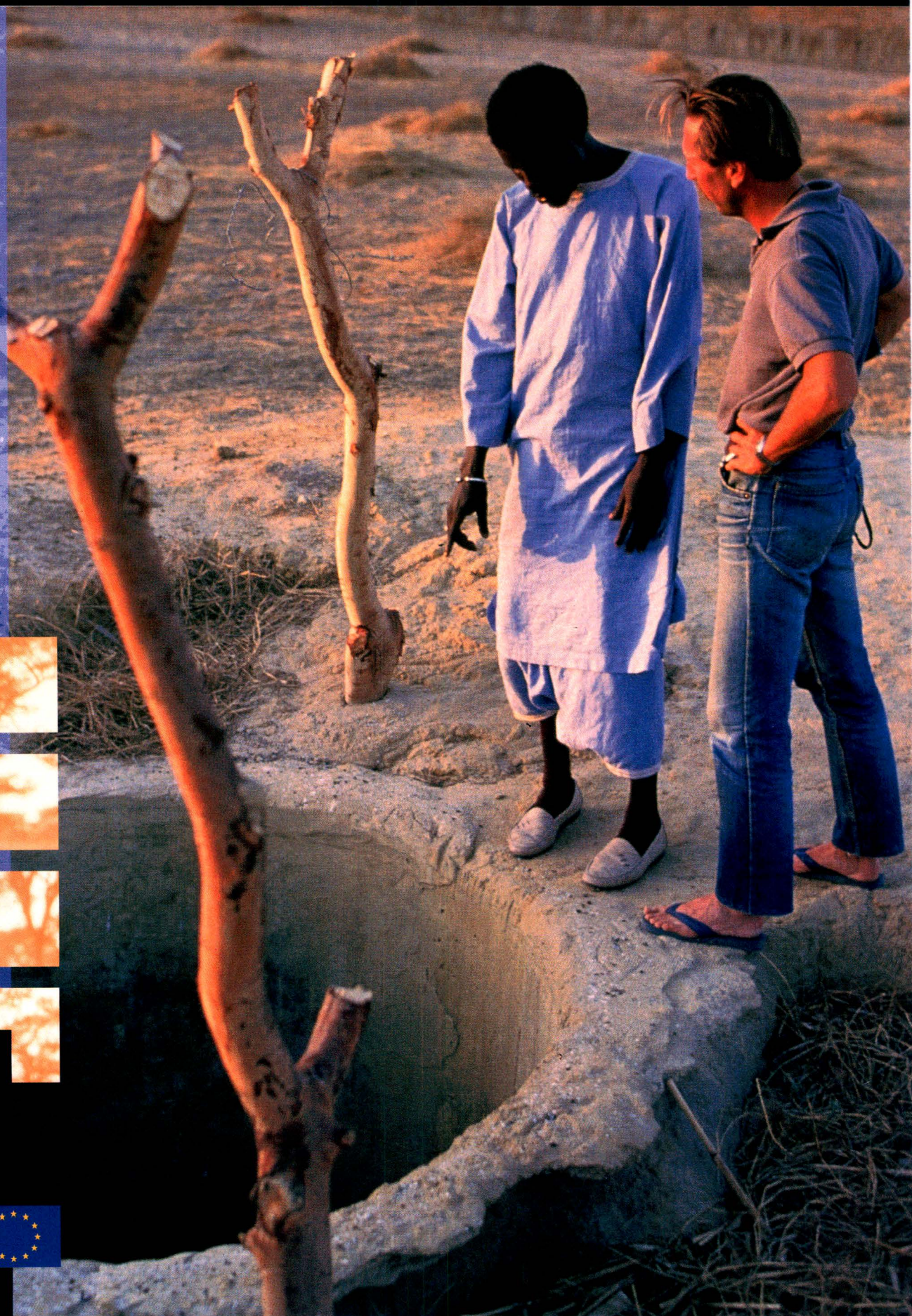


Partners in development

The European Union and NGOs



European
Commission

Directorate General
for Development



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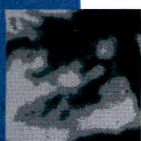
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Partners
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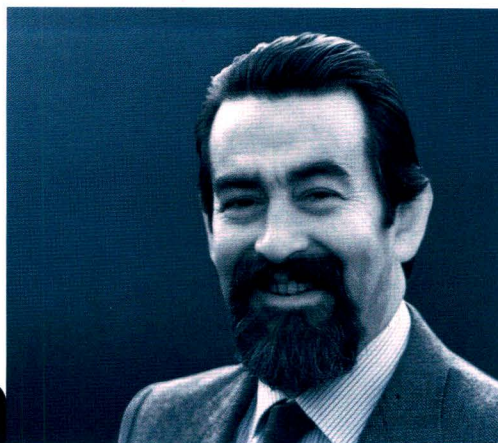




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Introduction



by Professor João de Deus Pinheiro, member of the Commission, responsible for external relations with the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific and South Africa and development aid

The Commission's cofinancing with European NGOs, which began in 1976, reached, at the end of 1994, the 1.000 million ECU mark. The Commission's support to NGOs goes both to their development projects in countries in the South and to their activities to mobilise public opinion in favour of development and fairer international relations between North and South.

The NGOs are indispensable if development cooperation policies are to produce real and deep-rooted improvements in the lives of even the poorest and most marginalised peoples. Exclusion exists everywhere - at home but also in the developing countries and in relations between rich and poor. This is why official cooperation agencies reserve a rapidly increasing space, alongside their own large-scale programmes, for NGO activities and public funding support to their initiatives.

No-one would suggest that NGOs can do everything. They are no more perfect than anyone else. But they are an irreplaceable complement to official programmes. Officials and governments cannot achieve development on their own, either in our own countries or in developing countries, and they know it. What do we then feel the NGOs' specific contribution to be ?

First of all, NGOs mobilise all kinds of potential, in a spirit of personnel commitment, be it in the North or - even more importantly - in the South. These committed groups deserve support.

Then they have an original approach to development. Not only do NGOs target marginal populations, which tend to be neglected by official policies or to which the latter do not have easy access, but they also try to base their activities on people's mobilisation and organisation for their own development, according to the beneficiaries' own ideas about their priority needs and methods. NGOs thus play a vital role in ensuring that participative development which is so difficult to achieve and so important if one wants lasting results from cooperation activities. What is more, they contribute to the creation of diverse social structures and the constitution of a demo-

cratic base at grass-roots level, indispensable for a really just and stable political democracy, which is a factor in sustainable development, itself a major goal of the European Union. The NGOs also frequently act directly in favour of human rights, particularly where vulnerable or minority groups are concerned.

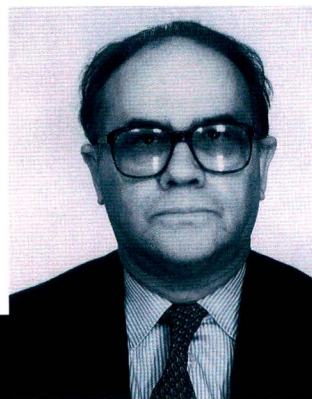
In all these questions, it is the grass-roots groups and the NGOs in developing countries which are the real focus of interest. Our support to European NGOs finds its main justification in the support that they give to their partners in the South.

I should also add that NGOs' relations with the Commission are not solely based on the types of cofinancing described in this brochure. They also have a powerful role in emergency aid when natural or man-made disasters occur, in the distribution of our food aid and in many other sectors. All this is mentioned in this brochure.

Of course, relations between public authorities and NGOs are not always free from frictions or misunderstandings, since it is a question of combining differing points of view and reaching a minimum of coherence of action between various players in the development field. But harmonious collaboration is far from impossible, provided that each respects the role and the originality of the other. The Commission holds to the principle of complete respect for the NGOs' autonomy.

Last but by no means least, the European NGOs have another role, to motivate the European public and those with political and administrative responsibility for development towards improving development and in favour of international relations which would give their rightful place to developing countries. In my position of responsibility for European cooperation policy, I fully appreciate that role.

I am therefore pleased to present this brochure, which aims to help the public know more about development NGOs' North-South relations and about the fruitful collaboration which has developed between them and the European Community.



Foreword

by A. Jardim Gonçalves

Chairperson, Liaison Committee of NGOs

As the 20th century draws to a close, the history of development NGOs can be seen to be closely intertwined with the European Union's historic political commitment to fostering human development through multilateral cooperation.

From the very earliest days of the first Community institutions - but especially since the inception of the Liaison Committee of NGOs to the European Union in 1976 - the EU's recognized partner NGOs in European Union Member States have been working to gain recognition for an enforceable right to human development for all. This ever-closer partnership today stands as one of the most significant achievements in international cooperation.

A look back shows us that the work done by development NGOs has produced a net benefit in terms of recognition by the Community authorities. At the same time, the European Union has been able to put into practice a highly progressive form of democracy by facilitating and supporting active relations between different «civil societies» willing to forge closer links of cooperation and solidarity.

As well as its support through technical and financial additivity, the European Union's weaving of closer relations with NGOs has shown that the voluntary community has an irreplaceable role in European cooperation, and has at the same time set parameters for cooperation between official institutions and private agencies which respect the autonomy of both.

What was at first a half-hearted and often ambivalent relationship has become a shared commitment in which the concern for human development, the potentialities of societies in the South and the beliefs of Northern societies remain the nucleus and focus for the development of a whole range of plans, programmes and projects.

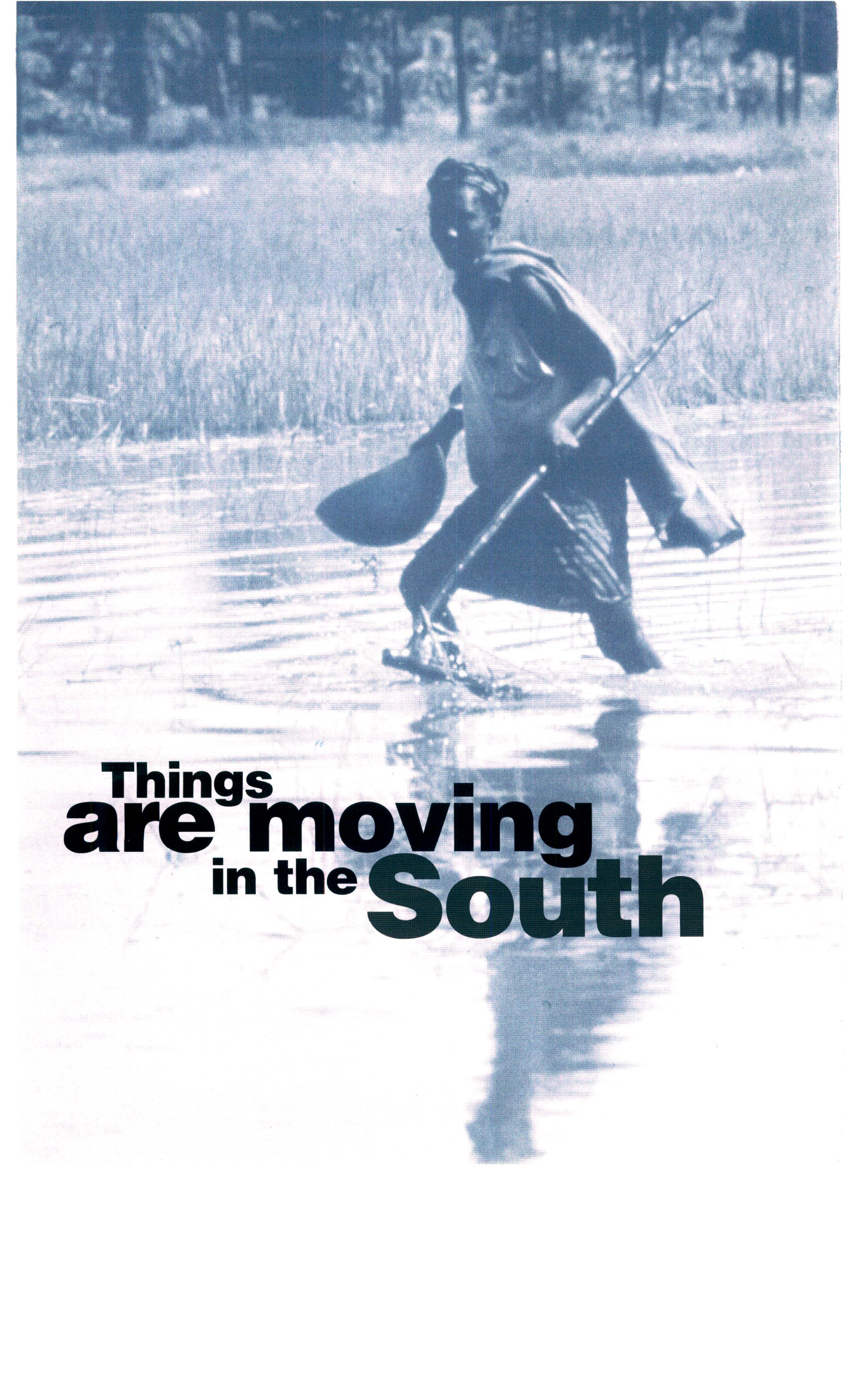
In the decades since decolonization, what has sometimes been the tragic interaction of old between Europe and the Southern countries has changed in nature and quality under the influence of the joint actions taken by European States and NGOs to bring people real independence in their economic, social and cultural living conditions.

