

**Working for  
a just world.**

**Trócaire**

**Trócaire  
Development  
Review  
2008**

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## Editorial Statement

Trócaire, the Irish Catholic Agency for World Development produces the Trócaire Development Review as part of its programme of policy research and development education. This programme aims to raise awareness in Ireland and elsewhere of the scale, dimensions and causes of world poverty and to advocate for policies to overcome it.

Trócaire, in producing the Trócaire Development Review, draws together policy analysis and research findings with particular relevance to Ireland's evolving role in international development. Review articles are on economic, social and political themes related to poverty and injustice in the developing world. A particular focus is the impact on developing countries of aid, trade, financial and other policies adopted by industrialised countries. Ireland's policies in the context of European Union policies are of special interest.

Articles that fall within the remit outlined above are welcome. While analytical, they should not be over-technical in presentation. In general, individual country case studies should only be used to illustrate a general argument. Research findings on pertinent issues would be particularly welcome. All articles are subject to blind peer-review by the Editorial Committee; articles should not

exceed 7,000 words. Short notes and comments are also welcome.

The views expressed are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Committee nor of Trócaire.

Trócaire Development Review is published annually and back issues over 20 years are available online, fully digitised and searchable.

**Editor:** Tara Bedi

**Manuscript and Production Editor:** Dr Fergus Mulligan

### Editorial Committee

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## Preface

Over the last year, climate change has featured heavily on the global political agenda. Since last year's UN meeting on climate change in Bali, Indonesia, governments have been trying to reach a greement on the global response to the future impacts of climate change. Yet, while these negotiations continue, the poorest and most vulnerable people are already feeling the current reality of climate change. For the 80% of Africans

who rely on the land and rainfall to eke out a living, climate change means less secure access to water, and therefore, sustainable livelihoods. It means greater vulnerability to disease, hunger and exploitation. It means more conflict over ncreasingly scarce resources. All of which will result in greater vulnerability and in security for those people who are already at the margins.

Trócaire is witnessing how the impacts of unpredictable rainfall, increasing droughts, floods and hurricanes are already being felt across the developing world. In an internal Trócaire survey among its partners 86% said that harsh weather conditions are having a negative effect on poor communities' food supplies. In the same survey 90% said that climate changes are badly affecting people's water supply, while 43% said that water supply is a source of tension and conflict in their region.

The interaction between climate change and poverty is potentially catastrophic as climate change pushes what are already fragile livelihoods over the edge. Given that this year marks the mid-point to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, there is even further urgency to address climate change as it poses a strong threat to reversing decades of development gains.

Yet today despite international commitments to avoiding climate change, the emission of greenhouse gases, the major contributor to global climate change, continues to grow. In Ireland emissions have been steadily rising rather than falling. The biggest overall and per capita emitter of greenhouse gases, and one of the wealthiest countries in the world, the United States, has no emissions reduction target at all.

Since its inception, Trócaire has been firmly committed to issues of global injustice. Trócaire sees the impacts of climate change on the world's poorest and most vulnerable as one of the 21st century's greatest injustices. As Pope John Paul II stated in his message on World Peace Day in 1990: "...the earth is ultimately a common heritage, the fruits of which are for the benefit of all... It is manifestly unjust that a privileged few should continue to accumulate excess goods, squandering available resources, while masses of people are living in conditions of misery at the very lowest level of subsistence."

This year's Trócaire Development Review is focused on the issue of climate change. The articles in this edition address different questions, including what are appropriate strategies for mitigating and adapting to climate change, the potential role of biofuels for poverty reduction in the context of climate change and the

responsibilities of faith communities in tackling climate change. Through this we hope to encourage a constructive discussion in Ireland on the issue of climate change, which is not just a question of our own environmental sustainability, but also a moral question - of justice for the world's poor. - **Justin Kilcullen, Director, Trócaire, November 2008**

## Editor's Introduction

### Climate change as an issue of justice

Climate change affects every person on the planet, but not to the same extent. The theme of the 2008 Trócaire Development Review, "Tackling climate in justice" is very timely and is also the theme of this year's Lenten Campaign. In choosing it Trócaire seeks to imbue a broader understanding of the causes and effects of climate change and how it impacts most on the poor of the developing world. It is important to recognise that climate change is not simply an act of nature but a series of global changes caused by human actions and our interaction with the planet.

The injustice of climate change, its causes and its consequences, are a very real concern for Trócaire because the people who suffer most from it, the

world's poor, are least responsible for creating the problem in the first place. They also have the least resources to cope with the impact of climate change and its effects on their homes, their land and their livelihood. The message is clear: if we are serious about tackling poverty we must tackle climate change at the same time.

