HOW CAN PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT CULTURES COME TOGETHER TO MAKE SENSE OF OUR WORLD?
The Center of International Learning Explores A Model for Dialogue

Edited by Peggy Ray

At international meetings of all kinds, high-level government officials and business managers discuss world problems and make decisions that affect the day-to-day lives of billions of other people. The Center of International Learning (CIL) has another vision: That is to bring together more ordinary folk to discuss those same problems and fashion their own solutions.

CIL's Communities in Dialogue model works like this. First, participants choose a theme and develop some initial questions. Next, international groups that CIL organizers have come in contact with are invited to join a dialogue on the theme. Interested groups discuss the theme among themselves and then exchange reports of their discussions internationally by post and e-mail. Sometimes participants are able to deepen their relationships with partner groups by making personal visits to other countries. The culminating event is an international workshop organized by CIL which representatives from all the groups can attend.

The most recent CIL international workshop of this kind took place in 2002. Between 1999-2002, people from groups in Zimbabwe, the Philippines, Germany and the U.S. considered the issue of "sustainability." To CIL planners, this involved asking people to examine their communities and to think about what is needed to create brighter, more secure futures for themselves, their children, and future generations. This information could then be shared internationally to produce a deeper understanding of the world situation and some directions for action.

Exchanges by e-mail and personal visits among the partner groups led up to a 10-day international workshop in New York City in January, 2002 called "Neighborhood by Neighborhood: How Do We Build a Sustainable World?" A core group of 20 and dozens of other people who participated in one activity or another engaged in intensive discussions on the topic.

For the purposes of this discussion, "neighborhoods" included both local geographic locations and social networks that have developed as a result of migrations, mobility within countries and "globalization." As CIL Board member put it in the Fall, 2000 CIL newsletter: "A neighborhood may include anyone we are connected with. Neighborhood is no longer limited by geography or kinship. Because in today's global neighborhoods, different communities are both united and divided by economics, politics, and culture. The work of
CIL is to initiate and nurture dialogue between communities, neighborhoods by another name.”

Many of the issues discussed were painful. Most of the communities discussed were urban ones where such problems as inadequate housing, problematic schools, unemployment, and drug addiction were common. But participants also celebrated the achievements of their communities, visualized a better future, and, in the end, sketched out some actions to enlarge the conversation.

This document contains some of the correspondence among groups that preceded the 10-day workshop along with notes of the discussions that took place at the workshop. The correspondence and notes provide interesting information and insights into participants’ communities plus some directions for future action.

The Workshop Participants: Introductions

How did this diverse assortment of people come together to create a global CIL neighborhood at the workshop?

CIL-USA has participated in eight international workshops with our partners in Germany since CIL’s origin in 1986. For this workshop, a long-term friend from Germany, Ute Wannig, founder of CIL there, provided a helpful conceptual framework for looking at issues of “neighborhood” and of sustainability. She came to the workshop along with Barbara Heun, who has been focusing on alternative economics projects in Germany, and Martina Gessner, a CIL-Germany staff member.

Through contacts in the Maryknoll order, CIL-USA organizers met Ed Gerlock, advocacy officer of Coalition of Services of the Elderly in Manila, the Philippines. He contributed valuable information about the situation of people in his community to the pre-workshop dialogue. He then introduced CIL to Bahay Tuluyan, a program he founded in 1988 to assist abused and exploited street children.

Lily Flordelis and Catherine Scerri, two staff members of Bahay Tuluyan traveled to New York to participate in CIL’s January, 2002 workshop.

Cesar Ledesma of Mindanao, Philippines was visiting New York when he heard about the workshop and was invited to participate. Mr. Ledesma is a development consultant who has worked with farmers in the Philippines on organic farming methods and on ecotourism projects.

Evelyn Zinyuku and Ndaipaneyi Mukwena of the St. Joseph Singles Club in Harare, Zimbabwe proved to be excellent informants on the situation in their community in the pre-workshop dialogue and eventually came to New York to attend the workshop. CIL-USA organizers were introduced to the Singles Club through contacts in the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary who work in Zimbabwe.

The remaining core participants lived in the U.S. in a various localities but also formed a “CIL neighborhood” through relationships built over time. Connie Newton, a long-time participant in CIL and a board member, resided in Denver, Colorado. New Yorkers Helen Corbie, Virginia Dorgan, Kathleen Kanet, Peggy Ray and Lillian Wall, although
living in different geographic neighborhoods (the Bronx, Manhattan’s East Side and Harlem), became a CIL “neighborhood” through long participation in a CIL group called “The Third Stage of Life.” New Yorker Larry Jones, a board member, has been involved with CIL for many years. Laine Alston and Sara Thomas, migrants to Manhattan from other parts of the U.S., came to CIL through student internships. Harlem residents Janice Hendricks, Frances Amando, and Muriel Young-Williams became involved in CIL through activity in their churches. Kathleen Kanet was the President of the CIL board of directors, Virginia Dorgan the organization’s Executive Director.

**Beginning The Dialogue:**

**Taking Inventory of A New York Neighborhood**

As a first step in the dialogue process, groups exchanged background information about their neighborhoods. Partners were asked to describe both the assets and problem areas of their neighborhoods.

At Harlem’s All Saints Church, Virginia Dorgan and Bob Zuber worked with Girl and Boy Scouts to create a Green Map of the All Saints neighborhood. Bob Zuber wrote the following description of the project for the CIL newsletter in the Fall of 1999. It offered a model that other partners in dialogue could consider while assessing their own neighborhoods.

Imagine an urban neighborhood featuring brightly colored school buildings and people offering melons and boiled peanuts for sale. Imagine a place that combines wonderful historical monuments and sites, green markets, riverfront parks, well-kept community gardens tucked away on side streets, architecturally and spiritually significant churches, and a large park where squirrels breed, birds pass through on their way to feeding grounds, and where the laughter of children is absolutely contagious.

It sounds like a wonderful place to live, doesn’t it? Well, those of us who work with CIL and worship at All Saints Roman Catholic Church think so! We realize that East Harlem is known in the broader U.S. public for its “toxic hot spots,” abandoned buildings, rat-infested lots and troubled schools. But we also know that there are so many positive, healthful resources in these neighborhoods, resources that are a completely unknown to disinterested outsiders, but also to many of the people who call East Harlem home. As CIL and All Saints do their part for healthier, more sustainable neighborhoods, we realize that residents must come to know much more than they do know about their own community -- what we have, what we don’t have, and what we need. Realizing this, we decided to create a “Green Map,” a visual representation of the resources in our geographic parish.

Our East Harlem Parish Green Map is being directed by Sr. Virginia Dorgan with the help of the Boy and Girl Scouts of All Saints. Under supervision, young people have walked the streets of our neighborhoods, making notes and taking photographs of important ecological and cultural sites. Young people were not only encouraged to locate sites, but to describe them. What takes place here? Why is this place important? How does it contribute to the general health and well-being of the community? Is this something we want more of? Or less? By posing questions and making judgements, our young people are learning about important resources close to home, but also about their responsibilities for making communities healthier and more sustainable places to live.
Once the investigations had been completed, we set out to make a map of our parish using the Green Map System's global green site icons and a "base map" furnished by the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. The completed map will be displayed at All Saints and presented to members of our Community Board to help inform them about ecological resources and problems in our neighborhoods. Copies of the map will also made available to neighborhood residents and tourists.

The map was inspired by the Green Map System (GMS), a global collaboration that helps people everywhere make their own local Green Maps. Visit the GMS web site (www.greenmap.org) to see some of the varied and beautiful green maps that have already been designed and published. If you have any general questions about Green Mapmaking, you can e-mail GMS at info@greenmap.com or mail to GMS at 157 Ludlow Street, New York, NY 10002 USA.

To make our Green Map, we looked at the 51 square block of the parish boundaries. A summary of the numbers expresses a lot about the character and needs of the neighborhood. This is what we found:

1 Bicycle site; 18 Child-friendly sites; 1 Community center; 10 Gardens, 5 Organic produce/natural foods; 1 Recycling site; 21 Redevelopment/opportunity sites; 6 Traffic hazard zones; 6 Notable sites.

Zimbabwe Partners Describe Their Neighborhood

Our partners living in Hatfield, a middle to high-density section of Harare, assessed their neighborhood early in 2000. Evelyn Zinyuku sent this report.

Evelyn Zinyuku

Eighty percent of houses are owner occupied. Forty percent of these are sublet to the homeless at various rentals with a minimum monthly rent of Z$500 per room. These are rooms built at the back of the main houses. At least 15% of children going to local schools come from these dwellings.

Most of these poor tenants share bathroom facilities. Two percent are the lucky ones housed in one/two bedroom cottages with self-contained bathroom facilities which cost anything between Z$4000 – Z$6000 per month.

Both owners and tenants share one common problem – many are grandparents looking after orphans, an estimated 20-25% of the population of the neighborhood. [Ed. note: Usually children are orphaned because parents died of AIDS.]

Most households eat at least two meals per day, but few households can still afford three meals.

About two percent of the neighborhood are old people with no other living relative to look after them, so they sit on street corners and sell vegetables to make ends meet....
Clinics in the area do not have basic medicines apart from pain killers, and it’s not uncommon to see a sick person dying at home because going to hospital means paying a lot of money, which many do not have.

Land is in short supply since the town is surrounded by large farms. Buying off the farms will cost a lot of money which the council does not have. Each year the population is growing beyond the means of the authorities, so housing becomes very much in demand, overcrowded and expensive. Show me an idle mind and I will show you where the devil plays!! Crime becomes rife in these areas and the police are as powerless as they are short-staffed.

During these trying times, we try and counsel whoever is able to listen that sometimes only spiritual strength will help them through. Cases of suicides have increased due to stresses caused by the depression we are in.

