

ETHICAL AUDIOMETRY OF THE NGOs

editorial

We cannot stay this superficial and think that our participation in NGODs exempts us from thinking, acting and evaluating ourselves.

Nowadays, belonging to a non-governmental organization (NGO) -whose two basic principles according to the UNO are: (1) non-profit making social action; and (2) independence of governments and of prior determining factors such as ideology, race, religion or sex - is something socially recognised. Being a member of an NGO sounds great! Let us suppose we are going for a walk and we spontaneously ask anyone to name an NGO. Just a few would not be able to mention one. Country wise, who hasn't heard of Cáritas, the Red Cross or the ONCE (Spanish National Organization of the Blind). There are others with an international projection and known as NGO Development Organizations (NGODs), such as Intermón Oxfam, Doctors Without Borders or Action Against Hunger.

In any case from Claim for Dignity, we cannot stay this superficial and think that our participation in NGODs exempts us from thinking, acting and evaluating ourselves. Being a young and small NGOD should stimulate us to be responsible and have clear references, which will help us walk together. Otherwise, and at best, we would be wasting our time and other people's time.

In this sense, it is very illustrative what Jesús Sastre explains in his book *Repensar el voluntariado social desde la Doctrina Social de la Iglesia* (Madrid: San Pablo, 2004; *Thinking again about the social volunteering from the Social Doctrine of the Church*) when talking about doing an

"ethic audiometry" to NGODs based on the following three criteria:

(1) ALTRUISTIC MOTIVATIONS. It is obviously hard to measure the altruistic motivations of each member of the organization, but we cannot oversee this main starting point, since "motivation is important, but it does not guarantee things will be well done"

(2) DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION IN MANAGING THE ORGANIZATION. There is need for mechanisms that allow their members to participate in the management of their NGOD, as well as clear criteria for defining the possible participation rate".

(3) PROTAGONISM OF THE RECEIVERS. The idea is cooperating, and not dominating or creating dependency. Receivers themselves will write their own history. "Good intentions, declarations of principles and reference values are not enough to justify a performance; it is necessary to check the published results and the "indirect effects" that are not mentioned in the reports", and that often affect the receivers in a negative way.

With regards to small NGOs, Jesús Sastre warns us about two great dangers resulting from their performance: (1) the *amateurism* of their members, who leave almost everything in the hands of good will; (2) and looking for project aids at any cost.

Hopefully, this year will help us keep in mind these warnings and use these joint performance criteria so that we can turn them into well-defined realities.

The Council

NGOs OF THE 21ST CENTURY

thoughts

The next generation of ONGs should have as an objective the reconstruction of the spirit, of the soul.

Reza Deghati is an Iranian photojournalist and president of "Aina" (www.ainaworld.org), a NGO that sets up independent mass media in Afghanistan. I attended September 8th to his intervention in the "Fòrum Paraula". I was impressed by the personal quality of his speech, his professional competence and his photographic work, translated in images that were projected in a gigantic screen while he spoke. His camera has captured dramatic moments in settings of war such as Iraq, Lebanon, Kosovo, Palestinian...

He told us an idea that seemed me especially interesting. The present generation of ONGs has been dedicated to provide infrastructures: schools to the children who are in the street, dining rooms, refuges... after a military conflict, is important the physical reconstruction. The next generation of ONGs should have as an objective the reconstruction of the spirit, of the soul. There are children that have seen how some merciless have beheaded their parents in front of their eyes, they killed their brothers, they violated their mothers and sisters, or they produced thousand diverse horrors, fruit of the hatred or of the unconsciousness or thoughtlessness. These children surely need a school or a ceiling under the one that to be able to be sheltered, but it does not enough. They have a broken soul, deep injuries and continuous nightmares. If their memory responds to episodes of their lifes, only find faces bloodied, violence, death and desolation. Their spirit is smashed to smithereens.

