

The latest in development

to concentrate on long-term development programs in areas such as health care, education and food production. There still are a considerable number of evangelical NGOs which combine charity and missionary zeal.

Changing programs

Over the years many NGOs have been able to build a solid reputation for "people-oriented" development, with an ability to respond quickly and effectively to community needs. Their cost-effectiveness in project delivery has drawn a considerable amount of praise from high ranking civil servants and parliamentarians. NGOs serve as a buffer before legislation is introduced, partly because their projects are easily understandable — they represent motherhood — and partly because they represent constituencies and, accordingly, votes.

The share of Overseas Development Assistance going to NGOs has increased substantially in recent years, and there is speculation that this upward trend will continue. In 1968 CIDA supported twenty NGOs with a total of \$5 million, amounting to 2 percent of CIDA's total budget, food aid excluded. In 1984-85, CIDA funded approximately 200 Canadian NGOs with a total of \$169 million, or approximately 10 percent of CIDA's budget. Public contributions to NGOs have increased despite the economic recession. The overwhelming response of Canadians to the African crisis sent the federal government twice scurrying for funds to fulfill the promise to match private funds on a 1:1 basis.

"We have learned that governments and the private sector need each other in development," says Lewis Perinbam, CIDA's Vice President for Special Programs, the Branch that administers federal contributions to the voluntary non-profit sector. "International development . . . requires the participation of citizens . . . Fortunately, we have the means at hand to involve citizens. We can do so through the vast array of voluntary organizations."

But with success comes new pressures. Although some experienced NGOs have seen a fast increase in funds available for overseas programming, this increase signifies a bittersweet progress for some people in the community who maintain that the autonomy of NGOs has been jeopardized. Most NGOs like to think they are in the driver's seat when it comes to programming. They prefer to formulate their programs independently with their overseas partners, and then to ask government to "respond" to their requests for matching funds. Bilateral, government-to-government development assistance, tends to reinforce the status quo, because it goes from one political body to another political body. But development, by its very nature, is changing the status quo. NGOs like to see themselves as independent moral and ethical forces in international assistance and politics.

However, government priorities can have a strong influence on the type of project an NGO chooses to undertake. A renewed interest in support for the small-scale business sector and private enterprise, in the Third World

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY/KOZIMA J. TARASOFF



NGOs protest in Ottawa against the use of government funds to promote arms sales in the Third World.