**CIL Learns About “Squatters” in the Philippines**

*CIL’s correspondent in Manila, Philippines, Ed Gerlock, contributed background information on his community in Manila. We have excerpted the following from his paper “A Community-Based Approach with Older People,” which he sent us in October, 2000.*

No one quite knows the population of the Greater Manila Area, variously estimated between 11 and 14 million inhabitants. Everyone knows it is too many, too much traffic, too much pollution, too much garbage ... Truly a third of the population are so-called "Squatters," i.e., people who live precariously on the edge of the passing river, squeezed along the railroad tracks and pressed against the wall of the Central Bank Building where water is collected from the humongous air-conditioning units, for bathing and washing clothes...

....Older poor people living in a squatter area need money -- not big money but enough to retain dignity and have something in the pocket (to buy candy for the grandchildren). Factories and tailor shops give scrap materials gratis to the groups [set up by Coalition of Services to the Elderly]. A Korean factory has been regularly supplying truck-loads of foam rubber which older people, sitting in a small circle and gossiping, cut into small pieces to be made into pillows. The whole operation, including sales, is done by the group. Some buy rice from a cooperative and sell it retail in the squatter area. Bits of cloth from tailor shops are fashioned into dust cloths and shag rugs. There is a great potential in the area for income-generating activities which we have only begun to develop (after ten years!).

There are not many benefits to living in a squatter area but one of them is that people live in close proximity to one another and almost everyone knows everyone else. There are people who have “wisdom” or are just good listeners. Could they add to their considerable skills by learning non-directive counseling--become peer counselors? Could they help the angry, depressed, rejected...in their own areas? Could they mediate in some of the tensions of the area? This program is in its early stages but shows promise....
...And About Philippine Street Children

Lily Flordelis, director of Bahay Tuluyan described her work with street children at the workshop. The following is excerpted from information that appeared on the Bahay Tuluyan web site in 2002.
(www.geocities.com/bahaytuluyan)

According to a UNESCO report, there are about 1.5 million street children aged between 5 and 17 working in the Philippines today. Around 75,000 of these are located in Metro Manila.... Seventy percent (70%) of these children go home every night while five percent are estimated to be completely abandoned and have no contact with their families.

Street children sell flowers and fruits, beg, collect garbage, wash cars, gamble and steal in order to support themselves and/or their families. Most street children do not attend school regularly or at all. They are often malnourished and afflicted with poverty-related illnesses. Many street children are victims of abuse and exploitation, often forced into prostitution in order to support themselves or their families. Some children are involved in gangs and/or drug use. Many street children are in frequent contact with the justice system from a very young age....

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Bahay Tuluyan believes in the inherent capabilities of street children to improve the quality of their lives and to share responsibility for the care, nurture and education of other street children. Accordingly, it has developed the Junior Educators Program. Junior Educators are street children who are trained to provide an alternative education to other street children known as the “Child to Child approach.”

Often street children do not respond well to conventional or highly structured teaching methods. This is due partly to their frequent and prolonged absences from school. In order to provide an education that is appropriate and effective for street children, the Junior Educators employ a variety of non-conventional teaching methods including art, song, and drama.

CIL Asks: What Contributes to the Build-Up of Your Neighborhood? What to Breakdown?

To move the dialogue along, CIL staff developed questions addressed to all the participating groups. Ed Gerlock responded from the Philippines to the above questions with this reply (October, 2000):

The community we are a part of is an urban poor community (so called “squatters” who live on land they do not own). As a matter of fact, they live on top of one of the largest water pipes in the city. The community itself is quite homogenous, i.e., they mostly come
from the same area of the country and speak the same language--kind of an ethnic enclave. It is a very congested area with housing mostly made of scrap material.

In stark contrast, they are surrounded by town houses and condos--and so their shanties are always in danger of demolition because the land itself is valuable and someone could be deriving a large income from it. Sometimes people in the area (it is called "Pasadena") look up at the town houses and sigh, but I find the spirit in the area wonderful and the organization of old people inspiring. I feel that we could never organize the people in the condos nor would they wish to be organized...

There are not many benefits to living in a squatter area but... precisely what contributes to the build up of the neighborhood is the sense of solidarity, not only among older people but the whole community. They block off the street and hold a fiesta; a priest comes once a month and the community turns out en masse; a case study we have shows how important the older people are to the life of the community. The community cares for one older woman who in other circumstances, might be in an institution.

What works against community are drugs and the threat of demolition. People live in great insecurity because it is common in the Manila area for people to get notice of demolition. Ironically, it also helps to unify the community....

A U.S. Group Discusses the Effects of Racism in Their Neighborhoods

In New York, the "Third Stage of Life" group discussed the impact of racism on the build-up or breakdown of New York neighborhoods. The following reflections came from Helen Corbie, a woman of African-American heritage who has lived in her Bronx neighborhood for more than forty years (November, 2000).

Helen Corbie

Dating back to the early Fifties, the neighborhood that I live in was predominately white. The area was made up mainly of homeowners of one- and two-family homes who were proud of their homes and took great pride in the way they were kept. The residents were mostly Italian, Jewish and Irish with a sprinkling of Caribbean families.

The schools in the district were excellent and held in high esteem, especially the high schools. There were churches of all denominations but they tended to reflect the population of the area, that is white with white and the few blacks had their own churches. At time of worship people wanted to be with their own.

As more and more people of different nationalities began to move into the area many of the old time-residents, who had by this time retired, sold their homes and moved to Florida. In many cases, they sold their homes to the new immigrants who were usually people of color. Sometimes this was ill-received by those who remained.
Gradually, as more and more people of different backgrounds and different cultures moved in, the schools as well as the up-keep of the homes began to change. There was redistricting of schools to accommodate certain neighborhoods. Parents often complained about the changes that were occurring in the schools and felt that the economic picture was deteriorating. The number of children eligible for free lunches in the schools evidenced this. Administrators were not always clear on how to deal with these shifts and changes. Adults complained that the schools were becoming unsafe and especially that the teenagers who attended them were creating problems. These were inevitably teenagers of color.

Our own children did not attend neighborhood schools until they were older and better able to cope. Our youngest did not attend local schools except for a period of two years in the early grades.

Where we once could leave our doors unlocked and feel safe, now sporadic robberies and break-ins were occurring. The neighborhood was definitely changing.

Our church members began to reflect all that was positive about the change. For the past several years, we have had an African-American priest for our pastor. Although the church remains predominately white, the school associated with our church is predominately black now. The standards have remained high, however, and attendance is up. I would say that 80 – 90% of the graduates go on to college.

The church is a wonderful example of how people can live and worship together. This reflects how much we have in common in terms of values and spiritual needs. The ministries are mixed and we all work well together.

**A Group in Colorado Enters the Dialogue**

*CIL board member Connie Newton brought the discussion of neighborhood build-up and breakdown to a group in Colorado. In the Spring, 2001 newsletter, Sally Ponfick of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Anton, CO contributed this dispatch:*

Near Anton, Colorado, distance between neighbors is usually measured in miles. The church member who lives closest is 10 miles away – one family is nearly 30 miles from the church. The neighbors are mostly Caucasian, speak English only, and have been in Washington County for a long time. (The area was Homesteaded in the late 1800s and early 1900s – the U.S. government was trying to move people onto the land and would grant 40-80 acres free to those who would live there at least five years.) They know each other well – sometimes too well!

We are rich in social capital. Everybody knows everybody else and their kids (and dogs) – and cares about and for them. When somebody is in trouble, help is not hard to come by.

What contributed to neighborhood breakdown? The economy of Washington County, Colorado is directly tied to the formal global economy and the world prices for commodities. In the last several years, the prices received for commodities have been well below the cost of production. Advice to farmers has been to increase efficiency – “Get big or get out.” And so they did. The result was that many got out, and instead of having several families on a section of land (one square mile) now it takes several sections to support one family.
The Land Question Engages Partners in Zimbabwe and the Philippines

Another of our Zimbabwe correspondents, Ndaipaneyi Mukwena, asked for some reflections on a pressing issue in her country where the government was encouraging the take-over of land from white farmers who had acquired large holdings as a result of colonialism. She wrote in June, 2000:

Ndaipaneyi Mukwena

I am sure there has been a lot of publicity about the Zimbabwean land issue in your national news. What do you think about it from a global point of view? Women have never owned land for various reasons. What advice would you give to your government to do something about the situation?

Ndaipaneyi Mukwena received this response from Ed Gerlock in the Philippines (August, 2000):

To Zimbabwe: I tend to mistrust CNN somewhat and the reporting coming from your country. I myself have been involved in land invasions in this country (and was deported as a result!) It seems to me the roots are deep. For one, the way culture views land. Land, for our tribal peoples, is only owned by God and is lent to us to use. Therefore, we have no right to use it as if it were a commodity. It is meant to support life. When it is abused (i.e., allowed to lie idle as an investment opportunity, used for cash crops, for export when the general population is hungry, etc.), in their opinion the right to use the land is forfeited.

Then, in our case, there is the failure of land reform, a great ideal but impossible to implement. Then it is indeed time to talk about "people power"—that people should take what rightfully belongs to them—that the people who work the land should "own" it while they work it.

At the same time (in our case), it was important to explain to the unjust owners that what we were doing was as much for their benefit as that of the farmers. It dehumanizes people to be (consciously or unconsciously) oppressors of the poor.

We were against violence and simply decided to occupy (with a thousand supporters) until the courts decided the issue—who truly owns the land? I don’t say it was highly successful, but maybe there were other gains beside the land itself. That’s all by the way of saying that when I heard the news [about Zimbabwe], I heard it from within the framework of my own experience. It’s a complicated issue and I don’t defend the violence, but it’s important to understand “land hunger.”
CIL’s Next Set of Questions Focused on the Future:
1) What changes would you like to see in your neighborhood in the coming year? How would those changes contribute to a healthier neighborhood? Why?
2) What changes would be good in the more distant future?
3) How do you see yourself participating in the changes?