The polluter pays principle is a very relevant one when confronting climate change. The idea being that those who created the problem should pay the price of the solution. Such a solution involves two strands: first, mitigation of the worst effects by slowing the rise in global temperatures and reducing greenhouse gas emissions to a realistic and manageable level. Second, developing countries need effective adaptation measures over and above official development assistance (ODA) to finance the industrial and agricultural changes they will need to make as well as assistance in technology transfer. This will require innovative forms of financing, clear and transparent mechanisms, while those affected by corrective measures must have an active say in their adoption and implementation.

This issue of the Trócaire Development Review offers a number of fresh approaches to climate change and ways to tackle climate injustice and the authors

address this problem from several different perspectives.

### **Lessons from Brazil on biofuels**

In the first article Daniele Cesano assesses the various impacts of efforts in Brazil to switch from hydrocarbons to biofuels through increased production of ethanol made from sugar and biodiesel made from feedstuffs. The production of ethanol and biodiesel in Brazil offers a viable alternative to fossil fuels and has aroused great interest in other countries. While the goal of reducing consumption of non-renewable energy resources is laudable, Cesano's research indicates that in Brazil the benefits have been mixed. Economies of scale are difficult to achieve and just as there has not been equal distribution of the wealth generated from producing sugar for fuel, so the consumer price of biofuels remains high. Small scale ethanol producers cannot sell directly to the public, allegedly to maintain quality control and prevent tax evasion. Thus income which could benefit local communities is lost to centralised sales and distribution.

There are over a dozen types of feedstock suitable for biodiesel production, some of them produced from crops which thrive in arid or semi-arid conditions. However there has been insufficient research and development

into ways to increase crop yields and at the same time high commodity prices make biodiesel less competitive, even with the present high level of oil prices. Cesano concludes that to integrate biofuel production with poverty reduction strategies, government, NGOs and the private sector must find innovative ways to develop this most valuable potential resource. This will include pilot projects to demonstrate the competitiveness of small scale production, to the benefit of both poor rural communities and the global environment.

### **Is Ad-Mit the answer?**

In his article Conor Fox suggests that an assessment of current global climate conditions indicates it will be impossible to avoid some of its negative impacts. The key task therefore must be to prevent other avoidable, more severe and potentially catastrophic long term effects. Alongside this are growing calls for reinforcement of the polluter pays principle while taking account of the small per capita greenhouse gas emissions of developing countries. This puts climate change firmly within the realm of development, the environment and above all human rights.

Fox proposes an innovative response to this problem involving a voluntary market of climate change that merges strategies of mitigation and adaptation (Ad-Mit) to redress climate injustice. A core principle of Ad-Mit is its emphasis on bottom up engagement, allowing vulnerable communities to suggest their own appropriate methodologies. Development agencies have a key role in this, being able to attract climate change funding with verifiable worth that can then be invested in, rather than donated to, those communities. The returns must be seen as over and above those derived from traditional development projects and quite distinct from any particular technology.

Ad-Mit, Fox suggests, challenges our understanding of ways to establish climate justice and questions the widespread belief in the value and effectiveness of carbon offsets as a means to address climate change.

### **Communities of believers and climate change**

The third article by Eimer O'Hare and Jim Kitchen focuses on what faith communities can do to tackle climate change and calls for nothing less than an ecological reformation. The authors share the belief that climate change is above all an issue for humanity not just an environmental concern and demonstrate

that all faiths profess a belief in our stewardship of the earth. They urge all communities of faith to be as vocal about climate change as they are about human rights, race, gender and social justice and they present the moral and ethical arguments for their stance. If faith communities come together as a powerful multi-religious force, they will be better able to articulate the links between climate change and poverty and then become actively involved in presenting a just response. These communities can also be a catalyst for change while at the same time helping to cope with the consequences of climate change.

The authors emphasise the need for new thinking and behaviour and while each faith has its own distinct beliefs, working together they can become a major force for environmental change. All creeds have this tenet in common: a mandate to serve one another as human beings and to care for creation. The necessary reformation will therefore prioritise ecological concerns along with other development issues. It will reinterpret doctrine so that it includes ecological insights and offer a new view of ethics based on faith that is grounded on the relationships between human beings and also with the biosphere. In this way faith communities can support the social action necessary to secure sustainable livelihoods and demand responsible action from their governments.

### **Capacity enhancement as a effective route out of poverty**

The fourth article in the Review is by Mary McNeil and Michael Woolcock on the topic of capacity building and social development. It links in closely with climate injustice in that it focuses on the need for capacity enhancement. This is often neglected in poverty-alleviation programmes but can empower the poor to make decisions on the design, implementation and evaluation of effective responses to poverty. Essential to this is a keen understanding of the local context, the complexity of decisions to be made and the processes they involve along with fine levels of discretion. Face to face interaction and the ability to grasp the how and by whom of project implementation all contribute to a desirable learning-by-doing approach.

The authors make a strong case against automatic replication of best practice models. Such practises may be beloved of some development agencies and government departments but transferring one particular model to a completely different culture and even another continent rarely works. Local constraints may constitute a real opposing force and social and political contexts demand respect. A more incremental, country specific approach will almost always be

more effective and as in all things, the timing of any intervention is crucial.

