



Le Centre d'information et de documentation pour le Mozambique et l'Afrique australe

## Village global

PAR ISABELLE RIVEST

Famine en Somalie, guerre civile au Rwanda, résurgence de la peste en Inde. Les images apocalyptiques du Tiers-Monde se succèdent, nous renvoyant à un profond sentiment d'impuissance. Pourtant, au centre Strathearn du quartier Milton-Parc, les membres d'une demi-douzaine de groupes de solidarité internationale refusent de se décourager.

Parmi ces organisations, le Centre d'information et de documentation pour le Mozambique et l'Afrique australe (CIDMAA) organise ici des campagnes de sensibilisation sur les problèmes des

pays du Sud. De plus, il appuie financièrement des groupes de base du continent africain.

Du 30 septembre au 2 octobre dernier, le CIDMAA était l'hôte d'un colloque ayant pour thème «Combattre la pauvreté au Nord comme au Sud». Des invités d'un peu partout au monde ont participé à cette rencontre. Mais quel est le rapport entre la faim en Afrique et le chômage au Canada? «La pauvreté, au Tiers-Monde et dans les pays industrialisés, est engendrée par les mêmes mécanismes économiques» explique Carole Boucher, responsable de l'information au CIDMAA.

Un des participants au colloque, M. Pedro Dalsero, qui

travaille à l'Institut brésilien d'analyse sociale et économique (IBASE), abonde dans le même sens. Par son économie, le Brésil se classe parmi les dix pays les plus riches de la planète. Ce n'est donc pas le manque de ressources qui est la cause principale de la pauvreté. «Le problème, c'est que nous sommes aussi au deuxième rang en matière de redistribution inéquitable des richesses», déplore-t-il.

Mais que peut-on faire ici pour aider les populations du Sud? «Vous pouvez appuyer des organismes non gouvernementaux (ONG) comme le CIDMAA, qui ont d'excellents contacts dans les pays du Sud, affirme M. Dalsero. Aussi, vous pouvez participer aux campagnes de pression organisées par les ONG, afin que votre gouvernement améliore ses rapports avec les pays du Sud.» ♦



Photo: Anne Latendresse

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## A Global Village

BY ISABELLE RIVEST

Starvation in Somalia, civil war in Rwanda, resurgence of the plague in India. The overwhelming problems of Third World countries seem to leave us helpless to do anything at all to relieve these people's misery. But at the Strathearn Center, in the Milton-Parc neighbourhood, members of half a dozen groups refuse to be discouraged.

One of these is the Centre d'information et de documentation pour le Mozambique et l'Afrique australe (CIDMAA), an organization that campaigns for increased aware-

ness of the problems in southern Africa, and supplies funding for grassroots projects there.

One of their recent endeavours, a colloquium entitled: "Fighting poverty in both the North and South" ran from September 30 to October 2, and was attended by people from all over the world. The main theme of the conference was to explain the relationship that exists between hunger in Africa and unemployment in Canada. "The causes of poverty here and in the South are the results of the same economic mechanisms" stated Carole Boucher, the promotional director at CIDMAA.

One of the participants of the Symposium, Mr. Pedro Dalsero, who works for the Brazilian Institute of Social and Economic Analyses (IBASE), agrees with her. Brazil is one of the ten richest countries in the world, based on GNP. The lack of resources is not the main cause of poverty. "The real problem, says Dalsero, is that the distribution of wealth in Brazil is the second most polarized in the world".

But what can we do here to help people in Third World countries? "You can support non governmental organizations (NGOs), like CIDMAA, that have reliable contacts in the Southern Hemisphere, says Dalsero. And you can exert pressure on your own government through the campaigns organized by NGOs." ♦

## Heritage Montreal

### More Than Just a Matter of Buildings

BY ISABELLE RIVEST

The preservation of her culture has always been an essential ingredient for Lucia Kowaluk, a founding member of Heritage Montreal. "Knowing our past helps us discover our own identity", she says. "And you have to understand where you come from if you want to know where you are going."

From September 30<sup>th</sup> to October 1<sup>st</sup>, Heritage Canada held a symposium in Montreal. The theme of the meeting was: "Heritage in the Age of Sustainable Development. New challenges for cities and towns." More than sixty people took part in the meeting. "We agreed on the need for decentralization of decision making. History has shown that the bigger a state gets, the more inefficient and wasteful it is" explains Ms Kowaluk, who took part in the meeting.

An interesting example of how decentralization can work was presented by two speakers from Vermont. In their state, anyone who wants to change something in the city, protocol or bylaws has to get a permit from the planning commission, a group made up of volunteer citizens. In places like Vermont, everyone knows each other, so people understand that they will make decision that affect both family and friends.

The result of this process is that people achieve compromise. But it doesn't always produce what

could be called a success story. "one picture showed a farm, a heritage sight, with new houses built right in front of it. Someone at the meeting said: 'this is horrible! We should be able to prevent this kind of thing'. But others didn't agree. If you make very strict rules, people can't get anything done. So this way is better, even if it sometimes means making mistakes" explains Ms Kowaluk.

"And this is the big problem in our own city. The bureaucracy is so heavy, nobody can move" she says. Members of Heritage Montreal know it all too well. They have just lost a big battle over the survival of more than 300 low cost housing projects in NDG. "We made a presentation at a public hearing of the "district-council" (Conseil d'arrondissement) for the area, to save these buildings to the City. But this council is only consultative. The city didn't listen to its recommendations, and the buildings will be demolished."

Ms Kowaluk believes one solution could be to establish neighborhood councils with the power to make decisions concerning local issues like parks, public transportation, local services and so on. She also invites everyone to join Heritage Montreal. "Governments never hand out power. We have to fight if we want things to change."

For more information concerning Heritage Montreal: 1181, rue de la Montagne, Montréal (Québec) H3G 1Z2. Tel: 875-2985. ♦

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