Sadly, this is true perhaps only in the thinking and practice of only a handful of NGO and European Community leaders, and we must admit that society in the North and South has, by and large, failed to appreciate the importance of such an approach or take up the challenges posed to the people and public opinion in the countries concerned. While the future must be planned and prepared, there is no time to waste with this type of consciousness-raising if "people to people" cooperation is not to be confined to inner circles, but is to become a reality and the norm in the sharing of all types of resources.

That presupposes that European NGOs - and especially those who work together within the Liaison Committee - are willing to act as partners with the European Union as such and individual governments, not only in project financing, but also in working out, monitoring and evaluating cooperation policies. This is one aspect and area of cooperation which our lobbying activities have so far failed to address in a concerted and effective way.

All the wealth of experience built up over the last four decades does not permit half measures in the partnership between NGOs and the European Union. To the contrary the progress made so far prompts us to meet the new challenges head on and continue moving forwards towards new horizons. The dream of a united world at peace demands, in the present economic climate and in the years to come, a Europe-wide commitment (from States and NGOs) to still more dynamic action for human development.

But that action will not succeed unless all sides are able to pool their strategies and action plans as real partners in «development.» That is not a pious hope. It is an Appeal.



**Things
are moving
in the South**

A dismal picture

Some developing countries are still regarded as vast expanses of poverty and misery, an unchanging situation which only charitable acts on the part of better-off populations in the North can remedy. This depressing picture is due, amongst other things, to media saturation coverage of extreme situations which generates a totally negative perception of these countries as a whole.

But the reality is different

Many examples show that Third World peoples are on the move, taking on responsibility, organising themselves and making efforts to improve their lot. People in developing countries often have their own ideas about how to improve their situation in the long term. However, the techniques and means for realising their objectives are often lacking. One option local populations have is to contact a European non-governmental organisation (NGO) which specialises in development. Such an organisation will be able to help them get together the means necessary to carry out their projects.

Solidarity amongst Cambodian women

The upheavals Cambodia has experienced have left indelible marks, principally on women and children. Nowadays, many women have sole responsibility for the family, in conditions of total destitution. They have neither the means nor the training to improve their living conditions.

To remedy this situation, one Cambodian woman has set up the country's first NGO: Khemara. The NGO aims to mobilise women and to enhance their self-esteem by making them aware of the essential role they play within their society. Khemara trains group leaders and enables the women to take part in different projects such as literacy programmes, setting up a loan system, training in the field of health and family planning, etc. Khemara also offers a temporary refuge for women and children in distress.

Khemara receives support from a Dutch NGO. The Commission has financed 25% of the project (total cost ECU 500,000).

The Khemara experience is a driving force in the construction of a civic society in Cambodia and is today a model to encourage the setting-up of other NGOs.

A loan system enables women to take part in local economic activities



Improvement of living conditions



Organising the life of a community around a dynamic services centre

Development is an in-depth, long-term process which takes time to produce results. If the changes it makes are to last, projects must be rooted in the experience of the local population which must be the principal driving force of its own development.

Lasting feelings of solidarity

Nowadays, both the general public and European institutions pay more and more attention to emergency aid operations. Humanitarian aid ranks highest amongst concerns Europeans have regarding people in the South and many NGOs specialise in this type of activity. While humanitarian aid is vital, it is important for it to be kept in perspective. **Although the aim of humanitarian action is to re-establish living conditions which have suddenly deteriorated because of a conflict or natural disaster, development projects are the only way of substantially improving the situation of a given population in the long term.** This is the difference between a gift given out of charity and an investment based on genuine and lasting feelings of solidarity.

Starting up socio-economic activities in an underprivileged district

The district of Aguablanca is one of the poorest areas in the city of Cali (Colombia). The inhabitants wanted to set up a place for exchange and meeting, a sort of «main square» acting as a focus for the community and to breathe fresh life into it. A «basic community services centre» has been set up there and its priority is to improve the quality of life of the people concerned.

An integrated approach

Currently, no fewer than 80,000 inhabitants can meet there, buy their supplies there, set up a business or trade there. The centre groups together a number of activities and services adapted to the peoples' needs: housing services, a bank for building materials, and a range of other activities (micro-enterprises, health, community organisation, basic social services, aid to grocers, etc.).

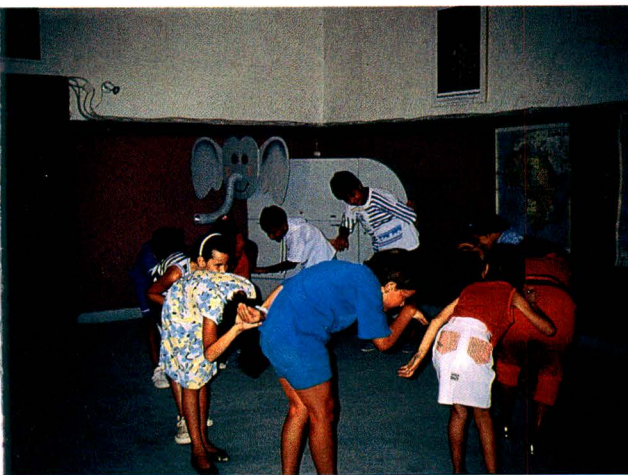
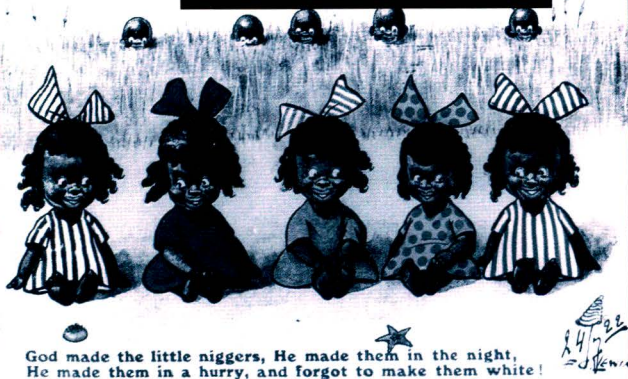
The Carvajal Foundation, which initiated the project, appealed to a Spanish NGO to co-finance the construction of the centre. The Aguablanca district now has three services centres covering the entire population. These centres are recognised as models in the informal economy sector and receive visits from a number of organisations from other countries. The total cost of the project is ECU 640,000, 47% of which has been financed by the Commission.

A bridge between North and South

The northern NGOs have a major role to play in their home country to be able to respond to requests from people in the South. They mobilise support for development projects and draw the attention of the man in the street to what is happening in the Third World. This is an essential function since, given Western Europe's difficult social and economic situation and in the wake of the political and economic upheavals in Eastern Europe, citizens of European countries are likely to feel less and less concerned about North/South relationships and the problems of developing countries, even though, in the long term, these problems also affect industrialized countries.

A more balanced view

Stereotypes are deeply rooted. Awareness campaigns aim to offer a more balanced view of the reality of people in the South.



Changing attitudes and behaviour towards people in the South

In Western countries, the view held about developing countries is usually made up of stereotyped images deeply rooted in popular culture. They include a number of often racist prejudices which are generally without foundation. A number of causes for so-called «under-development» are to be found in the North, both in the behaviour of European consumers and in policies which take scant account of the most underprivileged populations in the South. It is therefore of paramount importance that, alongside action in developing countries, there should be initiatives in Europe, aimed at changing behaviour patterns which have negative effects on the most deprived populations in the South. A wide variety of projects have taken up this challenge. Here are two examples.

Sweeping away prejudices

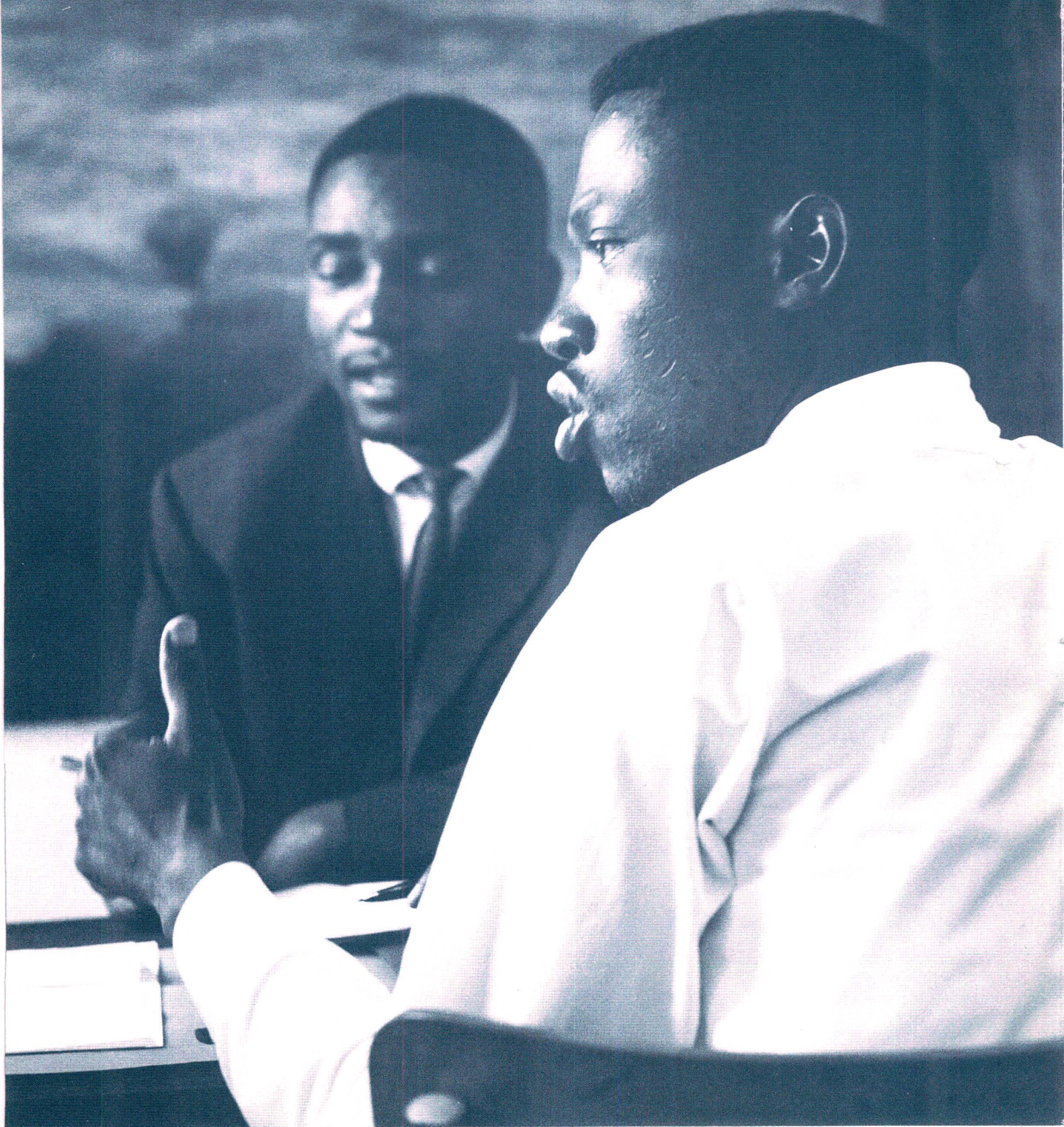
The «White on Black» exhibition shows, through (principally colonial) history, how Black people have been represented in western culture. The visitor to the exhibition is shocked by the revelation of the way in which Black people were regarded as children and sometimes even as animals, and it triggers awareness of the way in which prejudices are formed and persist to the present day.

Initially organised in Amsterdam, the exhibition has travelled to Brussels, Luxembourg and to other towns in the Netherlands. It is still currently on the road and is enabling a wide audience to question the bases of racism and think about the need to take another look at the developing world.

