team on 020 7354 0883 or visit www.progressio.org.uk (section: jobs@progressio)