

cutbacks at a time when social spending was key. In Thailand, for example, the public school lunch subsidy ended under these conditionalities.

We saw and heard the human implications of poverty statistics. In Indonesia the price of rice has more than tripled from 1,300 to 4,000 rupiah a kilogram — more than half the daily minimum wage. In Yogyakarta we met students at the Gajaha Mada University who are hungry; over half of them are down to eating only one meal a day, and this is dependent on charitable works of university staff and their families. One professor at the university noted that 700 students had not enrolled this term. We met a farmers' organization in the area that told us people from the cities have come and stolen their crops. SAMIN, an organization working with street kids in Yogyakarta, has seen the numbers of children on the streets jump dramatically from 700 in 1997 to 2,000 in 1998. They estimate 30 percent of these children are now engaged in prostitution. In Thailand, hill tribe communities are afraid to send their children to school since many have turned to selling readily available amphetamines as a source of income.

The crisis did not hit all equally. Pasuk Phongpaichit, professor of economics at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, commented: "For the poor, growth may trickle down, but disaster sweeps down like an avalanche."

Women have been particularly affected by the crisis. Not only were they employed in the industries most affected by the layoffs, such as textile factories, but women's organizations have told us of the rising incidence of domestic abuse, given the loss of employment and increased economic hardship. More and more women are turning to the sex trade, and although business is up, prices have dropped.

Human rights take a beating

The crisis in South East Asia illustrates the vulnerability of human rights and raises the question of how they can be sustained in bad times. How do we ensure not only poverty reduction but sustainability of economic rights to ensure people just over the threshold can't fall back so easily. And how can a policy instrument like ODA address this issue?

Many complexities cannot be covered here, they relate to both the national development model of tiger economies and flaws in the global system. But a main observation from our mission arises from the relative capacities and vulnerabilities of Thailand and Indonesia.

The delegation saw how Thailand's capacity to respond and manage the economic crisis is far greater than Indonesia's, where the bankruptcy of political legitimacy, the lack of credible channels for public debate, and the preponderance of military control have resulted in social and political breakdown, and violent military crackdowns.

Early investments in the strengthening of civil society and human rights in Thailand have won Canada a strong reputation and have served Thailand well in a time of economic turmoil. Despite continued challenges, the democratization movement in Thailand has built both a practice and capacity for public dialogue as well as institutional channels for participation in decision making through the new constitution. Lessons need to be drawn for Indonesia.