Showing a positive image of an unfamiliar world

«I did it for fun» - this is the title of a campaign, based on a Greek initiative, aimed at children between 7 and 12 years of age. There are two aspects to it. Firstly, a travelling exhibition of toys made by African children and secondly a programme called «Elephant» carried out in primary classes. The children find objects, fabrics and materials inside the belly of a large wooden elephant, enabling them to discover for themselves scenes from the daily life of African countries. Supplemented by discussions on various subjects and based on African toys and slides, the programme has three objectives: an appreciation of the creativity of African children, giving Africa a more realistic image based on dynamic and positive elements such as sociability, work, games and education, and, at a more basic level, it aims to promote the idea of exchange over that of aid.

**The originality
of the NGO
approach**



Combating AIDS in Uganda

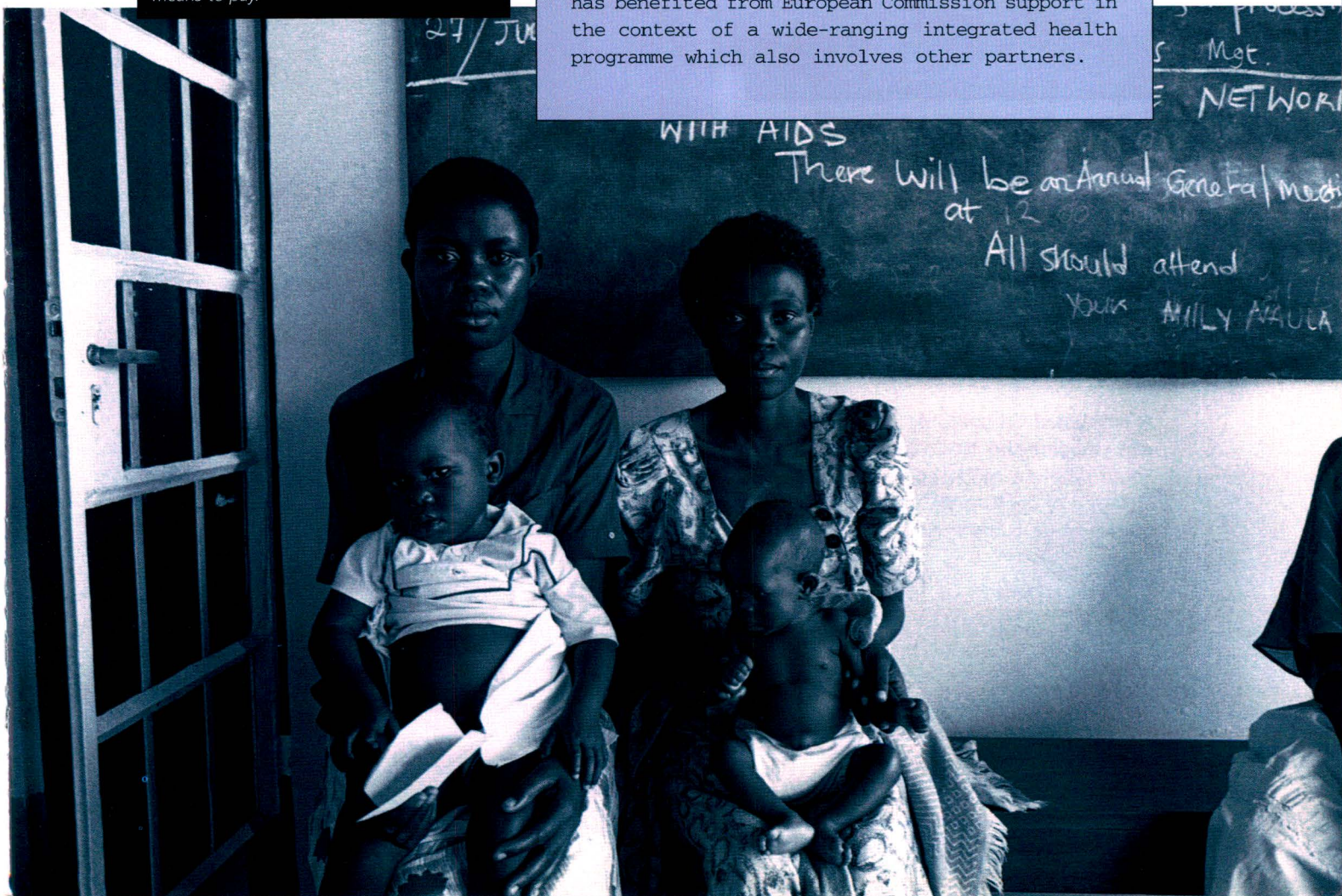
Uganda is in the grip of a major AIDS epidemic. 1.5 million people in the country are HIV-positive and 165,000 of these have developed the disease. In 1986, a number of people with the virus formed a self-help group, since the disease had made them «untouchable» in the eyes of society. One year on, they set up TASO (The Aids Support Organisation), an association which aims to provide support for patients and their families in their distress and solitude. Of the 16 founding members, 12 have since died. Nevertheless, the movement is well established: today, TASO is a generous provider of care and psychological and social assistance to approximately 25,000 patients via 7 centres throughout the country. With the support of a British NGO, TASO also gives direct support to village communities. The objective is prevention, screening, the improvement of the patients' living conditions, the promotion of income-generating activities, etc. The TASO network, set up to combat the AIDS epidemic, has progressively become a development instrument whose influence is felt beyond the borders of Uganda. Its activities were rewarded in 1994 by the Prix International Roi Baudouin [King Baudouin International Prize] for development (King Baudouin Foundation, Belgium).

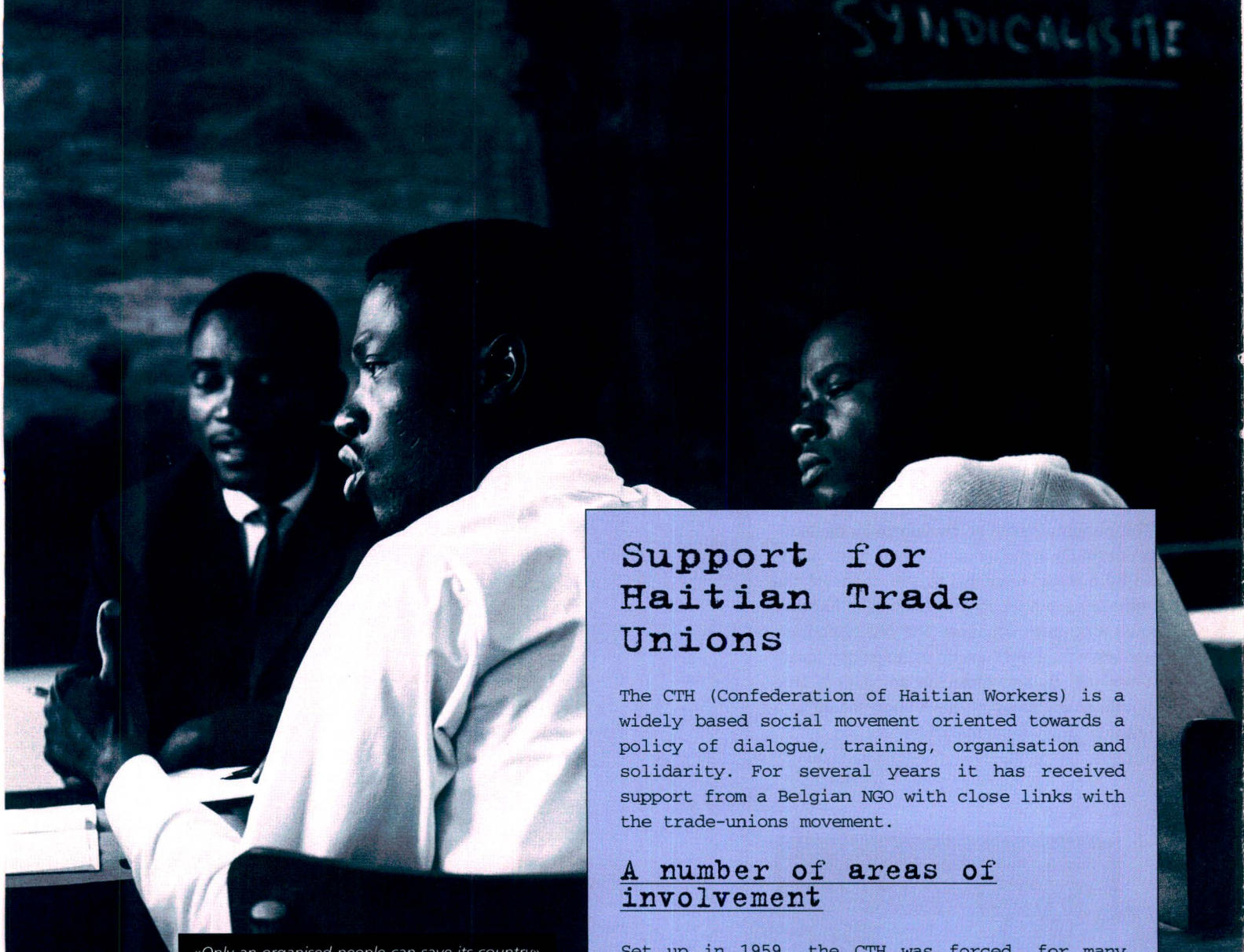
In addition to a block grant of ECU 15,000, TASO has benefited from European Commission support in the context of a wide-ranging integrated health programme which also involves other partners.

Direct access to marginal groups

The projects identified by European development NGOs are often small scale. Their aim is to be a direct response to the needs of the most underprivileged groups so as to improve their long-term situation. The NGOs cooperate with the target group in question, sometimes directly and often via an NGO in the South, many of which have been set up as a result of grass-roots initiatives.

Consultations at the TASO centre in Mbale. Treatment is free for those without the means to pay.





«Only an organised people can save its country»
(CTH motto)

From people to people

While the broad outlines of cooperation policy are drawn up by the governments of industrialized and developing countries, the NGOs bring together ordinary people in the North and the South.

A link based on solidarity unites Europeans who support the NGO and people in the South who are mobilised around a project. This type of cooperation takes place without official circles imposing their own approach.

Support for Haitian Trade Unions

The CTH (Confederation of Haitian Workers) is a widely based social movement oriented towards a policy of dialogue, training, organisation and solidarity. For several years it has received support from a Belgian NGO with close links with the trade-unions movement.

A number of areas of involvement

Set up in 1959, the CTH was forced, for many years, to operate clandestinely. Since it was officially recognised in 1986, it has assumed the role in Haitian socio-political affairs of a defence movement for peasants and workers. Through its affiliated organisations (trade-unions federations, grass-roots associations and cooperatives), the CTH covers 80% of the country. It is mainly active in the rural sector (to the extent of 80%), but also touches on other fields, such as health, savings/loans, the press, etc.

The CTH has set up a training programme aimed at trade-unions officials and activists to enable them to respond better to the needs of Haitian workers. Moreover, it has been able to improve the material infrastructure of its social training centre. The Commission has financed 48% of the project, the total amount being ECU 590,000. It should be stressed that the project has been implemented until recently in extremely difficult conditions under a dictatorial and oppressive regime.

The CTH is sole manager of the project. All staff are recruited locally. Training programmes are therefore completely adapted to the experience of the participants.

The initiative comes from the South

Development projects must not seek to impose western models which are to be followed blindly. European NGOs and their sponsors need to understand the deep-seated concerns and aspirations of people in the South. They must understand their strengths and the realities of their day-to-day life, through first-hand knowledge of conditions in developing countries. Respect for solutions proposed by local communities characterizes the development work of many NGOs.

The potential recipients of aid must be approached in terms of what they are and would like to be and not in terms of what others would like them to be.

Participatory development

In the early days of their development aid, the NGOs tended to run the entire process: typically, a small team of Europeans would be sent out to the site of the project to run it, to obtain technical support and to provide money obtained from fund-raising activities back home.

More recently, the actual implementation of projects has been taken over by organisations in the South (villages, groups, cooperatives, associations, etc.), with the NGO from the North obtaining the necessary technical support and overall finance for the operation. **Nowadays, as the spirit of cooperation has developed to a considerable extent in the South, local partners are taking over not only the implementation of actions but also technical support.** This development should be seen as a logical step in NGO activities, which aim to help the organisations representing the local population in their activities so that, in the long term, they can become independent.

Experience shows that the efficacy of development projects depends directly on target groups' participation in choosing, designing and implementing their own development programmes.

Savings and loan groups in India

Peasants in the Chitradurga district have organised themselves into savings and loan groups so as to improve their conditions of production. They have identified their needs in terms of training so as to acquire a basic knowledge of accounting and credit management. A training project has been set up, together with a German NGO, and this has been supplemented by literacy programmes, advice in the field of agriculture, reforestation, etc. Moreover, through a fund managed by the local partner, loans are extended to the groups, thereby enabling them to acquire the means of production or of consumption and to finance community infrastructures. Repayments and interest are ploughed back into this fund.