Reza participated also in 141 questions. He confirmed that for two motives leaves the camera: "I do not take pictures when I make an attempt on the privacy of the people or when the person that I have thought to photograph needs my aid". He added an example, lived in Afghanistan when a full bus of refugees was

destroyed by a mine: "from among the smoke, the flames and the confusion appeared a girl completely bloodied that ran toward me; I got ready to take a picture that would have earned many prizes, but I gave up because that girl needed me a hug, not a photo". Making a zapping by the Spanish televisions, is enough to realize how many insurmountable distance exists between the taste of Deghati and the trash programs that rummage around the private life by means of gossips, portrayed in a bashful way but there is no doubt that productive since the point of view economic, so much for the ones that participate in the program as for the businesses that organize them. Clearly if they had not remarkable audience ratings, these programs would languish quickly. Having the media and the professional capacity is used to be a disaster if they are not in the service of fair and noble causes, because they head for to the manipulation and to the degradation of who use them with these criteria and of the spectators that contemplate them.

The ONGs continue having a huge work in the physical reconstruction of so many countries and in the endowment of material media that believe an adequate framework for the social and personal development. But it is not enough. The new generation of ONGs is called to work in the world of the spirit and of the soul. Some years ago was not notorious that the surviving victims of an attack and its relatives had the need of psychological attentions. In the attack of the 11M, many psychologists put their knowledge and experience in the service of the people that had the soul broken by a violence that truncated the life of almost 200 people. Certainly, it is a matter of an important and indispensable aid, that does not deny also a relief for many more necessary and possible since the faith and of the confidence in God.

Lluís Serra Llansana

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A YEAR OF VOLUNTEERING IN SOUTH AFRICA

experiences

If you want to give of yourself completely, be challenged, grow, learn more about yourself and your faith at the same time, being a volunteer is something I would definitely recommend!

Let me introduce myself; my name is Sandra Schimanski, I'm from New Zealand, recently turned 26 years old and am currently doing volunteer work with youth & young adults in Nzhelele Parish, South Africa. Here I had the wonderful opportunity to meet up with those volunteers from Clam for Dignity who were working on the "Makhado Workcamp" and Edi has kindly asked me a share with you a little of my experience here.

How I ended up doing volunteer work here has a lot to do with my past and even more to do with God! My parents were volunteers for 6 1/2 years in Papua New Guinea when I was a child. This paved the way for me doing volunteer work and when I finished school I also did 2 years voluntary work with youth in Australia. In October last year I had made plans to travel to USA in 2005, when not long after that I received an email from a friend about a youth worker being required in Africa. A week later a completely different friend told me about the exact same position and suggested I investigate it. After some firm persuasion I agreed, I went home, prayed and God very firmly put on my heart that this was where he wanted me. It would mean leaving family, friends, sacrificing my income and venturing into the complete unknown – but I knew without a doubt that I was to answer that email. When I did reply to the email I found out the post was in South Africa – which was ironic, as I had always wanted to come here! During my time of preparation God graced me with complete confidence in him and provided all the necessary funds, documentation and support necessary for me to come here.

When I arrived in February 2004 I expected that I'd be coming to the BUSH! I was thinking; very rural, poor and possibly not easy access to basics such as water and electricity. When I arrived I found the situation much more modern with a stronger western influence than I'd anticipated – but was appalled at the contrast between those who 'have' and those who 'have not'. Workwise I had no idea what to expect, but I knew I would have a few weeks with the volunteer I was taking over from so hoped that would enlighten me a little! I hoped that I would be of help to the parish I

would be working in and perhaps pass on some of my knowledge and experience in working with youth.

Some of my more 'challenging' experiences here have been; trying to explain the concept of being a 'volunteer' to people, the concept of time and how long it takes for things to get done, being greeted by everybody, driving on the roads – which has involved a few near misses, and I can now claim to have had a truly South African experience as I was mugged one evening – I was really blessed in that it wasn't too serious. I have continually experienced our Father's care and concern since I've been here along with other wonderful experiences such as; sharing in local community life, friends I've made, being able to witness youth and young adults grow in their understanding of God's love and purpose for them as well as being able to share in the vibrant spirituality and culture.