From the Philippines....

In February, 2001, Ed Gerlock had more reflections on “people power” after large demonstrations had resulted in the resignation of the Philippine president.

Sorry for the long silence but, as you may have read, we were busy dumping a very corrupt president. This may not seem to have much relevance for our project but it is very much related. The former president, corrupt as he was, had a gift of communicating with the poor, something his rivals (and the present occupant of the office) sadly lack. The area we have been discussing (Pasadena) was where he began his political career and where his son is the incumbent.

As I mentioned before, the "squatter area" of Pasadena is located smack on top of two of the largest water pipes in the city--thus the poor of Pasadena are "squatters" because they live in a forbidden zone". They have been assured by the family of the former president that as long as they are in power, the poor of Pasadena are secure. The message can be read from another angle: If you care about your security, make sure we stay in power. (This game is played not only with the poor of Pasadena--but across the land.)

Suddenly, there is an eruption of "people power," and students, church people, business people, generally middle class, (rightly) think the country is going down the tubes. A million people amass at the same place where we dumped the last dictator (Marcos).

What do you think the poor of Pasadena feel? They feel very nervous. Concepts like "democracy", "freedom", "good government" etc. don't mean very much for people who live close to the edge, I'm afraid.

So when we ask the question, What is it you want for the future? Answers are quite concrete: We want to live, have security, food, a job, education for the children so they will not have the life we have had. But you say, can't you have one along with the other???: We're working on that.

Zimbabwe Partners Present a Bleak Picture

Correspondent Evelyn Zinyuku responded to the questions about the future in this way (March, 2000):

....We highlighted the threats that we face in our neighborhood and these can be picked between the thin lines of our name (St. Joseph's Singles Club). The scourge of HIV and AIDS, and the resurfacing of resistant and deadly strains of tuberculosis and malaria have maimed our society. Added to these is poverty, which is endemic....

Life expectancy has now been reduced to 37 years for males and 45 for females. This simple statistic gives you an idea about the composition of families in our neighborhood. It can be translated to mean that most families are single parent families,
some on the death list, so to speak. It is not surprising that most of the affected families are now headed by children or have reverted to grandparents, who previously looked forward to being pampered by their now dead children…

The Zimbabwe group came up with a list of proposals, some of which are excerpted below:

…Of immediate importance, is to educate our children about the deadly HIV and AIDS scourge. This can be achieved by aggressive awareness campaigns at schools and colleges, etc; especially at political rallies where the masses are gathered. Without health, we can forget about any progress in the future, since the majority of our people will be no more in a few years….

…In the coming year, we would like our clinics stocked with adequate medicines; a resident doctor and enough staff to run them smoothly….

…We would like all our neighbors adequately housed; every Zimbabwean was supposed to have a roof over their head by the end of the year 2000!!! To this day this remains a dream. Overcrowding has caused a lot of untold pain both to adults and children. Communicable diseases and child abuse have been indirectly caused by inadequate housing in the towns of Zimbabwe. Adults of tomorrow might turn out to be dysfunctional due to this problem. We need to address this issue with the urgency it deserves….

…We presently have water purification problems; a very serious health problem indeed. We need to revamp our water works to prevent water-born diseases from affecting the entire city one day. …

…In the near future our education system should employ enough school teachers; most classes have 45 pupils and a further class that hot-sits in the afternoon. This is not helping the pupils as not enough attention is paid to those children needing extra help (slow learners or those with slight learning disabilities).

In the distant future we want school curricula to include actual technical training from an early age so that the pupils can be channeled into areas they are best suited when they reach high school level; presently schools are almost purely academic – no natural talents are recognized and no facilities are available to make the necessary assessments. The result is that children have no trade or jobs after having done their "O" Levels and the majority has no chance of ever going further with their education; due to the expenses involved at private commercial and technical colleges. We require technical colleges for those of our children who are not academic and these should be state funded….
In New York City, African-Americans Fear Being Priced Out of Their Harlem Neighborhood

At a dialogue that took place in Harlem in December, 2001, long-time residents in the area expressed fears that they would soon not be able to afford to live in a community dear to their hearts because of gentrification. Here are a few notes from that meeting.

Harlem residents (left to right) Lillian Wall, Frances Amando, Janice Hendricks and Muriel Young-Williams conferring at the workshop

In the Harlem neighborhood there is major reconstruction everywhere…but who can afford to live in the new structures? Where do people go when apartments go to “market” rent? [Ed. Note: In New York rents of some apartments are controlled by state law to prevent huge increases. Apartment not so controlled are said to be going at “fair market” prices.]

People need to support each other in their determination to stay in the neighborhood.

Kids don’t want to help parents keep their brownstones. [Ed. Note: In New York, “brownstones” are typically narrow townhouses built with reddish-brown sandstone facades in the 18th and 19th centuries.] They want their own spaces. We need to “merge” to keep what we have.

The city is forcing the elderly into nursing homes. There is a desire to get their apartments.

There was a forum devoted to protecting local property, but it was discontinued at 9/11. Lots of local businesses don’t have long-term leases because the rents are too high to afford. Chains like Old Navy and others force rents up.

There are lots of chain stores now in various parts of Harlem, and people abandon the small stores.

Some Reflections on Sustainability from CIL-USA

CIL’s discussion about the meaning of the term “sustainable” had been going on for several years. It was clear the problem of what future was possible involved social and cultural relationships as well as economic and environmental elements. In a Fall, 2000 issue of the CIL newsletter, Lillian Wall mused on a Harlem she grew up in 45 years ago.

Sustainability, what is it? What makes my neighborhood/community home? What would I miss?

…Harlem is home for me. It is the community where there was always a ready hand to hold, there were voices that assured and told the stories, pots to stir and news to get home
before I did!! There was always more than enough love, wisdom, history and prayers to be shared and passed on.

Few were hungry, homeless, or orphaned. Of course, the public treasure and acknowledgement and embrace of Harlem includes the cultural Renaissance, the religious devotions and spirituality and the pride and nationalism of the citizens. In Harlem, our heritage, blood, sweat, tears and struggle, are remembered without being spoken of. Yet there is “plenty good room” for others to embrace and call Harlem home.

Recently Harlem has begun to receive some of the bounty of what has been said to be our national prosperity. The community is being transformed and all the signs and symbols of success are evident and welcome, but what will this mean in the long run? Will those residents who are rooted in the Harlem community benefit from what seems to be a positive change with the promise of some prosperity? As a ‘daughter’ of Harlem I certainly hope that the bounty will be shared and that I and others will be welcomed at the table.

The family-owned businesses, including the 24-hour bodega, the local newsstand and candy store, neighborhood pharmacy as well as the physicians and dentists have all contributed to the sustainability of our neighborhoods/community.

In that same issue, Helen Corbie wrote this definition of “sustainability:”

To not only maintain what is good and precious but to replenish and build and nurture our resources, be they human or natural, for a lasting world.

In a Spring, 2001 issue of the CIL newsletter, Connie Newton raised many questions in an article entitled “In Search of Elements of Sustainability.”

…What does it mean to indigenous people? … How will we talk about the non-human elements of the land, the soil, water supply, and the species the land supports? … Is all culture dependent on its relationship to the land?…What is the role of memory?… Does holding on to tradition lead to the life or death of a community?…

…Why do we have so much stuff? When do we have enough? When do we have too much? Who decides? The people who don’t have as much stuff don’t ask that question. They still want to accumulate believing that more stuff will make them happy. Can we who live in the world capital of stuff tell others that they should have the same stuff that we have?

…How important is local production? Because of globalization are the real costs of resources taken into account? What does globalization have to do with sustainability?

…Is sustainability the same for the young and old? Does sustainability always mean low-tech? How does unpaid work figure into our definitions and practice of sustainability in our own neighborhoods and in the world? Can our generalizations apply to the whole world? What values are required in order to create a sustainable economy? Who makes these decisions and who benefits?

The Fall, 2001 CIL newsletter contained these reflections on “sustainability”: 
The problem of sustainability is not fundamentally a technical problem, though it has important technical aspects. Primarily the problem of sustainability is a problem of ethos, the way people live, their habits and customs – an ethical and cultural problem. The global commercial media has spread an obsession for wanting more and more. Commercial media incite consumers to want more than they have and even more than they actually want. Every aspect of commercial media glorifies a life of excess.

And, in that same issue, this thought:

...Sustainability as an outlook is necessarily oriented towards the future, though it's always wise to keep a careful eye to the past. Whatever we do now, what we burn for energy, what we waste, what we dump into the oceans, into the atmosphere, and into the soil will shape the future. It seems imperative that we become conscious of how our behaviors will determine the future for good or ill. Does it make sense to destroy the future for the sake of the present?....

German Partners Offer the Concept of “New Neighborhoods”

CIL-USA’s German partners have been working on issues of sustainability for many years. They provided us with an analysis of the changes in neighborhoods all over the world in an issue of their newsletter, “The Dialogue,” part of which is excerpted here.

CIL Germany’s Ute Wannig with Larry Jones

...Globalization creates new relationships among people who formerly had no relationship to each other, and alters the existing relationships among people of differing cultures and societies as well as those among people living in the same society.

In the process of globalization, the fixed boundaries between countries become displaced. This process of political, economic and social boundary-unmaking brings individuals and groups of people, who were separate until now, into perceptible contact for the first time. People in the most varying parts of the world take notice of one another. “New neighborhoods” arise between societies and groups separated until now. Prosperous citizens in the cities of Central Europe begin to think about the impoverished rural population of Africa. They feel threatened by global migration. Farmers in Europe and Latin America are related to one another through the world market for agricultural products and the GATT agreement. World-wide mobility allows cultures to come closer.