This integrated development project is based essentially on the solidarity of peasants united by common interests. It promotes their integration into the regional microeconomic circuit. The Commission has co-financed the project to the extent of 50%, out of a total cost of ECU 720,000.

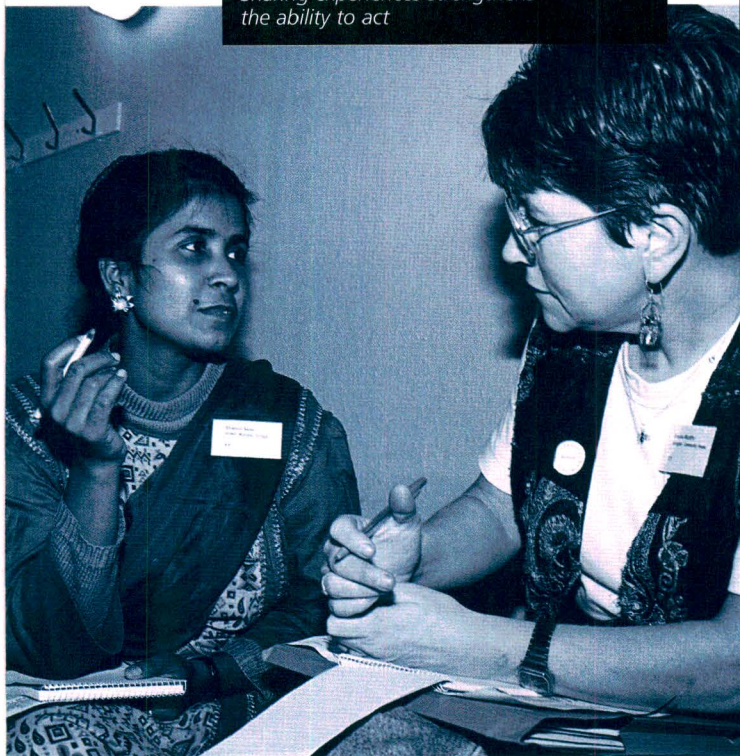


The peasants make their training requirements known, and these are passed on by the Northern NGO

Making Europeans more aware

The NGOs have long been aware of the fact that action in the field is insufficient insofar as many of the obstacles to development in the South originate in the North. For this reason, they have embarked upon programmes to make the public more aware of the problems. NGOs in the North and their partners in the South want Europeans to have a good understanding of the causes underlying «underdevelopment» and to adopt a more positive attitude as regards people in the South who are working for their own development. The NGOs also act at a political level by proposing alternatives and changes in their programmes and priorities to the various authorities in question. A wide variety of methods are used, including production of teaching materials, exhibitions, films, simulation games, debates, joint discussions, theatre, etc. Those responsible for official cooperation policies feel a genuine need for such activities, without which the political will needed here for development cooperation would be insufficient.

Sharing experiences strengthens the ability to act



People in the North and South: the same struggle...

Unemployment, exclusion from society, environmental problems, AIDS, the economic crisis - all the current major problems directly affect people both in the North and in the South. The attitudes and behaviour patterns adopted in the face of these problems in the North have repercussions in the South, and vice versa. This is what is termed «North/South interdependence». The solutions are of necessity global solutions, beginning with mutual reflection and moving on through an exchange of experiences and collaboration between people who are confronted with the same difficulties. Together, we are stronger! For this reason, the Commission finances projects aimed at stimulating North/South exchanges in different fields.

A global approach to agricultural problems

In the face of the imbalance in the world agricultural situation which is leading to a widening gulf between rich and poor countries, a network of European NGOs has a vital role as a mobilising force. It consolidates exchanges between farmers in the North and the South, facilitates meetings and the sharing of successful experiences both in the North and in the South, it provides access to information, increases the partners' knowledge and capacity for analysis (particularly of those partners in the South) and improves the quality of debate. The pooling of experiences from the North and from the South initiates a dynamic process which makes it possible to define more effective new strategies. The objective of the network is to encourage a **concerted global approach** to problems in agriculture in order to seek greater coordination between agricultural policies in the North and in the South.

Women from Scotland and from the Third World standing shoulder to shoulder

A Scottish NGO is stimulating contact between Scottish womens' groups and their counterparts in the Third World. The «Shoulder to shoulder» project brings together marginalised women from both the North and the South who have organised themselves in order to improve their situation (e.g. unemployed women who have created their own jobs). Women in the North and in the South meet and gain mutual benefit from their successes. Their joint reflection makes it possible to better understand the mechanisms of poverty and to fight more effectively against the process which leads to exclusion from society.

A person wearing a white headwrap and a blue shirt is walking through a field of tall, dry grass. They are carrying a bundle of sticks or branches under their arm. The scene is captured in a slightly blurred, high-angle shot, suggesting movement and a rural setting.

**What is
a development
NGO?**

What is a development NGO?

It is difficult to give a precise definition. In general terms, it is a private, non-profit-making organisation established on a voluntary basis and with the aim of pursuing international solidarity activities. The NGOs rely on popular support which can be mobilised in the field or for fund-raising.

There is an enormous variety of NGOs in Europe, reflecting the diversity of the world of voluntary associations of which they constitute one of the principal forces. They emanate directly from the dynamism of European civic society and are answerable to their private and public sponsors, in respect to whom they must be totally transparent regarding the way they manage the funds which are raised.

The NGOs rely on popular support and therefore raise funds from private sources. They are also able to call upon the public purse - NGOs are today able to benefit from national and Community co-financing as well as funds from multilateral bodies.

NGO action is based on ethics rather than profit.

Development NGOs aim to strengthen local organisations so they can become self-supporting in the long term.

The NGOs are required to publish a balance sheet of their activities, giving a realistic overview both of what they do and of the political, economic and social context in which they are called upon to work.

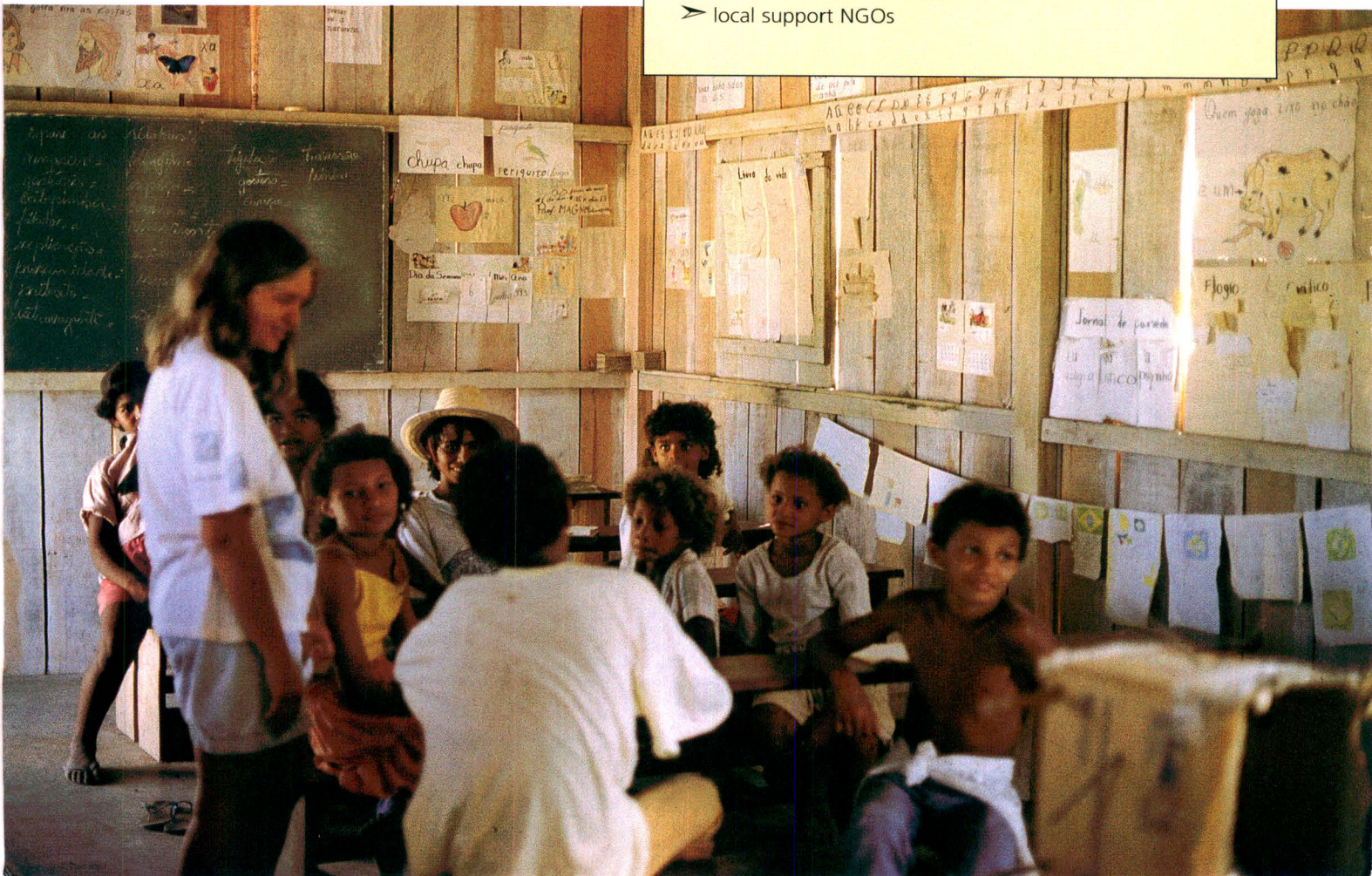
In their home country, the NGOs conduct public-awareness campaigns concerning major North/South topics, such as debt, the environment, world trade, etc. They also lobby governments in the North, urging the latter to adopt cooperation policies which are more advantageous for those in developing countries.

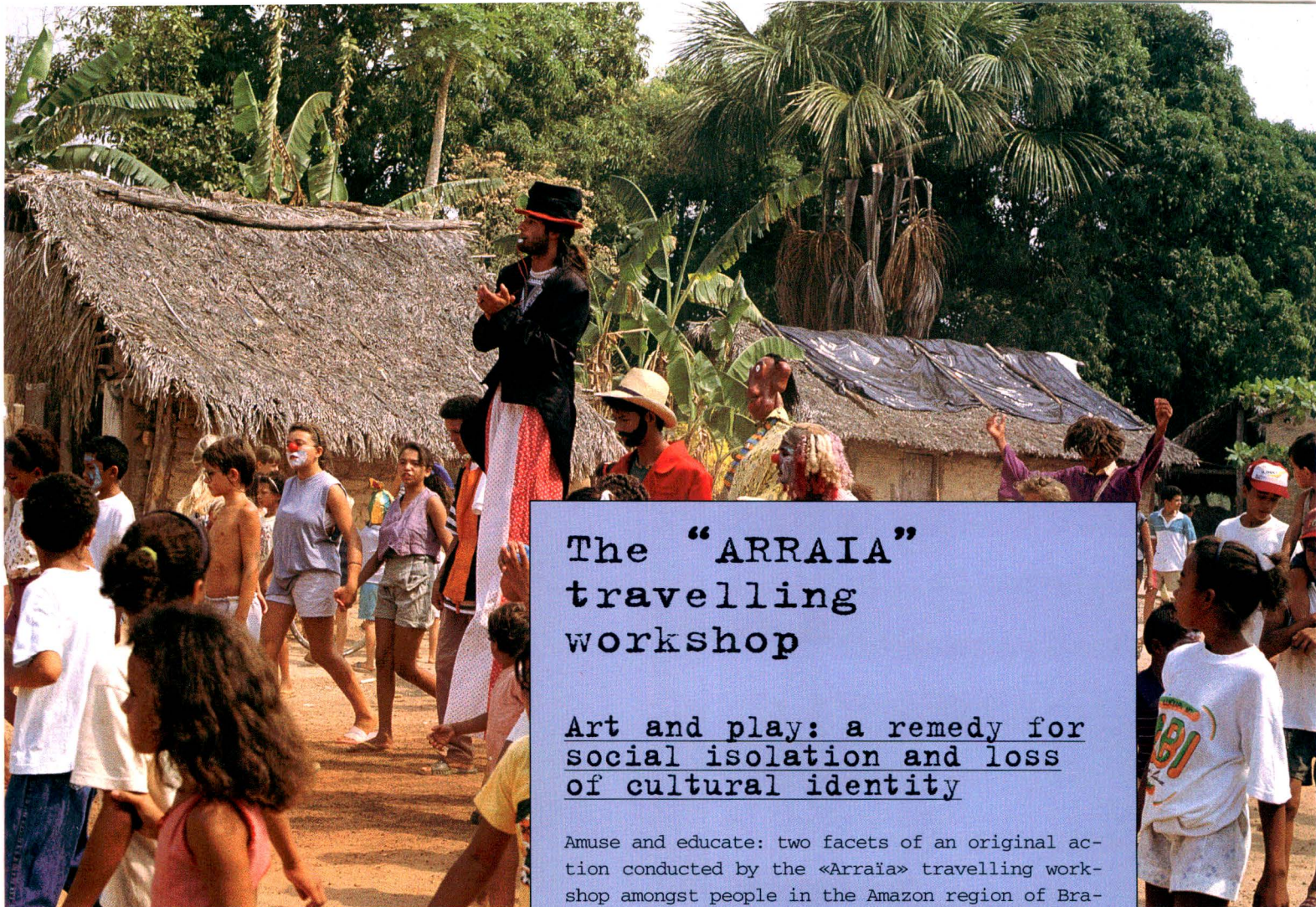
Their work in the Third World can take various forms:

- financing organisations and projects in the South
- providing other types of assistance (technical assistance, training, provision of specialised equipment, etc.)
- implementing projects or parts of projects themselves
- supplying a complete service together with follow-up

Their contacts in the South may have different profiles:

- grass-roots organisations (rural groups, village associations, cooperatives, groups of craftsmen, etc.). These organisations act and have an impact at local level.
- regional organisations (rural associations, federations of cooperatives, etc.) which have a wider radius of action
- local support NGOs





The "ARRAIA" travelling workshop

Art and play: a remedy for social isolation and loss of cultural identity

Amuse and educate: two facets of an original action conducted by the «Arraia» travelling workshop amongst people in the Amazon region of Brazil. The population comes from diverse origins (indigenous peoples, people of Latin and African origin) and is largely illiterate. The project is helping to break the isolation into which these people are forced through a lack of means of communication, and health and educational infrastructures. The workshop's objective is to develop collective reflection about the people's origins, their experiences, their role in society, their aspirations and claims in a manner which is adapted to their needs.

The Circus-workshop, supported by a Spanish NGO and the Commission, intelligently mixes purely recreational events (circus, music festivals, theatre, folklore) and more educational activities (workshops and art courses, socio-political training, seminars and debates, technical workshops in various fields such as health, agriculture, electricity, etc.).

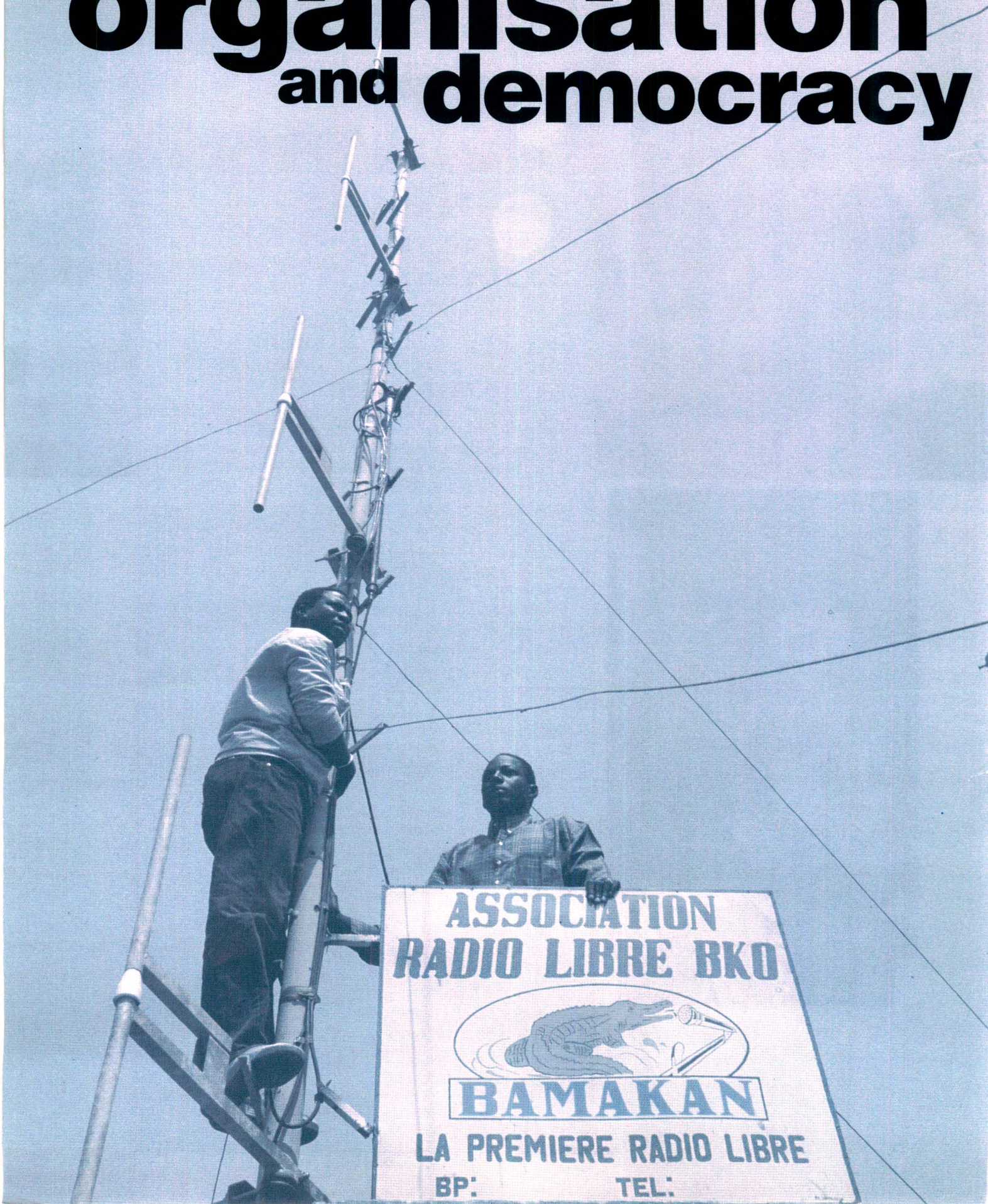
Training group leaders to take over

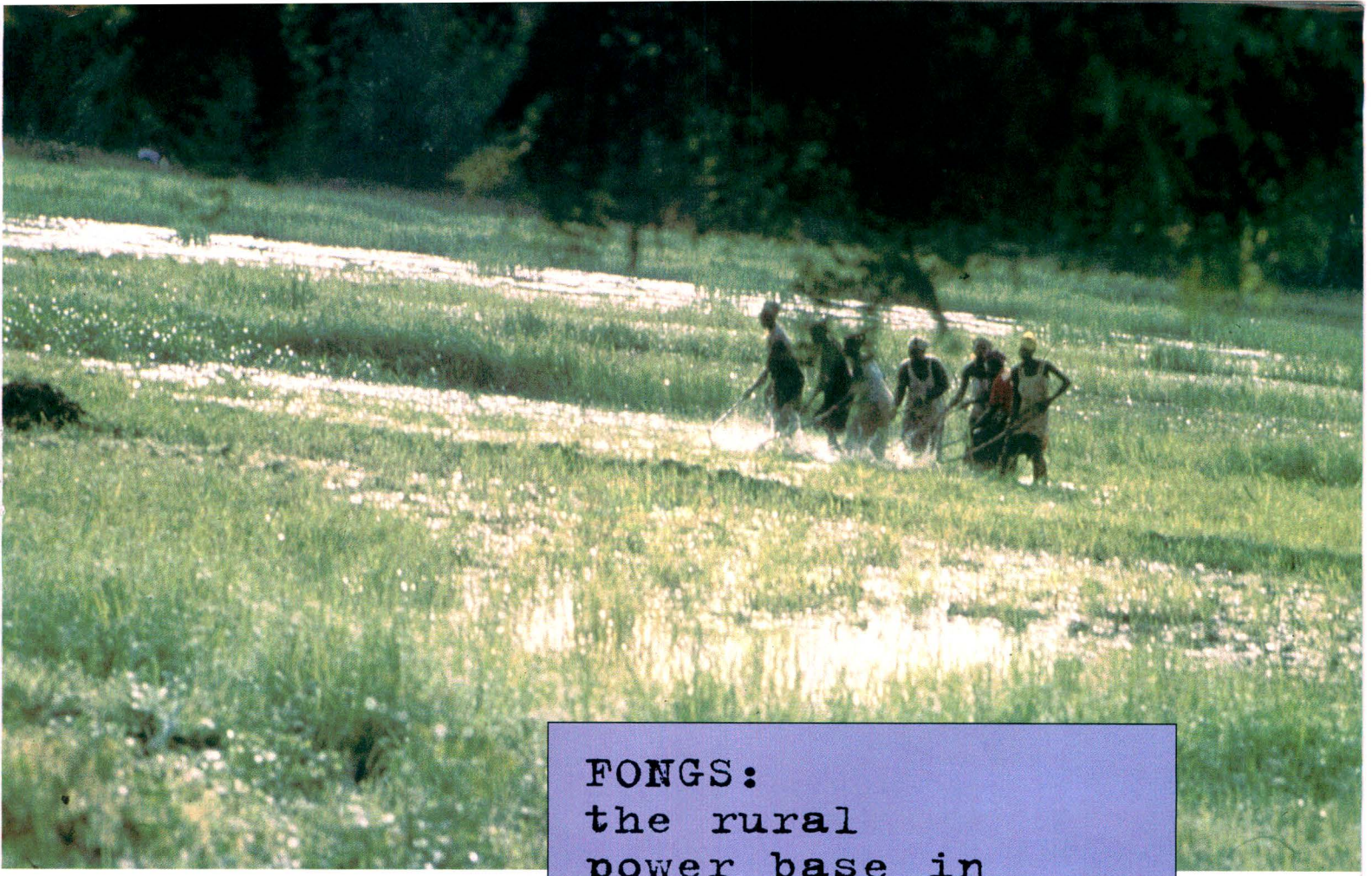
An essential aspect of the programme and also a guarantee of its effectiveness is that the Circus-workshop (a completely local production) tours villages, trains, on site, group leaders who are to carry on the workshop's activities, and returns to each community to assess the results obtained and possibly develop new strategies.



*Creating a space for popular expression
which is much more than just a
place for recreation*

self- organisation and democracy





Strengthening grass-roots organisations in developing countries

The financial, technical and organisational support given by European NGOs to their contacts in the South enables the cooperative effort to be expanded in developing countries. By consolidating local organisations, the northern NGOs enhance their autonomy and the role that such organisations play within their societies.

FONGS: the rural power base in Senegal

The FONGS is a rural movement made up of federations from all over Senegal, representing approximately 100,000 farmers. Faced with complete Senegalese state withdrawal from all areas which are vital to the development of the rural world, the FONGS has defined the major challenges it will have to meet in this final decade of the century and has set up a programme aimed at consolidating and structuring peasant organisations so that they are able to put forward proposals in the area of rural development policy. This vast programme of support for peasant organisations has been supported by the Commission and a consortium of European NGOs since 1992.

Moreover, the FONGS has had a major role in the creation of a national consultative committee which brings together everyone involved in the rural world. This committee has the following objectives:

- to be the sole contact representing rural movements in their dealings with the state, on all domestic questions concerning the rural world;
- to be the mouthpiece for the rural world on all national problems concerning it;
- to be a platform for reflection and the generation of proposals in any area likely to affect the living conditions of rural populations.



Encouraging democratic practices

Strengthening local organisations in the South has a multiplier effect in that it sets a dynamic and continuous process in motion to improve the living conditions of the various populations. This is where **the political role of the NGOs is most apparent: they encourage democracy from the bottom upwards.** The democratic political system is, in fact, unviable without democratic practices in economic and social life at local level. Local organisations aim to stimulate, consolidate and pass on changes in mentality and attitude on the part of the populations and can counteract authoritarian tendencies in a period of democratisation or democratic transition.