I have three more months left of my time here and it is going fast! I do dream of coming back to South Africa and doing more volunteer work here, however, that depends on God and what he calls me to. If He calls me back here I would gladly return, but for now I feel His desire for me is to return home to New Zealand, find some form of work, and spend time with family, friends, sharing what I have learned.

If you want to give of yourself completely, be challenged, grow, learn more about yourself and your faith at the same time, being a volunteer is something I would definitely recommend! Whether that is in your own country, a similar country or a completely different one – they all have different experiences to offer. My three pieces of advice would be – 'go where you are called' and 'expect to give but also come prepared to learn' and most importantly (and the most difficult!) 'Trust God' because "His grace is sufficient for me" (2 Cor 12:9).

Sandra Schimanski



communications

- Monday the 3rd of January, we celebrated in Sant Just (Barcelona) a dinner of Christmas with the members of CxD. Before sharing the supper, we made a mini meeting. Hope we might celebrate for many years this supper!
- Even it is not objective of CxD to do donations, neither this possibility is excluded if the Council considers it the appropriate. In the first three months we have done:
 - Contribution of 1.000 Euro to the Foundation Cristo Rey (King Christ) of Colombia, to add an extension to the building of the house and to adapt to the existing one for the lodging of at least 30 elders of the Geriatric Home "El Edén de Esperanza" ("The Eden of Hope"), in the Municipality of Albania (Department of Santander), for elders deserted.
 - Contribution of 500 Euro for the victims of the tsunami. In concrete 250 Euro have been delivered to Cáritas and 250 Euro to Intermón Oxfam.
 - Contribution of 100 Euro for the logistic support of the act that will be next Sunday the 6th of March. It will be lead by E-Christian and the platform of entities that are part of the Pact by the Life and the Dignity, among those is CxD, to claim the Christian fact in the public life.
- Saturday the 26th of February the "Association of Old Students of Canigó" delivered 600 Euro to CxD through Laura Garcia-Faria to support the project "MaS" that we are carrying out in Madombidzha (South Africa). Many thanks!
- We thank for the standing order that many of you have already done and we ask to all the associates that not yet have liquidated the annual quota, as well as to the supporters of CxD that want to do the standing order or a punctual donation, they do it (more details, consult web side).
- We remind that all the "active" members have to get involved in a commission or working group. The dates of the meetings of each commission, consult to the responsible respectie.
 - We have read this book: Sastre, Jesús, "To think through the social voluntary enlistment from the social doctrine of the Church" (Madrid: San Pablo, 2004). We recommend it to all of you!
 - We remind what we told you in the letter of Christmas: we are still seeking an office/local for CxD! Suggestions and concrete proposals are welcome!

agenda

- Calendar meetings 2005:
 - Three general encounters: Saturday 8th of May (17h); Sunday 16th of October (17h; General Assembly); Monday 2nd of January, 2006 (20h, supper of Christmas).
 - Four encounters of the Council (always Sunday): 20/2 (11h); 24/4 (17h); 21/8 (18h); 13/11 (11h)
- Next Sunday 6th of March at 11h, will be celebrated in the old Palau d'Esports (Palace of Sports) from Barcelona the act organized by E-Christian and the platform of companies of the Pact by Life and Dignity, of which we are part.
- Next Friday 11th of March at 21h, will be carried out in the parish Josepets the supper of Hunger of Lent. The money collected will be destined to these three entities: Hiedra, Cáritas and Claim for Dignity. Every entity will do a brief presentation of what they are carrying out. At the end of the act, will be an open go of questions
- We are already starting the preparations of the Work Camp for this summer! (WC 2005). The three basic aims are: (1) to support the educational task of the school (2) to collaborate in the elaboration of the plans of the church that we want to build in Madombidzha (3) to organize activities of leisure and free time in the different settlement of the zone after the timetable of school. Aleix and Laura coordinate the beginning of the WC'05. Those who are interested in participating, speak to them!
- We are valuing the possibility of doing a quick trip, just a week, to South Africa in May, in order to revise the done works until now, to prepare the WC'05, to begin the project of the scholarships and to meet the teachers of the school for propose to them work more narrowly in the future.

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