“New neighborhoods” also arise within societies because the relationships between the members change: The relationships—between men and women, young and old, city and country, indigenous and immigrant populations—are subject to profound changes. These “new neighborhoods” form a complex network of varying relationships which overlap and exert reciprocal influence.
The International Workshop – Day 1: A Clash of Urban and Rural Neighborhoods As Viewed From Harlem, U.S.A.

The first day of the workshop the core group and other CIL participants met with mothers and children at the Incarcerated Mothers Program in Harlem. The day’s program engaged hands and hearts as well as minds. In the morning session, the video “Yes In My Backyard,” produced by Tracy Huling in association with WSKG Public Broadcasting prompted interesting discussions of urban-rural relationships. In the afternoon, adults and children together drew and painted dreams of the future with the encouragement of James de la Vega, an artist who decorates the streets of New York with his work and art teacher Margaret Fernandez. The dream pictures were to be presented at a ceremony on the birthday of Martin Luther King.

The Incarcerated Mothers Program works to assist families divided because the mother has been imprisoned, usually in an upstate New York facility and usually on a drug charge.

CIL’s prison neighborhood project has also been involved with these families. The relationship between upstate New York communities where prisons are located and the communities in New York City where the inmates come from was conceptualized in this way:

New and destructive relationships between neighborhoods have developed because of the expansion of the prison system. For example, Albion, a town in upstate New York, is the site of a major women’s prison. Albion has thereby become tied to some of the poorer and more desperate neighborhoods of New York City. The slums of the city provide the inmates. Albion has become a prison town where the prison means employment in a depressed region. The friends and family of the inmates often travel from New York City to Albion to visit.

The two communities are inextricably locked together. A continuing disaster in one—caused by despair and crime—means continuing employment opportunities in the other. Both communities suffer from the relationship even though only one of them, Albion, enjoys a dubious advantage. There are jobs, but the jobs the upstate prisons provide are demeaning and psychologically damaging. One community has become the jailer of the other and both communities are thereby degraded.

Even though the two communities are so closely tied there is little or no real dialogue between them. The nature of the relationship makes that extremely difficult. They are inclined to look upon each other with hostility, or at best, with cold indifference.

The video “Yes In My Backyard?” revealed the dependence of the people of the town of Coxsackie, New York on the prison system for jobs. Formerly, many
prison workers had been farmers, but with the industrialization of agriculture in the past few decades, the small family farms of the area were no longer economically viable. Some notes taken by Peggy Ray in one of the group discussions follow.

This group included participants from the Philippines, Germany and the United States. Because one of the U.S. participants came from Vermont, a state with a mostly rural and white population, we were able to compare conditions in New York State with another state as well as with Germany and the Philippines. Participants from the U.S. included both white and African-American people.

Our Vermont participant was puzzled by aspects of the situation and asked why prisons weren’t built in the cities. In her state, there are no large prisons and corrections are handled on a community basis. In the video, it was said that in Coxsackie, if a young person got into trouble for criminal mischief, the police would call a parent and the matter would be settled with a reprimand and a fine, while if a young, black person in Albany did the same, the penalties would be much more severe. In Vermont, matters would be handled more like they are in Coxsackie.

There was some discussion of the Rockefeller drug laws in New York with their harsh penalties for drug possession and sale. There was some attempt to compare this situation in New York with the situation in Germany and in the Philippines.

In Germany, there are prisons located in rural areas and near-by residents are fearful of the inmates, but the inmates are often people with histories of sexual assault and other violent crimes. Drug users are not imprisoned, although those who are African or Arab are treated differently. Dealers from other countries are deported, but they usually find a way to come back.

A Philippine participant said she noticed the spaciousness of the American prison. In her country there might be 50 young people imprisoned in a small room where they could not even lie down. They can only sit crowded together. They would be in prison for theft, usually. As far as drugs are concerned, in the Philippines they do not lock up drug users, but only go after the drug lords, the “big fish.”

A German participant analyzed the situation as being about exploitation of “surplus populations” both in the city and rural areas. She did not think it would be possible in Germany to “push surplus populations at each other.” Partly the reason would be that farming systems are more traditional and partly because the social security system is still pretty strong, even though it has been reduced since the re-union of East and West Germany. She commented that the U.S. has a reputation internationally of having a very low rate of unemployment, but if you include the number of people in prisons and the number of people kept employed in those prisons, the numbers don’t look as good. The prison system conceals the real employment situation.

We discussed briefly the need to revive the economies of rural areas by supporting local agriculture and local industry and business. A U.S. participant felt strongly that education and employment in the cities would also have to be addressed.
Day 2: A Discussion on Health and a Tour of Harlem

On Day 2, the core participants visited All Saints Church where participants were treated to lunch prepared by parishioners, a presentation on health issues by Bill Norris of the community-based program Rheedlen, a walking tour of parts of Harlem and dinner at a well-known Harlem eatery. Kathleen Kanet describes the health issues discussed.

Kathleen Kanet

On January 13, the international group met at All Saints Church. The theme was how to address health issues, not so much as a technique or as a diagnostician but as a community organizer. Bob Zuber, educational specialist from the Green Map System and a parishioner of All Saints, initiated this dialogue with us. His note of introduction stated that good health is key to learning, to growth in education, to being able to participate creatively in life. How can we prepare for healthier outcomes? How can we see what we have to do as an organizing problem? How can we manage to have good health for all of our children, especially when the poor suffer increasingly from asthma, diabetes, obesity, hypertension, lead poisoning, HIV/AIDS, low birth rate, drug and alcohol abuse as well as environmental illnesses?

These bad conditions exert a multiplier effect in terms of their impact on the quality of life in our neighborhoods. Health problems can rob us of energy and enthusiasm to meet life’s challenges. People in economically marginal neighborhoods have greater needs for medical care, spend much of their time seeking out care and have few resources to fight for better housing, safer streets better schools or city services.

Bob had invited Will Norris, Director of the Fitness and Nutrition Center of Rheedlen (now called Harlem’s Children’s Zone) to share with the group his work with youth in Harlem. In his program they choose youth ages 9-13 to become Ambassadors of Health. They have special programs after school to teach physical fitness including martial arts and aerobics, have created a youth leadership development team on good health, and take a van into the community to teach about better nutrition and good health.

The writer of this piece works with families affected by maternal incarceration. Most of the families live in poverty. One of our goals is to ensure that the children get proper health care, but resources are often not available to them. Some of our children do not have health insurance; some have never seen a dentist. Many of the children are overweight as they eat at McDonalds and seldom eat family meals. Many suffer from asthma and miss many days of school. Absenteeism is high in our schools in the city. As the children lose out in early years they drop out of school in their early teens. Seventy percent have been diagnosed as needing special education, which can be related to having poor health. Even after the cataloguing, the diagnosing and the placement of them in special education, the resources are not there to deal with their needs. These children will not be employable when they get older and their poverty will continue into the next generation. Also in most cases the mothers are incarcerated because of drug addiction. In the USA prisons become the drug rehab centers which do not succeed. This is hardly sustainable development!
The Workshop -- Days 3 to 6: Intensive Discussions at a Retreat Center on the Hudson River

These three days were the core of the workshop. Facilitators Grace Troici and Karen Davis introduced the group to a way of organizing meetings called Open Space Technology. The process is described in Harrison Owen’s book, *Open Space Technology* (Berret-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 1997).

The basic requirements for Open Space Technology are passion and responsibility. The group was asked to be concerned only with issues they felt deeply about. The passion brought to discussion was expected to motivate participants to action once the discussion was ended. A sense of responsibility also was required to bring about action.

In the opening circle, all participants were asked to write down some topic or topics they felt passionate about on sheets of colored construction paper. These were taped to a wall identified as the Community Marketplace with spaces for four discussion groups a day over the four days of the workshop. Once the topics were posted, participants signed up for whatever groups they were interested in.

During the meetings, participants were free to leave any group if the discussion did not interest them and go to another one – the “law of two feet.”

At each meeting, one group member took responsibility for taking notes during the meeting and typing them up on computers that were available. The typed notes were posted on a bulletin board so people could read about any discussions they were unable to attend in person.

A total of 18 discussion groups met over the four days. Notes from all the groups were compiled at the end of the workshop. The entire list of discussion topics can be seen in The Table of Contents below. Excerpts from notes taken during the discussions follow that.

On the last day of the workshop, participants from each country met to outline actions they intended to take once they returned home.
There are different concepts of sustainability. We can think about it in terms of sustaining ourselves, our families, our communities, our countries, etc. The needs of these groups often conflict with each other. We need to sustain ourselves (satisfy our own needs) before we can consider sustaining others.

Very often people decide for us what is sustainable. For example, big companies say something is sustainable and use this as a marketing tool. But is this really what we need?

One idea is that each person should take responsibility in his or her own area. For example, a fisherman can take responsibility for the sustainability of local fisheries. BUT there is a problem with huge, industrialized fishing trawlers fishing in international waters
and depleting the supply of fish. Another example of areas that conflict is when the sustainability of an oil company conflicts with the sustainability of indigenous groups.

Another idea is that we need to agree on a set of criteria for sustainability and work towards achieving this. BUT is this realistic? Again, there are problems with different people’s ideas of what is sustainable.

Conclusions:
- A definition of sustainability must focus on the future, not just the here and now.
- Sustainability to some extent equates with the art of survival but must also be a process that leads to change.
- The academic or political definitions of sustainability are not very useful.

Topic 2. The Earth and Sustainability
Convener: Evelyn Zinyuk. Participants: Helen Corbie, Connie Newton, Virginia Dorgan, Connie Newton, Barbara Heun, Sara Thomas

We are dependent on the earth, yet humans have been destroying the very life systems we require for our survival. The oceans are being fished out, soils eroded or degraded, rivers and air polluted with chemicals. We tend to think that what we do not see does not exist; garbage is carted away, but where does it go? It never disappears. If we do not change, little will be left for our children. What shall we do?

We need to examine our values. Humans are not separate from the earth and cannot continue to view the earth as dead matter apart from ourselves. We must learn to treasure the earth and our connection with all that is.