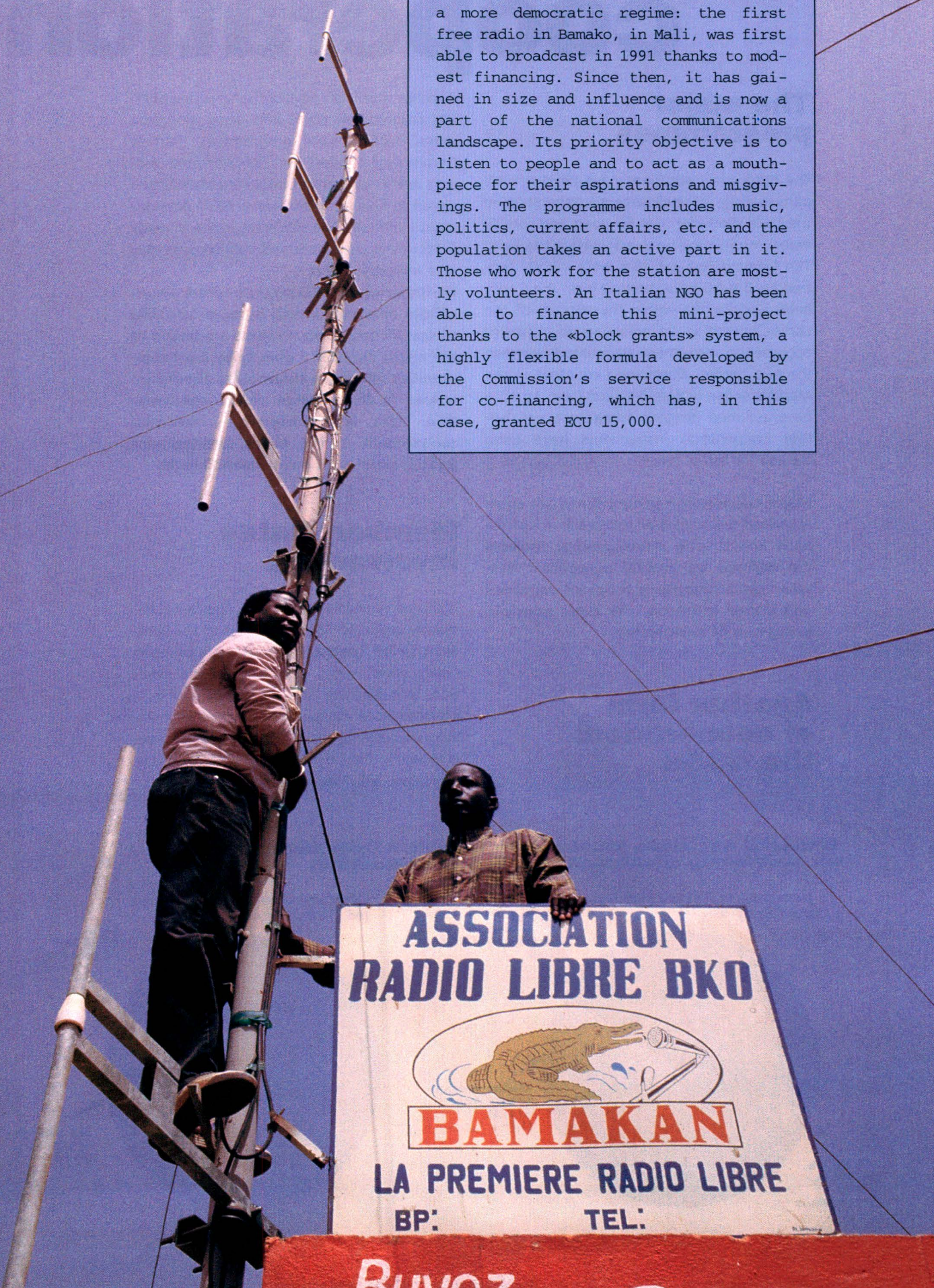
The aim to be achieved is the emergence of an NGO sector which is robust, recognised and powerful enough to be able to support social change in countries in the South.

Supporting integrated development

A growing number of NGO projects are geared towards what is usually called **«integrated development»**: this involves supporting organisations which are active in several fields at the same time, such as agriculture, crafts, training, health, environmental protection, civil engineering, etc. The NGOs help to support these organisations which are active both in rural and urban areas.

Free radio: one step on the road to democracy

It is a tangible sign of a move towards a more democratic regime: the first free radio in Bamako, in Mali, was first able to broadcast in 1991 thanks to modest financing. Since then, it has gained in size and influence and is now a part of the national communications landscape. Its priority objective is to listen to people and to act as a mouthpiece for their aspirations and misgivings. The programme includes music, politics, current affairs, etc. and the population takes an active part in it. Those who work for the station are mostly volunteers. An Italian NGO has been able to finance this mini-project thanks to the «block grants» system, a highly flexible formula developed by the Commission's service responsible for co-financing, which has, in this case, granted ECU 15,000.



European Community development cooperation

The major programmes

The European institutions have been actively participating in development cooperation in the Third World for over 30 years and considerable results have been achieved in this field. The Community's activities were initially centred on the ACP Countries (Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific) within the context of the Lomé Convention, an innovative development cooperation instrument negotiated between the two parties. Developing countries in the Mediterranean region, Asia and Latin America have assumed growing importance and further cooperation instruments have been created for this purpose.

Major cooperation programmes are characterised by a global approach to problems linked with development. Projects are defined by mutual agreement between governments of recipient countries and donor countries, the basic principle being one of partnership.

Another form of cooperation: the NGOs

Another form of development cooperation has progressively come into being alongside these major official programmes, namely Community support for NGO-initiated projects and a number of budget lines have been set up to finance or co-finance NGO development initiatives. The NGOs are active in many fields in various regions and their projects may take a variety of forms.

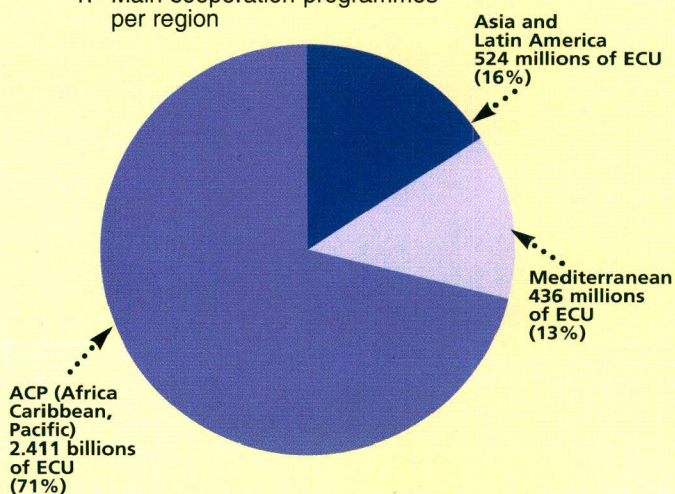
Co-financing of NGO projects offers a non-official approach which is more targeted to specific recipients. Projects are linked to the needs expressed directly by local communities which are themselves directly involved in their design and implementation. This is therefore an essential complement to the major development policies defined at governmental level.

Member States involvement

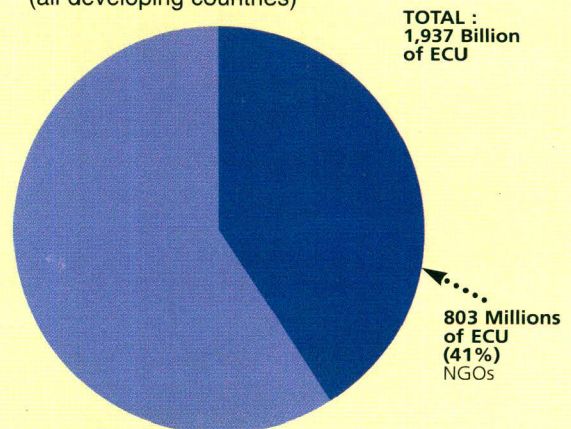
It should be remembered that, besides Community action, all Member States of the European Union conduct their own cooperation policy which varies according to the traditions, priorities and financial resources of each Member State. Policies are coordinated at Union level either by discussion of general guidelines within the Council of Ministers or by coordinating activities in the field.

Financial decisions taken by the European Community in 1994 for developing countries (excl. Eastern countries)

1. Main cooperation programmes per region



2. Other instruments of cooperation (all developing countries)





**The European
Community
and the NGOs**

**partners
in development**

An ever-growing confidence

On the basis of these policies, the Commission and the European Parliament regard the NGOs as an indispensable complement to official cooperation activities, it being impossible to conceive of cooperation without their original type of input. The NGOs therefore need their full backing. Moreover, in order to supplement the private funds raised from their supporters or during public-awareness campaigns, the NGOs have progressively called on public funders.

Community co-financing of development actions implemented by the NGOs began in 1976. Since then, funds for co-financing NGO development projects have been regularly increased, reaching approximately ECU 170 million in 1995. By the end of 1994, one billion Ecus had been made available since the beginnings of NGO co-financing in 1976.

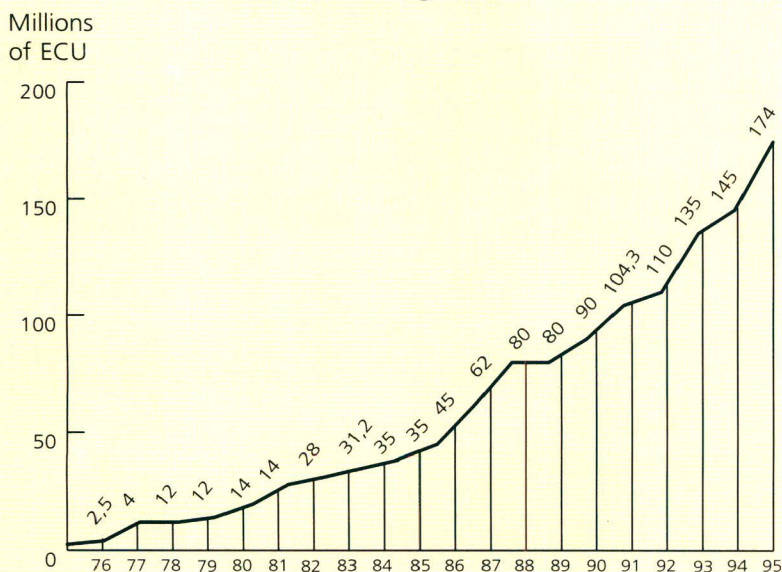
The NGOs also work with the Community in fields other than development, such as humanitarian aid, food aid and aid to refugees, fields where they can contribute special expertise (promotion of women, human rights, environment, etc.), in countries experiencing particular problems (South Africa in the era of apartheid, for example).

Nowadays, more EU development aid is channelled through NGOs than through any other non-Community organisation. (table with EC financing, all lines included, in 1994 + co-financing table 1994 + 1976-94).

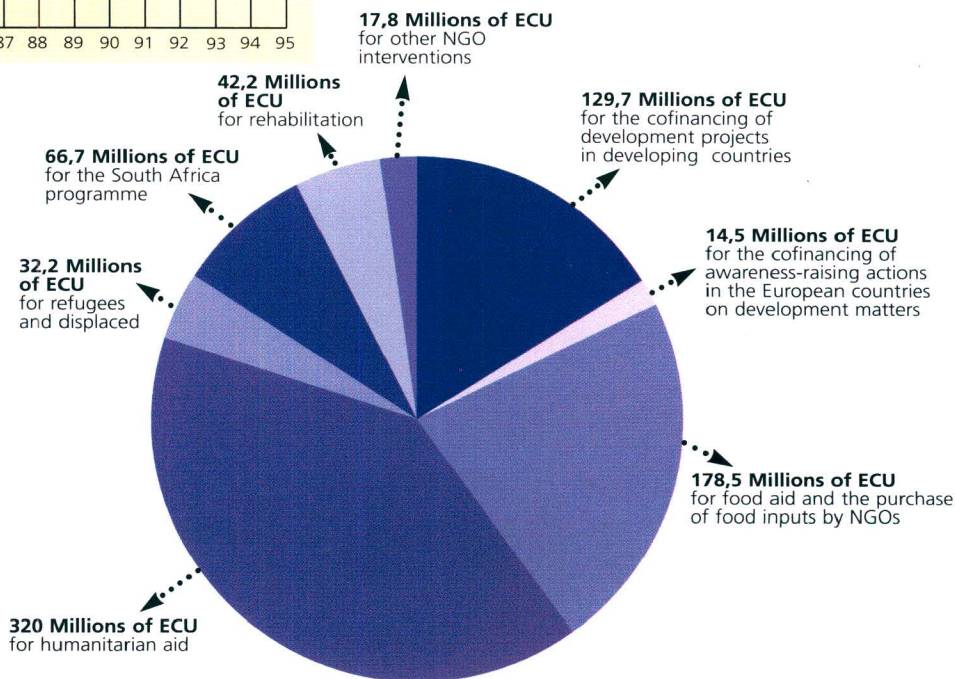
A constructive exchange of experiences

Development policies have evolved over the years. Those in charge of development cooperation in the Community have had of necessity to reexamine their methods and this has enabled them to conclude that the participation of local communities is a prerequisite for the success of a development programme and that the NGO approach is a testing ground offering a lot of useful ideas. Nowadays, the Commission encourages NGO projects which promote participatory development and which give organisational support to their partners in the South.