Achieving a desirable response must also take cognizance of the reasons for past failure. Knowledge sharing is obviously key but also required are more skilful execution, better local research, policy analysis and collection of essential data. Without these, defective and outmoded ideas and policies will dominate. International partners, NGOs and the private sector have a role to play in regional networking and learning while integration with neighbouring countries can help reinforce economic success as well as encouraging the exchange of ideas, more realistic public attitudes to elites and acquiring the confidence to deal with social and political change.

### **Trócaire's commitment**

The articles in this year's Trócaire Development Review go some way to focusing international attention on climate change injustice in the developing world, what can be done to confront it and the changes needed in public behaviour and attitudes. It is crucial though not to lose sight of the fact that those who did the least environmental damage are suffering its worst effects. Whatever international

policies are proposed or adopted in an attempt to address climate change it is important to retain a grasp of this key reality. Trócaire will continue to work to ensure that the effects of climate change on the world's poor remain core to any proposed solution.

**Tara Bedi, Editor**

### **Notes on Contributors**

Tara Bedi is the Policy and Research Coordinator for Trócaire. Prior to this she worked on monitoring and evaluation as a junior professional associate with the Poverty Reduction Group at the World Bank. She received a Master's degree in Public Administration in International Development at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. She has previously worked on the sustainability of non-governmental organisations, refugee settlement, and health policy.

Daniele Cesano has been Giorgio Ruffolo Fellow in Sustainability Science at the Centre for International Development, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

Conor Fox has an MSc in Environmental and Natural Resources Economics from



University College London. He has worked as an environmental economist for the Environmental Protection Agency of the Republic of Guyana and for local and international NGOs in Central America in programmes for sustainable livelihoods and prevention and mitigation of disasters. He has researched for Trócaire on issues related to climate change and environmental justice in Latin America and Southern Africa. He is currently working on climate change issues in Malawi.

Jim Kitchen is the Head of the Sustainable Development Commission in Northern Ireland, the government's independent advisor on sustainable development. The Commission provides advice, advocacy and capability-building to help put sustainability at the core of government policy, with a particular emphasis on the opportunities inherent in policies on the built environment, procurement and climate change. Earlier in his career, he worked in education, as a teacher and later a headmaster, 13 years of which were spent in Africa.

Mary McNeil is a Senior Operations Officer in the Urban and Local Governance Program in the World Bank Institute's Sustainable Development division. She has been with the World Bank Group since 1986 and before that was Specialist for the International

Finance Corporation, where she coordinated relations with NGOs. She formerly worked in the World Bank's Vice-Presidency for Sustainable Development, managing capacity building programmes and providing operational support in the urban and water and sanitation sectors, primarily in Africa and Eastern Europe. In 1992 she launched *The Urban Age*, a quarterly journal on urban affairs. During 1993-94 she took leave to attend the John F. Kennedy School of Government, where she was the Joel Leff Fellow in Political Economy, focusing on community development, participation and urban development issues. Before joining the World Bank, she was a journalist covering environmental affairs for *Congressional Quarterly*, where she authored a book on environment and health. She has also worked as an editor/journalist for the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, the National Academy of Sciences, and for several newspapers. She has a Master's degree in Public Administration from Harvard University.

Eamonn Meehan is Head of Communications and Education and Deputy Director of Trócaire.

Eoin Murray is the Campaigns Coordinator in Trócaire. Previous to this he worked as the Palestine Programme Officer for Trócaire and as National Coordinator of the Ireland Palestine

Solidarity Campaign. Before that he lived in the Gaza Strip working for the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights and for Front Line, the International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders. He has also worked for the Metropolitan Police Service and holds a Master's in War Studies from Kings College, London.

Eimer O'Hare is a former Policy Support Officer at the Sustainable Development Commission in Northern Ireland. With policy responsibility for promoting sustainability within the built environment, her role also embraced external communications. Prior to working with the SDC, she handled public relations and marketing at Trócaire.

Ann Rigney is originally from Portland, Oregon USA. She lived in China for several years, much of that time working for the New York based NGO Trace Foundation in Tibetan areas. In 2004 she received a Master's degree in Ethnochoreology from the University of Limerick and currently lives in Dublin.

Michael Woolcock is Professor of Social Science and Development Policy at the University of Manchester, and Research Director of the Brooks World Poverty Institute. He is currently on leave from the Poverty Team within the Development Research Group at the World Bank where he has worked since 1998. From 2000-2006 he was also a

part-time Lecturer in Public Policy at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. He has been a team member of two World Development Reports (including the 2000/01 report on "Attacking Poverty"), and has published extensively on the social dimensions of economic development, in particular the role of social institutions in shaping the survival and mobility strategies of the poor. An Australian national, he has an MA (1992) and PhD (1998) in sociology from Brown University.