We have been led by an economy based on consumerism to continually think about having more and more. We have too many cars, too much “stuff” in the industrialized world, while there is much deprivation elsewhere.

These consumer values have been exported so that, for example, a poor family in Guatemala living in a house with dirt floors will have a TV set, watch soap operas, and yearn for a lifestyle that is mainly an illusion. These illusions need to be interrupted so that the reality of the life people find when they leave their families and head for the cities or industrialized countries (loneliness, unemployment or menial employment, migrant camps) becomes known to them. Those migrants who return to their home countries or send pictures want to portray themselves as successful and enjoying a luxurious life because they do not want to seem to have failed in their quest for “a better life.” In this way, they perpetuate a false picture.

Actions: Save paper – stop buying the newspaper every day. Support ways of producing paper from alternative sources (tree farms developed by indigenous people that are sustainable, hemp or other fibers). Use less fuel. Support development of solar, wind and bio-gas energy. Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs which use less energy.

Recycle organic garbage so that it is put back on the land, as is already done in Zimbabwe. Change monoculture agricultural practices so that people eat from their own
bioregion. This would eliminate migrant labor and would require land re-distribution. Work to eliminate chemicals that are harmful to the earth – support organic agriculture.

Elders can teach young people about “home remedies” for common illnesses.

People should stay where they are and improve where they already live.

**Topic 3. Can We Be “Us” Without Hating “Them”?**

*Convener: Larry Jones. Participants: Virginia Dorgan, Peggy Ray, Frances Amando, Lillian Wall, Catherine Scerri, Ndaipaneyi Mukwena.*

Especially following September 11, in the U.S. people seem to need an enemy to be united. Is that what we are? Do we need to hate somebody to be more ourselves?

Some people feel ashamed to be U.S. citizens because of our government's response to that tragedy which caused many innocent people in another country to be injured and killed. What happened on September 11 reflects how some people in the world feel about the U.S. as a symbol. … Responding with anger is not productive; people should let it go. But this is hard especially for those who lost relatives and friends.

Americans can be terrorists, too. Some people were disappointed when investigators [of the bombing of a federal building in Oklahoma City] found Timothy McVeigh, an American, responsible, and he wasn’t a “them.” Those people were quiet when they found out he was an “us.” …

When September 11 happened, there was a mixed reaction around the world. Some people were upset. Others said, why is it a big deal now that it has happened in America? It happens every day in other places and no one seems to care.

As children grow up, they are socialized into “us” and “them” on a smaller scale (e.g., families, schools). People want to feel connected to one another… This is not a bad thing. For example, at sporting events we combine strongly, and this is healthy.

“Us” and “them” causes a problem when it becomes political…. The basic human need to be with other people is manipulated on the political level. Antagonism between people is politically convenient to maintain social structures. “Us” and “them” will always exist, but we must accept our differences.

…Often, people want to feel better than others. To counteract this, there has to be somebody in a group who will stand up for others. The leadership of a group may determine which way the group will go. There is a tendency to want to eliminate others to feel strong; therefore, leadership makes a big difference….

Is the UN combining “us”? There is some feeling that there is inequality in the UN and that it is dominated by the U.S. However, there is some potential in the UN to be a forum for all countries…

Concluding thoughts:

- What people really want is to be connected. This is built into human beings and into the universe. “Us” is “them.”
- We are all connected by the ecosystems of the earth.
People who are creating toxic bombs are destroying themselves because they are more concerned about money.

All identities are lies; we are better off without them. We are all human beings.

**Topic 4. Why Do Different Groups Hate Each Other? What Can Be Done To Change This?**

*Convener: Virginia Dorgan. Participants: Ndaipaneyi Mukwena, Evelyn Zinyuku, Lily Flordelis, Laine Alston*

**CIL’s Laine Alston with Laura Fernandez, director of the Incarcerated Mothers Program**

Why do different groups hate each other? One factor is fear of being overtaken, of being insignificant. Another is past histories that perpetuate cultural and ethnic hatreds that are generations old. An important reason is that “power over” oppressed people leads to their dehumanization.

Geographic and cultural boundaries have been created which separate people. These are passed on through such concepts as tribalism, nationalism, race, religion….

In the Philippines, there is no racial discrimination; rather mistrust is based on religious conflict. It is lack of understanding rather than hate, at least in the younger generation which has not experienced direct conflict and confrontation. There is also conflict based on region, because there are so many islands and dialects and cultural differences. There is a lot of miscommunication….

People demonize the “other,” the “evil” ones, the “enemy.” What do you do with those who are “evil”? You kill them, therefore justifying violence against others. Hate and violence is engrained in peoples and societies through media, politicians, society in general.

Is hate in our human nature? We are not born with hatred; rather it is a choice or it is imposed on us through socialization. The family has an important role in that socialization…. The media foster it. People are not taught skills of critical analysis and believe what they are told by mass media and political leaders….

The dehumanization of the “other” allows one not to realize that “others” suffer the same as “we” do. “We” choose to be blind to the consequences of hating the “other.”

…There must be a possibility for multiple truths to exist and still find alternative ways to live together….

What can be done?
  - Education to promote tolerance and the celebration of difference.
  - Education showing children alternatives to violence.
- Enter the broader systemic and political arena to promote alternatives to violence using mainstream and alternative media.
- Bring people together to promote dialogue and create relationships as we are doing here through CIL. Then bring that experience and outcomes to broader social and political levels.
- Teach that two wrongs do not make a right.
- Promote respect for a justice that is not at the expense of others but justice for all.
- Promote personal and collective responsibility to stop hatred and violence.
- Work with faith-based institutions and schools to teach social justice.
- Empower grassroots people and create connections among grassroots to influence public policy.

**Topic 5. Intergenerational Sustainability**

*Conveners: Connie Newton and Helen Corbie. Participants: Janice Hendricks, Barbara Heun, Martina Gessner, Lily Flordelis, Cesar Ledesma, Sara Thomas.*

...Elders have many ways to share, especially story-telling about where they have been and where they are going.... They can help young parents who have no idea how to raise a child. Elders can play a role in nurturing children...

In past generations people didn't rely on the government to take care of vulnerable children. If they needed a meal or some clothes, the neighbors helped them out. This is a more natural way, less destructive to the child and a benefit to everyone. In the U.S. much of that sense of community has been lost.

In Germany CIL has focused on the needs of elders in the community. In the development of the economy, many people have to resign from their jobs at a younger age than was previously the case. The identity of being a worker is then lost and the community doesn't value non-workers. Unpaid work (like that of mothers) is also not valued. How could elders share their experience and feel valued?

In Zimbabwe, elders never lose their position in the family.... A group member from Zimbabwe said she has parents 92 and 88 years old. Every member of the family has to put money in the pot for their living.... She felt that people should start in their own homes to respect the grandparents so children would respect every older person in the street.

...Some parents would like to stay in the place where they are and have people they know as caregivers. But in the modern economy, mobility is often required of younger workers. Other parents want independence and don't want help....

In the Philippines there is the extended family system and generations live together. What is beginning to occur is a psychological gap of values .... There is a radical gap with the children. The traditions of the older generation have not gotten into them. What does this mean for sustainability? The traditions have supported sustainability ... in the form of stories and customs. This is disappearing. Maybe this is why there is a loss of identity and a turning to drugs.

In Germany, CIL has putting societal change on the table as a problem. Because the change is moving so fast and so far we have to make it an important idea in our dialogue. Younger and older people have to look honestly at our illusions and wishes. This is really...
painful at first. Some of the issues are control, the elder’s attitude that they know it all, and relinquishing authority (it’s almost impossible to get over this).

Sometimes there is a fear that the elders will use up all the resources. There is resentment. In New York City there was a program where grandparents would be mentors for teenagers in the community. Once everyone got past the stereotypes and developed close bonds, the program worked. It changed some of the hostility....

The founder of a program for the street children in the Philippines also established a program for the elders.... Elders or house parents are put in charge of homes for 20 children. To some extent it is successful, but kids have their own lives and their own ways of life, their own world. Older people kind of know what will happen, because they have lived it. When older people give the rules and say you have to follow, kids can become dependent and shy. They have to be taught how to be independent. Guiding is OK but the issue of control can be negative.

In the Philippines, the extended family consists of grandparents, cousins, friends of cousins, and friends of friends. Sometimes it is a burden as well as a privilege. In our culture hospitality is both good and bad. For example, we inherited a tradition from the Spanish to celebrate saints’ days. Everybody has to buy a pig and feed the village. If you have no money you’re in trouble. It’s beyond economics. The life of the community revolves around these events.

So we want the elders to be present, to be an example. But if the elders want the young people to live out their dreams, that will not be sustainable. The responsible and mature people can be role models – the kids may not appear to be paying attention, but they are.

Ambivalence. The elders need care from their own family...but are ashamed to need care.... The kids say they need their own lives, but when there are problems they want to come home to get their clothes and money....

**Topic 6. What Is Our Relationship to Other Species?**

*Convener: Peggy Ray. Cesar Ledesma, Ndaipaneyi Mukwena, Lillian Wall, Frances Amando, Helen Corbie*

*Peggy Ray*

...We are dependent on animals for our existence and they in many instances are dependent on us for their survival....

In the Philippines ecologists documenting the extinction of certain species. Because poverty people need to hunt and fish for animals to feed people. The indigenous people have hunted and fished like this for generations and cannot be held responsible for extinctions. Where does the responsibility for the extinctions lie? Environmentalists are trying to make people conscious of these questions.... How are people to be fed? Who should make the decision that certain animals are in excess while others are too few in number? Is the future vanishing with the extinction of so many species?
In the U.S. animals are mistreated when they are raised in overcrowded and unclean conditions for commercial purposes. For example, the way chickens are raised creates disease that can be passed on to the consumer. The same is true with cows and pigs.