Evolution of NGO cofinancing since 1976



Community cofinancing in 1994 per type of intervention



Job creation in Lima: refuse collection

In Lima (Peru), the official refuse collection services serve only part of the city. Elsewhere, refuse is deposited just about anywhere and constitutes a long-term hazard to the health of the inhabitants. The areas most affected are the districts on the outskirts of the city. The solution envisaged by the population was to create a decentralised collection network, outside the official system, to cover all the marginal areas.

An alternative concept

To this end, the Peruvian IPES Institute, principal project manager, made provision for the creation of 111 cooperatives with approximately 10 employees each. In total, therefore, approximately 1,200 stable and adequately remunerated jobs were created. This project is supported by a German NGO.

These mini-enterprises are responsible for collecting refuse in those areas with no official service. A population of approximately 1,500,000 inhabitants can thus benefit from an efficient service which also cleans the streets and sorts and recycles refuse. The total cost of the project is ECU 1,050,000, 48% of which has been co-financed by the Commission.

The action has the three-fold advantage of providing a solution to this public health problem, of creating jobs and respects the environment.

The concept of participatory development has been incorporated into official policies

The most marked example of this trend is the Fourth Lomé Convention concluded with the ACP countries. Its principle is based on the fact that support should be given, even within official cooperation frameworks, to the initiatives and contributions of those involved locally in development. Within this context, the Convention encourages partnership between players in the North and the South for development activities.

Collecting, sorting, recycling: in addition to creating jobs, the project is a remedy for a public health problem and it cares for the environment



Why does the Community support the activities of development NGOs?

A system of health care which is close to the people, managed by the population within a Committee system

A response to the European public's commitment.

Co-financing is the Community's response to the European public's commitment in the non-governmental sphere. The Community wishes to support the upsurge in solidarity felt by the European public towards the most underprivileged populations in the Third World.

The Commission increases its outlay

Within the context of co-financing, the Ecu invested by the European public have generated additional funding from the Commission. It is therefore of paramount importance for the European public to maintain its commitment since this makes it possible to amass substantial resources for development by virtue of the considerable amounts contributed by the authorities.

The NGOs supplement the Community's range of action

The NGOs maintain direct and continuous personal contacts with the recipient populations, enabling them to understand and meet genuine needs. Working in partnership with the NGOs enables the Community to respond directly to the needs of marginalised populations. It is also the only means it has of acting on a developmental level in countries where the political situation excludes any official cooperation. The NGOs are guarantors of the correct allocation of aid to the recipient populations in places where respect for human rights and legitimate government is often lacking.

Flexibility

The often small size of the NGOs, the motivation and «ethical» commitment of their personnel, and their in-depth knowledge of the field permit rapid and effective action at a lower cost as compared with governmental intervention operations. They cannot do everything, but their action is an essential addition to that of governments.

Professionalism

The growing role of NGO involvement in a vast array of activities calls for improved qualifications for staff working with NGOs, both in the North and in the South. Development projects today include such areas as savings/loans, employment, health struc-

tures, etc., which demand a skilled personnel to guarantee the long-term survival of the operation. An «amateur» approach risks disappointing both the recipient populations and the donors. However, although greater and greater professionalisation appears essential, it is important for the NGOs to retain their own approach, motivated by a moral commitment rather than profit or a purely technical approach.

Supporting the health system in Northern Kivu

Goma, Zaire: a small town notorious as the site of a major humanitarian crisis in 1994. The international community conducted an enormous emergency operation there to help Rwandan refugees entirely dependent on humanitarian aid. The assistance brought by Western teams to the population in distress was given considerable media coverage.

Paradoxically, in the same region, there are large numbers of skilled nurses and doctors operating within health centres set up at the initiative of the local population. In fact, in order to facilitate access for the entire regional population (750,000 people) to basic health care (gynaecology, paediatrics, public health), a decentralised health infrastructure has been set up. The system is supported by several NGOs dedicated to giving local projects the scientific rigour to ensure their necessary quality and continuity. The project, costing a total of ECU 567,000, was co-financed by the Commission. These basic health services have also taken on responsibility for a very large number of Rwandan refugees who were not taken in by the camps.

Participation and collective management

Local participation, which is essential for the system's survival, is taking several forms : paying for care, voluntary aid for building the centres and, above all, collective management within «Health Committees» which are accessible to everyone, those in charge and recipients alike. Some people have no hesitation in walking 80 kilometres in order to take part in these meetings.



Why do NGOs want a partnership with the Community?

Expanding projects

The first reason is obviously financial, to obtain more funds for the work the NGOs wish to carry out. Increased resources will enable them to do work on a larger scale and the experience acquired in a small project can be converted into a programme benefitting a greater number of people.

Listening constructively

In the European Commission (which manages Community cooperation policies), the NGOs have, in its cofinancing officers, contacts who will listen to them and respect their approach in a spirit of pluralism. Moreover, the Commission advises small NGOs and sometimes helps them build up their capacity for action. The Commission is constantly urging the NGOs to improve what they do by discussing with them various approaches, priorities and methods. These are reflected in the selection criteria covering eligibility for co-financing.

An innovative approach

The Commission particularly encourages projects which involve strengthening local organisations in Third World countries. This is a notable feature of the Community's co-financing system. Particular importance is given to awareness-raising projects - the Commission recognises the fundamental influence NGOs have on European public opinion with regard to development problems.

NGOs from different countries working together

The Commission encourages NGOs to work together, giving increased financial support to projects submitted and implemented by two or more NGOs, particularly if they come from different Member States. The European dimension, strengthening the work of the NGOs, is also a selection criterion as regards public awareness projects. Such projects are more likely to benefit from co-financing if they relate to target groups in different Member States, if they envisage cooperation between NGOs from various Member States or if they deal with European issues.

A platform for discussion between the NGOs and the European Community: the Liaison Committee

The NGO Liaison Committee is the central point of contact for dialogue between the development NGOs and the Commission. It was set up with a two-fold objective:

- to represent the NGOs (currently approximately 800) in dealings with the European institutions,
- to act as a point of contact between the various European NGOs.

The Liaison Committee consists of 15 representatives elected from national NGO platforms in Member States. These representatives are involved in lobbying in order to influence development policy in Member States. The Liaison Committee has the same role with regard to Community institutions.

The European institutions have permanent contacts with the Liaison Committee - regular discussions are organised on subjects of interest to both parties.

Influence

Through co-financing, NGOs seek to diversify Community support development projects. Community involvement in an NGO project facilitates the NGO's lobbying work, which is aimed at influencing the Community's approach to development problems and helping to shape Community policy in this field.

Family planning in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the world's poorest countries where the mortality rate is very high. Disease and malnutrition are widespread, principally amongst women and children. Since 1988, a local NGO (MSCS) has been conducting a campaign to reduce female mortality in the most underprivileged areas. The fact is that women have too many children too close together, resulting in a high mortality rate.

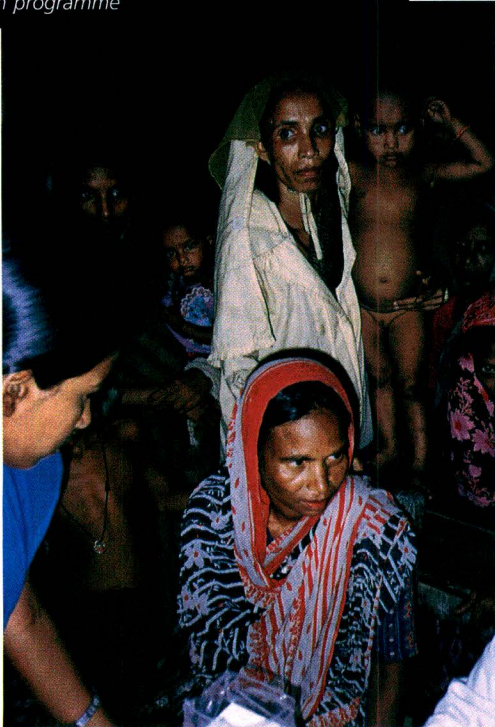
Promoting awareness

For several years, the Government of Bangladesh has been working to reduce the country's rate of population growth. It has adopted a family-planning programme aimed at making women more aware of the need to plan their pregnancies, particularly through the use of various methods of contraception. There is also an important maternal and infant health aspect to the programme, this being a proven integrated approach.

The NGO's action is part of the same integrated approach. With the support of a British NGO, medical centres have been opened in Chittagong, Feni, Comilla and Sylhet. The mainly female staff offer women advice on health, hygiene and nutrition in general, care more specifically linked to reproductive health, and also family-planning services. An information and education programme (meetings, publicity, etc.) supplements these activities in order to speed up awareness of the problem. The Commission has financed 50% of the project which has cost a total of ECU 194,000.

More and more women are now attending the centres and they are beginning to change their attitude towards their role not only in their own families but also within society.

An integrated approach : family planning is accompanied by a maternal and infant health programme



Family planning also involves men. The European Union supports an information campaign which addresses men in particular.

La construcción y equipamiento de esta Casa JUCONI fue posible gracias al apoyo de muchas personas, grupos e instituciones mexicanas e internacionales. Gracias a la *co.* financiación

COMUNIDAD EUROPEA



EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

co. financing

a system adapted
to the needs
of the **NGOs**



Principles of co-financing

The main principle is to respond to requests from European development NGOs who submit a project which brings needs or initiatives formulated by populations in the South to the Community's attention. **These projects may relate to a development project in the South or to a project to increase European public awareness of development issues.** The NGOs and their projects must meet certain basic criteria. When co-financing has been agreed, the NGOs remain in charge of their projects and, in return, they undertake to use the co-financing resources in a correct and responsible manner.

In co-financing an NGO project the Community is supplementing funds donated by ordinary people in Europe. The NGO must be able to raise at least 15% of the funds needed for a project from private sources, the Commission normally giving no more than 50% of the total cost. The rest must be sought from various sources by the NGO itself. **The principle of the NGO having to make its own contribution is one of the best guarantees of respect for its autonomy.**

Approximately 90% of the NGO co-financing budget is spent on projects in developing countries. The remaining 10% is used for public awareness projects.

Requests for co-financing must come from European NGOs. Organisations or associations in developing countries do not have direct access to the co-financing system described here - they need first to interest an European NGO in their project, which then submits a request to the Commission.

Confidence and respect

In its cooperation with NGOs the Community undertakes to respect their pluralism, their independence and the specific nature of their activities. Co-financing is an adaptable and flexible instrument distinguished by the absence of any economic and political interest. By making this instrument available to the NGOs, the Community is demonstrating its confidence in their approach to development by leaving them the initiative.

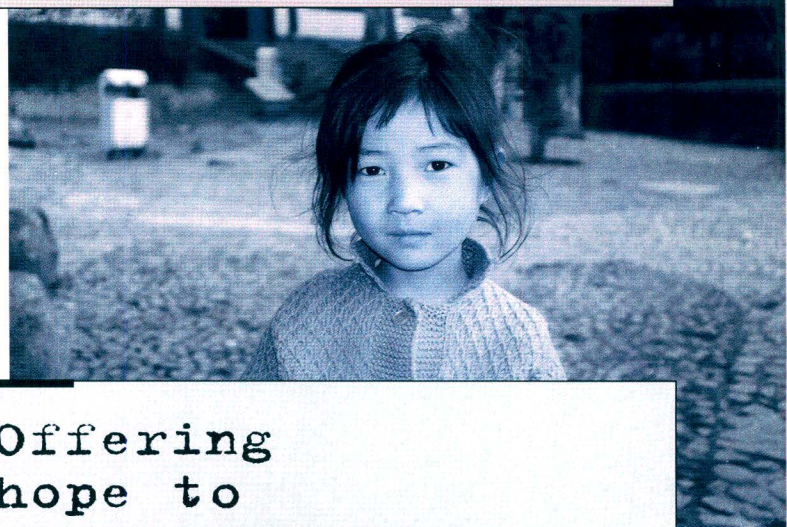
Selection Criteria

Given the large number of requests for co-financing, the Commission's services have of necessity to operate a rigorous selection procedure. Project files submitted are examined in terms of:

- the experience and professional and financial reliability of the NGO
- project quality
- the role of the partner in the South and the quality of the relationship between it and the European NGO
- project impact and viability
- the multiplying effect of the project
- meeting the needs of the poor in projects for developing countries.

And, more particularly, as regards awareness projects:

- the ability to involve new players in the North
- public understanding of North/South interdependence
- the European dimension: projects involving several Member States or dealing with European topics.



Offering hope to street children

It is a sign of extreme poverty in the cities and major towns in developing countries: more and more young girls and boys are having to live on the streets from a very early age, their parents being unable to support them. The Community has co-financed a number of initiatives aimed at helping street children. In Mexico and in the Philippines, in particular, the approach which has been chosen, after a trial period, consists in training the children actually within their environment, namely the street. The assistance offered to them is wide-ranging, including shelter (day and night), education, training, reconciliation with their families, assistance in legal matters, etc. This realistic approach takes into account the fact that it is impossible to accommodate all the street children in specialised institutions and makes it possible to reach a larger number of children and adolescents. The Community has provided ECU 107.000 and ECU 222.000 for two projects run by British NGOs.

Flexibility

Rural populations in developing countries incorporate innovation at their own pace. This is one of the unavoidable constraints of development - sometimes incompatible with the pace of international cooperation, which aims to achieve results within set time periods in order to assess the effectiveness of a project. The co-financing system is designed to manage these constraints with a degree of flexibility.

An example of flexibility: block grants

The Commission offers an additional facility to those NGOs which have already collaborated satisfactorily for a certain number of years. This «confidence capital» gives access to block grants, a system which is much appreciated by the NGOs and which enables them rapidly to finance a multitude of mini-operations, administrative formalities for obtaining funds being reduced to a minimum.

Neither official cooperation nor the NGO approach involves a magic formula. Development is not a linear process but is implemented in a changing environment where the unexpected is the rule. The objective set at the start might be called into question on grounds which cannot be foreseen. The process must allow backtracking, reorientation and debate aimed at making aid effective for the recipient populations.

Evaluation and monitoring

If, as we have just seen, operators must be allowed to work along the lines of trial - and even error (within certain limits!) - they need also to evaluate their projects and the long-term impact of them in development terms, or have them evaluated, so as to learn from experience and enable others to benefit from this. Moreover, monitoring mechanisms are necessary for verifying correct management of the public and private resources made available to them.

Evaluations

NGO projects are often the subject of evaluations which are conducted either during a project or at the end, with the aim of assessing the effects of the action in terms of sus-

tainable development. This is not a policing exercise but a way of assessing the impact of a project on the target population and of drawing constructive conclusions from it for the future.

Such evaluations are generally carried out by a third-party, a body specialising in this type of exercise. The decision may be taken either by the NGO itself or by the Commission. In addition to analysing individual projects, the latter regularly initiates more global evaluations, in terms of field of involvement (e.g.: training projects or projects promoting credit in developing countries, development education projects in schools, etc.) or in terms of development approach (e.g.: strengthening the action capability of partners in the South).

Monitoring

In order to ensure genuine and long-term support to recipients, and correct use of the money contributed by European taxpayers, monitoring mechanisms are required to verify correct management of the available resources. Both projects in the field and NGOs' accounts are monitored. In the event of anomalies in the management of funds allocated through co-financing, the NGO runs the risk of payments being stopped and even the risk of being compelled to pay back the sums paid out by the Commission. In the (fortunately rare) cases of fraud or gross negligence, the NGO is refused further co-financing.

The monitoring process

➤ The interim report

NGO projects are generally divided into different consecutive phases covered by a programme of payment in instalments. The payment of each instalment is conditional on the approval of a report which the NGO has to submit at the end of each phase.

➤ The final report

At the end of the project, a final report has to be submitted by the NGO so that the Commission can check whether the action conforms to the project outlined initially.

➤ Monitoring accounts

The NGO may be subject to additional monitoring, namely monitoring of accounts, by officials from the Commission, the Court of Auditors or by external auditors.

➤ Missions in the field

NGO projects may be subject to field monitoring missions. These are carried out by those responsible for the co-financing, representatives of the Financial control service or the Court of Auditors or, alternatively, by Commission's delegations (overseas offices) in the country in question. Such offices play an important role insofar as they are actually on site, are well acquainted with local conditions and are capable of verifying the quality and evolution of a number of projects.



NGOs

in the North

**and organisations
in the South**

**a
new
partnership**

Partnership is encouraged by the Commission

The NGOs in the North have become increasingly credible and strong players on the development cooperation stage, to such an extent that, nowadays, they have considerable influence over governmental development policy. The support they give to their partners in the South has enabled the latter to organise themselves and to take responsibility for virtually all project implementation. This new situation is currently generating a reorientation of the activities of NGOs in the North towards a genuine partnership, which is encouraged by the Commission.

From assistance to partnership

Certain campaigns aimed at raising development funds are still seen within the context of giving assistance: «the rich North must help the poor South». This generates actions motivated by feelings of guilt and pity, a concept to be regarded as out-of-date. The NGOs are endeavouring to get away from this donor/recipient relationship because, to a certain extent, it implies a hierarchical structure. NGOs from the North and from the South must be on the same footing, each making its own contribution to development on the basis of its capabilities.

NGOs from the North and the South each make complementary contributions to the process of development



Recent developments

Projects in European countries

The NGOs from the North are having to play a more prominent role in the field of European campaigns to raise public awareness and in lobbying politicians. This is undoubtedly one of the most important contributions NGOs in the North can make and it is one of the ways in which they will be called upon to concentrate their efforts in future years. Partners from the South are also expressing their desire to take part in a joint reflection on major North/South problems, which constitutes an excellent opportunity for a mutual learning process.

Fair trade : another model of development based on solidarity



Towards fair trade

Given that many small producers in the South were underpaid for their work and were not in a position to influence this, NGOs, approximately 20 years ago, set up parallel marketing circuits known as «alternative trade» or «fair trade». It involved introducing consumer goods (e.g.: coffee) onto the European market, in a way which enabled the producers to receive a higher income than they would have obtained via the traditional circuit. These articles are produced by cooperatives organised around a socio-economic aim (environmental protection, education, promotion of the role of women, etc.), within which the fundamental notions are those of community and the sharing of income. This is not a case of supporting initiatives emanating from individuals but rather those of a group of organised people investing in their own development.

There are various aspects to fair trade. The products may be sold either in specialised shops, constituting a genuine cooperation network, or in supermarkets in agreement with distributors on the conventional market.

Recently, the NGOs have launched fair trade labels for certain products such as coffee. The NGOs jointly manage a register of producers who fulfil the conditions mentioned above and they grant the guarantee label to coffee merchants who buy directly from the cooperatives at a basic price. In this way, a new form of contractual partnership is established, in which each person's work is interdependent. Each party is involved either in production, following certain standards of quality and social observance, or in long-term marketing. Aid does not take the form of a gift but it gives each party the opportunity to be responsible, involved in development on equal terms.

For all concerned, the mobilisation of European consumers is of fundamental importance. This market is called upon to show solidarity through specific actions, not only by purchasing the products but also, perhaps, by paying a higher price. The NGOs target individual purchasers but also bodies such as administrations, businesses, the European Parliament, etc. Fair trade brings with it better knowledge of the living conditions of the producers and proposes another development model based on joint action.

The Commission supports numerous activities of this type. In this way, it is responding to an increasing demand on the part of Europeans wishing to make a positive statement, within their means, on a daily basis.

Integrating marginalised groups into the economic circuit

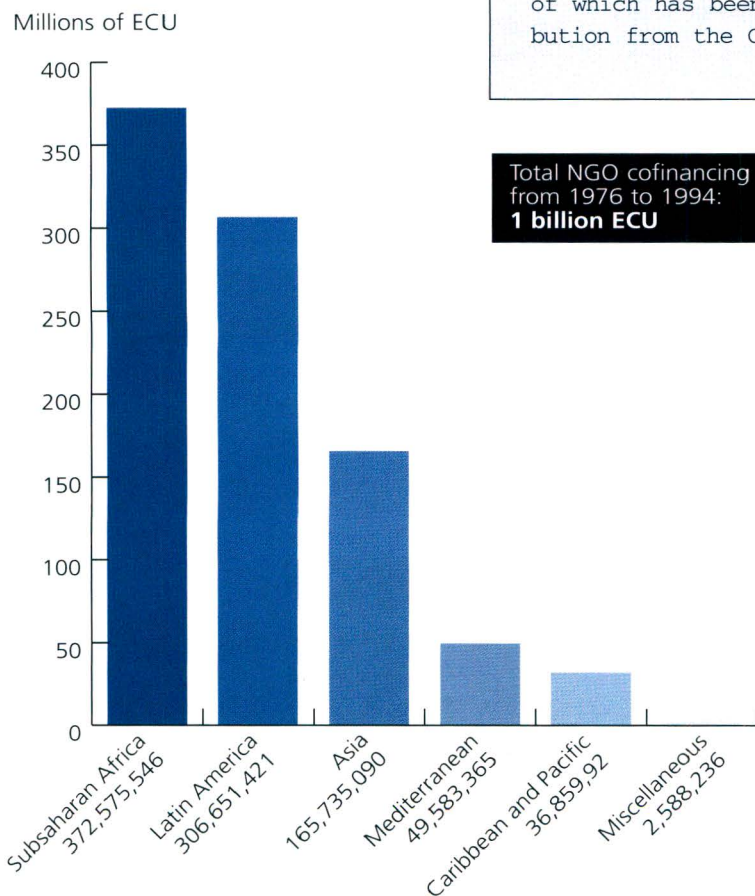
Since its creation in 1961, the CCU (Uruguayan Cooperativist Centre) has made a major contribution to strengthening the cooperative movement through its technical assistance and training activities.

Working for the development of marginalised groups, the CCU works both in rural and urban areas, supporting cooperatives and groups of farmers, stock breeders, fishermen, beekeepers and even craftworkers. It is also very active in the field of building community housing and savings/loans. Its objective is to stimulate the development of underprivileged groups and to encourage their integration into economic and social life. The Commission has given institutional support over a period of 2 years to the CCU's programme, which also relates to the integration of small producers into the process of setting up the «Mercosur», or common market of South America. Supported by a Belgian NGO, the total cost of the operation is ECU 2,360,000, 44% of which has been financed by a capital contribution from the CCU itself.

Projects in developing countries

There is a growing trend in developing countries for projects to shake off their charitable aspect, leaving that to the humanitarian NGOs, so that they can tackle organisational and development problems. Projects are today geared towards self-promotion, economic support for production and commercial initiatives, and actions which include a social component such as education, health and urban development.

NGO cofinancing Total by continent : 1976 - 1994



Cofinancing of the European Community with the NGOs (1976 - 1994)

Number of beneficiary NGOs	914
Number of cofinanced projects	
• in developing countries	6.178
• awareness raising in Europe	1.346
TOTAL	7.524 (in 1994 : 771)
Amounts granted to the NGOs (in millions of ECU)	
• in developing countries	935
• awareness raising in Europe	96
TOTAL	1.031 (in 1994 : 145)
Block grants for development projects (1979 - 94)	
• number of block grants	1.131
• number of mini-projects supported	14.154
Multiprojects programmes for awareness raising in Europe (1988 - 94)	
• number of programmes	215

Acknowledgements:

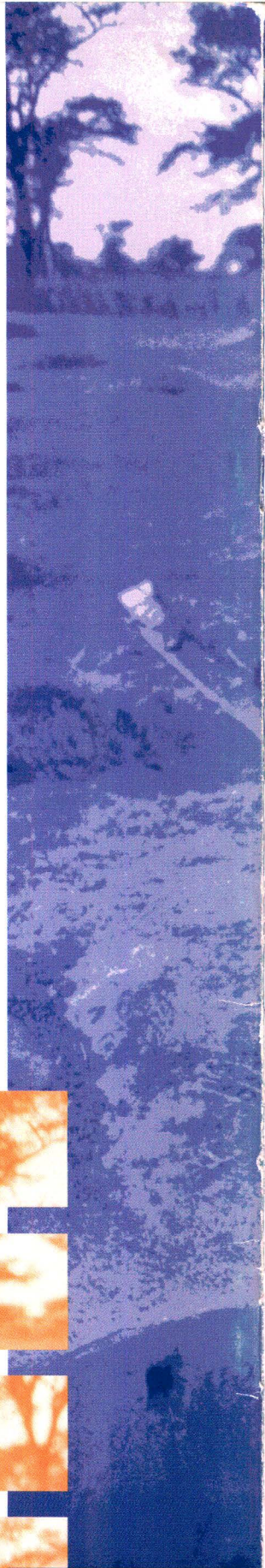
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