In the U.S. fifty thousand people are killed every year in car accidents and nobody seems to care. But if one animal harms a human, it makes the headlines and the immediate response is to destroy the animal. People must be helped to become aware that some animals will harm humans and some will not. We must know the difference. We must understand the habits of animals and how to co-exist.

In Zimbabwe, people are asked to be more mindful of animals and their safety, as for example, when setting fires. And floods have eroded the earth and carried away rich soil and nutrients. These are replaced with chemicals, some of which are harmful to both animals and humans.

**Topic 7. Indigenous People and Their Role in Building a Sustainable World**

Convener: Cesar Ledesma. Participants: Kathleen Kanet, Muriel Young-Williams, Frances Amando

Cesar Ledesma

Key Points:
The group recognizes the fact that it lacks knowledge and information about the indigenous people, their situation and how they impact on sustainability. The discussion generated more questions than answers to the issue. The significant ones are as follows:

- Why is there seeming disinterest on the part of the dominant cultures to the existence and the plight of indigenous people?
- Must the indigenous people isolate themselves from mainstream society?
- If we are to talk about sustainability how important is it to look at the indigenous people?

Conclusions:
There is a need to do the following:

- Do more research on indigenous people and how they are contributing to sustainability;
- Tell stores about them and get people to be in touch with them more directly. In that way mainstream society can get to know them better.

**Topic 8. How Do We Sustain a Sense of Community?**

Convener: Catherine Scerri. Participants: Laine Alston, Muriel Young-Williams, Lily Flordelis, Sara Thomas, Kathleen Kanet, Janice Hendricks, Barbara Heun

This group acknowledged that community ties have broken down in the industrialized countries in favor of an individualistic pursuit of material comfort and
personal freedom. Participants from Zimbabwe and the Philippines reported that while family and community bonds were still important in their countries, they were eroding. Following are some suggestions put forth in the group to address this problem.

Taking quality time with your neighbors.... A smile is contagious, exchange pleasantries.... Owning your responsibilities to others.... Bring people together at parties, gatherings, workshops.... Bring conflicts to the table.... Animals and kids bring people together.... Celebrate life and community through parties.... Schools can become positive communities.... Being willing to volunteer for such things as soup kitchens.... Family ties are essential. Start with the family and move outward.... Strengthen ties with neighbors, both in urban and rural areas.... Government funding allowing mothers to stay at home with children if they choose to do so.... Government giving money for child care centers.... Paid maternity and paternity leaves.... Putting the generations together....

Topic 9. Abortion

Convener: Evelyn Zinyuku. Participants: Helen Corbie, Cesar Ledesma, Catherine Scerri, Muriel Young-Williams, Lillian Wall. Each point in the following notes represents the comment of one person.

Discussion:

- [In the view of one participant] abortion amounts to child abuse, but may be more grave. Even though science says you can abort, who gives the power to take a life? Child labor is also child abuse.
- In Zimbabwe there are lots of backyard abortions because abortion is illegal, except where the mother is a minor and the father is not. But if both parents are minors, abortion is illegal. Lots of young mothers die from complications arising from backyard abortions.
- If a child will be brought into the world and not be loved, or not know its father, its life begins with an impediment. Maybe in cases of rape, abortion should be allowed, or where the mother is unable to cope mentally. Or if the baby might be affected severely by a disease.
- There should be exceptions in certain situations. It is not cut and dried.
- This question is never put to rest because there are always lots of complications (e.g.: incest, rape etc). There is also a need for babies for adoption, but if they are not adopted, foster care is not an ideal situation.
- In the African context, foster care outside the family group is a no-no because this would bring unknown forces into the group. Adoptions are not really official, relatives just assume care of the child.
- The issue is not so much abortion as birth control. Some people who have children have no sense of responsibility for them.
- Sex education cannot counteract family role models. More and more of the children in foster care are there because they have irresponsible parents.
- People are being aborted from society from womb to tomb in terms of maltreatment, the opportunities they are denied, etc.
- We should be treated with dignity from the moment we are born; everyone should have equal opportunities.
- When is it right to have an abortion? It depends on the personal circumstances. Need to think about whether it is better for the child to come into the world. If we
knew everyone had the same opportunities, it would be easier, but we know they won't.

- In many circumstances, I feel that it is justified, despite religion, because of my experience working with children in foster care. Although God takes care of us, we need to work as hard as if God was not there.
- Where child is disabled, it becomes more complicated. Some people who have disabled children believe they were given that child for a reason. People have different capacities to accept some children. If a parent is incapable of caring for it, then he or she may demonize and abuse the child.
- There are added problems when abortion is underground, because often the mother feels she cannot speak to anyone and suffers extra trauma.

In New Jersey, a woman can give birth to her baby and then leave it in a hospital without any legal ramifications. Some legislators say that this will encourage women to have unwanted babies. But this doesn't make sense; women don't get pregnant just to abandon the baby. Often once a mother sees the baby she decides to keep it.

- If you are to outlaw abortion under any circumstances, you have to accept responsibility for that mother or child. You have to make provisions for that child and mother, for a home and a life, to guarantee some security. Right to life campaigners need to be able to offer this kind of alternative. When a child is abused or killed, we don't hear from the right to life people in the same way. There is no sense of accountability.
- People who can afford abortion will find a way to do it. But poor people who can't afford it suffer because legislators say they won't fund it.
- Right to lifers who murder doctors in protest are very hypocritical.
- This leads to discussion of capital punishment. The problem with capital punishment is that the people on death row didn't start on a level playing field.
- There is a contradiction with people who are against abortion but believe in capital punishment.
- What causes people to abort? Societal factors – unwilling for life to change, fear of stigma, family pressure. Economics – can't afford to take care of child. Religious/cultural beliefs.

Child labor

- In Africa people do not believe that a child working is a problem because the child is learning to be a human being, to be responsible.
- If labor is hazardous or forced, then it should be prohibited, or if children are being exploited. It is different if the child wants to work to earn money, or learn a trade. If they can't go to school or are in dangerous conditions, then it is not acceptable.
- Often people don't want to bring attention to their plight because it is better to have a job than not (e.g.: illegal immigrants working in the U.S.).

Conclusion:

- If we can be really supportive (i.e.: financially, emotionally etc) of a woman who believes abortion is her only choice, then perhaps it will be unnecessary, but we have not yet reached that point.
- Families should be open to discussing problems; abortion should not occur underground, without support. Communication is very important between families.
Topic 10. Education/Learning: How Can We Enhance This for Children and Women?

Convener: Kathleen Kanet. Participants: Laine Alston, Muriel Young-Williams

Participants shared difficulties they encountered in working with families because of a disconnect between mothers and children or between families and social institutions. Ute Wannig recounted the following experience and set out her reflections on how to approach the problem:

Ute: I want to share some experiences from the intergenerational dialogue organized by our Philippine partner TAMBUYOG.

TAMBUYOG is a non-governmental organization which has existed for about 15 years and which advocates for a small population of fisherfolk, their way of life and their fishing grounds. In the dialogue, TAMBUYOG chose to focus on the city-land issue, intergenerational communication, and proposals for alternative new economies.

The dialogue between the generations that took place in a fishing village turned out to be the most vivid experience. Young and old, grandparents and grandchildren spoke about their different perspectives and dreams. To the surprise of both the grandparents and TAMBUYOG, the young people expressed strong disinterest and even distaste at the idea of making a living by fishing. They did not want to remain in the traditional occupation of the village. TAMBUYOG realized that in all the years they had spent working with this group of people, they had never realized this basic conflict existed. They transformed their program.

What does the TAMBUYOG story tell us about the experiences shared by Kathleen, Muriel and Laine? It is important to find out:

- What are the roles which each of the actors in a given situation play?
- What opportunities can be opened by bringing together the different actors?
- Who are the actors and what are their relationships with each other?
- What are the tensions between the actors and where do they interact?
- What possible new forms of energy can be derived from the situation?

Topic 11. In a Sustainable World, What Is the Chief Concern for Our Children?

Convener: Muriel Young-Williams. Participants: Janice Hendricks, Helen Corbie, Lily Flordelis, Cesar Ledesma, Laine Alston.

...It is very easy to romanticize “how things used to be,” but in reality, the world has changed. We need to create a community for children where they are now. Children/youth are constantly receiving negative messages from everywhere, especially media. It is very important that they receive positive reinforcement.

...We need to break down fears of “bad” children, that they will influence the majority. Where trust and kindness are developed, there is a change in the children. We need to reverse the trend of distrust and division.
Abused children will become perpetrators later if this is not stopped. We need to stop their painful experience, not only for them but also for society. What children hear and see is what they learn (for example, if they hear swearing, they swear; if they are scolded, they will scold; if they watch violence, they are violent.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) recognizes children’s rights, including the rights of survival (to have home, food, family), development rights (to go to school), protection rights (from abuse) and participation rights (freedom of expression, etc.). In the Philippines, children are taught these rights and they are taught to advocate these, even if it means that they will stand up to their parents. This is a way of empowering children.

...In New York, there has been a community effort to create a child-friendly zone. This is a way of creating positive energy. Neighborhood-by-neighborhood initiatives are the way we can improve. Where parents are working two or three jobs, children are not being taken care of....

Because families/communities are different now, maybe we need to create “urban tribes.” These can be places where children get confidence, services, a sense of family and belonging. This could operate as a support service....

...In the Philippines there have been big changes from simply giving children time, listening to them. It sounds very simple, but it makes a big difference....

...Often children are seen as victims, passive objects. We need to consider them as active subjects. Then they become agents of social change for themselves and their communities. Otherwise the adults will always be expected to solve their problems.... When children are marginalized, they take on that identity. When they are able to see themselves in different ways, possibilities are transformed....

We need to create safe havens for children where they can be who they need to be. We can also enlist the help of volunteers, especially intergenerational ones. Gradually, children learn to trust these people.

In the Philippines [in Bahay Tuluyan] the children take responsibility for other children. In order to be able to use older people, there needs to be lots of adjustment, because often there is a mistrust of older people (they were the abusers)....

Often, good intentions are not enough. There needs to be a process of growth and learning as much for adults as for the kids. Especially where adults are also products of the same society (and the same violent socialization) as the children....

Teachers are key players, too. They can have a very big impact on children and may have to be re-educated about how to teach children.

There is no substitute for giving love, care, etc. This is what we need to generate in the neighborhood. The only sustainable way to help kids is to give them something positive.

Some people are quick to label children as deficient or having learning disabilities. Instead there should be more creative ways of reaching kids and of approaching learning, so they
do not become discouraged and can hold onto their aspirations and dreams. Teachers need to support this creative dreaming process…. 

Teaching by rote only accesses one form of intelligence. We have seven or nine intelligences and these are not being developed fully. Therefore, if children do not do well in that one area, they consider themselves failures. It is important that children be allowed to explore the areas they are good at. The only danger with this is that stereotypes can develop, for example that girls are good at nursing while boys can become doctors because they are good at science…. 

Conclusion:
If we’re going to have a sustainable world, neighborhood institutions will need to take initiative. There is a lot of talent in the neighborhoods, and we need to tap this.

From the grassroots level, we also need to look at systemic changes so that children can be valued for the talents they have….

Inculcating values is still the most important thing.

**Topic 12. Too Much Packaging and Consumerism and How It Affects our Global Environment**

Convener: Sara Thomas. Participants: Helen Corbie, Jinny Dorgan, Frances Amando, Barbara Heun, Evelyn Zinyuku, Muriel Young-Williams

Members of the group discussed personal, educational and political actions to address this problem.

Personal actions included: Refusing bags when possible; taking cloth bags to the market; re-using items others are throwing away; emulating poor in Zimbabwe who find unexpected ways to use other people’s trash, such as using used tea bags as a fuel for burning paraffin or collecting bits of wool for blankets.

Educational actions: In Germany, the government sponsors a program to teach environmental awareness and develop habits of recycling in day care and schools.

Political actions: Government-sponsored education programs; legislation to require deposits on all bottles; requiring corporations to reduce packaging; requiring consumers to pay for bags; maintaining re-cycling programs.

**Topic 13. Urban and Rural Cooperation**

Convener: Kathleen Kanet. Participants: Cesar Ledesma, Barbara Heun, Ute Wannig, Peggy Ray, Helen Corbie, Larry Jones, Sara Thomas, Muriel Young-Williams.

There seems to be a growing divide between urban and rural people. There is a need for more contact so that people can see that one is dependent on the other.

Attitudes are very important. For example, urban dwellers dismiss country people as “hicks.” At the same time, they don’t know where their food comes from…. There is a need to bring people together for contact and dialogue.
CIL Germany has focused some of their work on this issue in the past two years. A women’s group from the city joined with a group from a rural area in a poor region that was part of the former East Germany. They were able to get the partners to cross the geographic borders. CIL had one of their international forums in the East German town.

They learned that the relationship opened up the perspectives of city dwellers as well as those of country people. All the women had to listen well and to confront their own illusions about the other side. The urban CIL women found they had to work hard to understand even though they were talking to others from their own country. Sometimes it was painful.

The CIL women came to the conclusion that both regional development is essential. Farmers need markets to stay on their farms. It is a disturbing phenomenon that farmers are moving to cities, creating an imbalance. Industrial farming methods have caused small farmers to lose their farms. Farming has to be made regional and labor intensive to be more sustainable.

Farmers need incentives to stay on their farms, such as contracts with urban dwellers to buy their produce.

**Topic 14. Fair and Sustainable Trade**


Fair and sustainable trade is defined as that which meets all of the following criteria:

- It is environmentally sound, which means it is non-polluting and promotes bio-diversity and the conservation of the integrity of creation;
- It is socially just, which means that it pays just salaries or compensation to the producers. It does not employ cheap child labor and does not exploit the labor of women and the indigenous people;
- It is culturally and gender sensitive, which means that the production processes respect the unique culture of people as well as provide equal benefits and opportunities to women;
- It is economically viable, which means that it can generate surplus income to enable the project to sustain its operation financially and provide additional resources for growth.

…Unfair trade is a product of a colonial system of commerce and trade. This characteristic is still very much present in the domestic markets of the developing countries where people still prefer goods from the developed countries. Fair trade should also seek to change this colonial mentality that regards locally produced goods as inferior.

Fair trade means developing opportunities in both the internal and international markets. In fact, it should first meet the demands of the internal market before it accesses an international market. If the demand for fair trade products is still low in the domestic market, the international market can serve as a booster when local people try to imitate
the behavior of people in rich countries. The international market for a fair trade product can be developed through intensive campaign and developing a network of contacts.

Development programs in developing countries have been very dependent on grant-in-aid mechanisms which are not sustainable. Grant funds for many development programs have already started to dry up. Fair trade projects could generate money to sustain ongoing programs and initiate new ones.

...Fair trade between the north and south can be a two-way process. In the case of the Philippines and Germany, for instance, the Philippines can supply Germany with organic coffee or rice or sugar. On the other hand, the Philippines can import technology, equipment and advice from Germany that is needed in developing community-based enterprises like producing fruit juices as an alternative to Coca Cola and other soda drinks....

...People in the rich countries are becoming aware of the widening gap between the rich and poor countries and its root causes. Many of them want to contribute something positive to reverse the situation. In the USA, the September 11 tragedy has contributed a great deal to further awakening the American people to the disparity in the distribution of wealth among nations....

Fair trade can enhance regional development and create economic exchanges among regions, as for example southeast Asia and Latin America. Inter-country and inter-people connections can make fair trade a sustainable activity that promotes a sustainable world.

**Topic 15. For a Sustainable World, What is Needed Globally and What is Needed Locally?**


Martina Gessner called this group in order to address community-based economic development and its relation to global trade. In her introduction to the group, she referred to concepts in Agenda 21, a document agreed upon by the world's nations at the UN's 1992 environmental summit in Rio de Janeiro. Agenda 21 includes agreements to reduce the chemicals used in refrigeration, to reduce global warming, to protect the rain forests, etc. It advocates community development plans, with a focus on locally based resources, labor, and management. Ecological, social, communal, and economic dimensions of life would all be considered. Following are excerpts from that discussion.

Martina Gessner making a presentation

...Markets tend to be export-oriented now. For the non-industrial countries, the export economies are ruinous because the people cannot meet their basic needs when cash crops for export are the focus of production. In addition, the export monies earned by this
focus are not returned to the communities. This creates a long-term structural problem that it would take communities many years to change. At Rio, the idea was to strengthen the local economy and the inner markets of the countries. How can this be done?

…Small countries do not even have processing equipment to provide products for export. Zimbabwe grows cotton. It is exported as a raw material and it comes back as dresses no one can afford to buy. Zimbabwe needs industries that can make finished goods that can be bought in the country. … Zimbabwe needs technology transfer.

In Zimbabwe there is a level of fear of the unknown. People haven't been socialized to go into business and don't feel it's possible to start one.

There is a need in Zimbabwe for markets in between the local and the global levels. The local community does not consume all that it produces but there's not always a way to get the surplus to market. Sell tomatoes to me, then to people in Harare. Also we are dependent on the seasons. How can we process our mangoes to have them when they are not in season?

Another area of opportunity is to think about products differently. For instance, sweet potatoes can be used to make paper. If we can think like a child, we can invent some new ways of doing things.

There is a need for technology and capital. There needs to be an integrated strategy…. Discussion must go beyond social justice people to those in business. People don't know how to market their products.

How would a person in Zimbabwe find out where in Germany there might be a market for their Zimbabwe product? The internet can be used for information, but it is not organized so that connections can be made between people who make things and markets…. 

…Business people have a model for networking, if we work with business we need to make sure that profits go into communities….

The informal economy lends itself to community-based enterprises like preserving food and child care coops. To move to a bigger market, you need capital and technical infusion. You also have to know more about marketing….

Maybe we need to open up the laws to assist the informal economy…. 


Barbara Heun chats with CIL supporter Albert Gyan
Most of the work which is done day to day is done by women all over the world. Unpaid work means taking care of children and the elderly, housework, volunteer work in the community. The principle that only paid work in the formal sector is productive work has to be challenged. Work in the informal and reproductive sectors should be valued as well.

New relationships between different kinds of work must take into account that the time of full employment in northern countries is over and that southern countries never had that situation at all.

...Many people would like to combine paid work with unpaid work in the community.... There should be the opportunity to contribute time to the neighborhood near your workplace, the place where you spend most of your time....

...In Bahay Tuluyan and Coalition of Services of the Elderly in the Philippines, elderly people take responsibility for a number of street children, sharing their competencies in managing households, cooking, laundry, etc.... This knowledge is recognized and valued.... People are paid for their care-taking and they need the additional income.

It is important to find out what competencies people in the neighborhood have. How can they be used?

Some people need cash compensation. An unpaid exchange system would be one approach, but not for all and in all situations....

New relationships should integrate the individual neighbor, the community, business and NGO (non-governmental organization) or non-profit sectors. For example, an NGO needs material, supplies, and human resources from the business sector, the business sector needs the opportunity to develop the social competencies of employees, neighbors need the chance for some skills training and jobs, which business and/or NGOs can provide....

In order to link people, it is necessary to create an awareness of how the different sectors are connected in a given neighborhood. Networks must be established. It is helpful to look for existing models of a balanced exchange among neighbors; for example wedding traditions in Mexico and funeral traditions in the Philippines where neighbors contribute food, flowers, accommodation, etc., so that family members can focus on ceremony and feelings.

What would help? Local government could play a role. Women take responsibility in many places.

It is important to negotiate with business sector to set up combinations of part-time work and community service.
Topic 17: Drug Abuse and Addiction

Drug types: Cocaine, crack, alcohol, medication abuse, heroin, glue and opium. There and other drugs are available all over the world; well, in most “civilized” communities anyway.

Germany has a very big problem in dealing with drugs. They have set up rehabilitation centers and special hospitals to help the addicts, but this does not seem to help in stamping out the use of drugs. Government does fund these, but it does not go far enough. To complete the program, the communities have to be involved, too, if this program is to work. But how do you get all the people to be involved? Everyone seems to think it is a problem for those families whose members are involved in drug abuse. Prolonged therapy and rehabilitation are impossible tasks to accomplish alone, so we need civic society support groups to get really involved. Dedication should be the main criteria to look for in the leaders.

In Africa, drugs are beginning to be a big problem, especially in street kids, who are seen sniffing glue to get high. Really hard drugs are beginning to be available in clubs. Some innocent patrons of these clubs become addicted without knowing it because their drinks are doctored. They then find themselves going to the same place for no apparent reason and are soon engaged in drugs, which then are introduced to them to try and experiment with. And soon they are hooked. Nigeria is in a real bad state with drug trafficking. Many Nigerians are in jails all over the world, but this does not deter any of them. Is it poverty or simple greed that leads people to do these runs?

To stamp out the drug problem, we need to look into large corporations that use funds from the drug barons of the world. Simply passing anti-drug laws without commitment from the government to investigate corporations involved in the drug network will not make the slightest difference in the drug problems. Money laundering is rampant in most corporations, but you do not hear anyone complaining because people employed in these corporations, even when aware of this, chose to turn a blind eye to the goings on. Funding to stop this should be made by the governments with help from United Nations because this problem is very much international.

... It also appears that once something is outlawed, the attraction really begins. Should we make it legal to purchase drugs off the shelf and also control the price to ensure that no one is exploited by the drug suppliers? Would that make it less attractive to the suppliers as well as the users?

There are untold problems attributable to drug abuse, e.g.:
- breakdown of families
- mental problems in new-born babies due to drug abuse during pregnancy
- loss of employment due to drug abuse
- our jails are full of drug users who might otherwise be gainfully employed but are turning into hardened criminals
- life expectancy has been lowered due to the unhealthy use of drugs
- criminal activities due to the need to support the drug habit
- families’ inability to send their children to school because parents are supporting their drug habits
- increase in suicides
- congenital deformities due to drug use by parents
- child delinquencies due to availability of drugs to children

One way to assist in the elimination of drug abuse, would be to make a complete program that would try to incorporate the addicted person into the community the whole way, not just rehabilitate but follow up until the person is really free from the habit, employed and able to sustain his or her and family.

**Topic 18: Entrepreneurship Among the Economically Depressed**

*Convener: Virginia Dorgan. Participants: Evelyn Zinyuku, Ndaipaneyi Mukwena, Janice Hendricks, Catherine Scerri, Frances Amando, Connie Newton*

Virginia Dorgan

What is entrepreneurship? A creative design of some activity that continues over time. Does it have to be for profit? No. Can it be volunteer work? Yes. It needs vision and discipline and both need to be sustained.

The economic collateral/opportunities should depend on the resources and needs of the community…. We need to ask what would be the benefit of the investment not only for an individual, but for the community.

In Zimbabwe, there are people with money who are financing others and holding others goods as collateral. This is helping a lot of people….

Micro credit was described by Connie Newton who has been involved in a project in which U.S. women raised funds in order to make loans to Guatemalan women who created small businesses. This was not a banking institution, Connie explained, but a way of extending cooperative activity….

**A Briefing at the United Nations**

Participants visited the United Nations, where they were briefed by Zehra Aydin Sipos, Major Groups Relationships Coordinator of the World Summit on Sustainable Development Secretariat. She talked about her work in planning the summit, which was to take place in Johannesburg, South Africa from September 2 – 11, 2002. Peggy Ray took notes, summarized here.

Ms. Sipos expressed a sense of urgency about this Summit. She said the environmental situation of the planet was so dire that there was little time to waste in talk. She hoped that this summit would result in commitments to fast action.
Business and non-governmental organizations were to be invited to take part in the deliberations in addition to representatives from governments. "Globalization," she said, was not a factor in the 1992 Rio Summit, but it is now and the question for her is how to make it work for sustainability. While globalization means that people are better connected, it is penetrating all parts of the globe and some people’s rights are being trampled on.

It is important to deal with poverty. Sustainability requires equity. There are issues of Third World debt: Should this be canceled? Restructured? She was hopeful there would be some movement on this at the Summit.

Changing the wasteful production and consumption patterns of northern countries might result in more modest living standards. This is essential and could result in both economic and environmental gains.

A key area, she emphasized, was to bring about changes in attitudes and mentality through religion and philosophy. She did not go into details on this issue.

Conclusion

Actions by Country

Participants gathered by country of origin to discuss what actions they would like to take following the workshop.

USA

CIL-USA
1. Assertive participation in the process of the Global Summit on Sustainable Development in August.
2. Produce a document of the learnings, reflections, values, actions of this workshop that can be shared in the CIL network, with other groups and funders/decision makers.
3. Facilitate and communicate the edited version of the workshop document through the website.
4. Use the website for the communications of each group and to document what is being done on the local level for one year.
5. Continue living room dialogues about issues of fair trade.

Harlem church groups
1. A potluck for churches in Harlem to communicate the learnings of this workshop...local and global.
2. Children’s issues are most important in the Harlem area. We’d work on them.
3. Develop a plan with those who come for the potluck.

Germany
1. Urban/rural exposures for youth focused on economic interests.
2. Rural and urban dialogue and partnerships.
3. Try to blend economic and social capital.
4. Education and learning for women and children will continue.
5. Develop new professional profiles for urban and rural work.
6. Regional development. Circular economies in rural and urban areas. Define a small geographic area and define an economy that is sustainable for the local...
area...including what is needed for the global economy.
7. Health. How can we be healthy in urban and rural areas? Networking with local markets to have healthy food.
8. Dialogue with children from marginalized families. The group members would educate in a global context.

**Zimbabwe**
1. Looking for self-sustaining, empowering, groups to work with
2. Education. To uplift the awareness of self and others.
3. Education on environmental awareness.
4. Begin partnerships and networks both with CIL and in our country.
5. Identify alternative means of assuring and sustaining basic needs.
6. Work with churches to eliminate violence and promote justice and peace.
7. We want to start fair trade and locally sustainable projects.
8. Propose and lobby for public policy to address issues of violence and justice.
9. Education about co-existence with all other species in the eco-system. Focus on the trees.
10. Continue education for cultural and intergenerational respect.
11. Education to recognize that we are not objects of change, but can be initiators of change.
12. Uphold the traditional values and people in the extended family who contribute to the health of the community...especially the elders...and how to address the problems of AIDS
13. Continue to define sustainability...because it is changing.

**The Philippines**

**Bahay Tuluyan**

**Local**
1. Find out more about recycling in the area.
2. Integrate environmental programs into our curriculum for our children.
3. More parents in our day care program.
4. Have more popular education.
5. Community Day with families
6. Become more involved with the school

**Global**
1. Support fair trade projects in our international networks.
2. Support initiatives on environmental programs.
3. Share programs and dialogues with our international partners.
4. Promote the conventions on the Rights of the Child.
5. Strengthen existing networks.

**Concluding Ritual**

**Blessing of All Corners**
(A prayer used during the sunset ceremony of the “International Youth Conference Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children” in Manila, 2000.
Author: Ma. Rhodora Veloso, the Philippines)
(Face the North)
Hail, angels of the North
Shower us with your reason
And fullness of grace
For our fulfillment

(Face the East)
Hail, angels of the East
Grant us your New Birthing
And fullness of grace
For our fulfillment

(Face the South)
Hail, angels of the South
Pour upon us your power
And fullness of grace
For our fulfillment

(Face the West)
Hail, angels of the West
Pour upon us your power
And fullness of grace
For our fulfillment

(Face the north)
Hail, angels of our Ancestors
Thee who dwell in the North
Interweave our destinies
And embrace us in our oneness.

(Stand upright, aware of the feet touching the ground)
Hail, angels of the Underworld
With you keep us grounded
In the fullness of your grace
For our fulfillment.

( Stretch arms to the heavens)
Hail, angels of the Higher World
Bring us to the your eternal realm
In the fullness of your grace
For our fulfillment.

(Arms down)
Hail, angels of the Middle World
Create in us your incarnation
In the fullness of your grace
For our fulfillment

(Arms Abreast)
Hail, angels about
Rain upon us your infinite blessings
In the fullness of your grace
For our fulfillment

(Arms down and eyes closed)
Hail, angels within
Bless us
In the fullness of your grace
For our fulfillment

Let us now pause for a moment to bless and heal the child within us.
The Workshop: Days 7 to 10

These days featured field trips and a culminating event on Martin Luther King Day at St. Joseph’s Church in Harlem.

Participants attended the Space Show and studied exhibits at the Rose Center for Earth and Space. Here they were reminded of the how tiny and vulnerable a speck is our tiny blue planet in the vast universe.

In lower Manhattan, they visited the Museum of the American Indian. Here were some fascinating examples of how an indigenous people integrated work with art and society in their crafts and way of life. They also visited Ground Zero, where participants were touched by tributes to the people lost in the World Trade Center disaster.

At St. Stephen’s of Hungary, participants joined families at a luncheon and dance party celebrating 25th and 50th wedding anniversaries. A panel of parishioners who contributed unpaid, volunteer work to the community described their programs: Providing a shelter for homeless men one night a week; providing companionship and help with shopping and household chores for homebound senior citizens; assisting young pregnant women at a nearby residence; organizing social events and dances for families of children undergoing medical treatment and for disabled adults.

Finally participants celebrated the conclusion of the work on Martin Luther King’s birthday with a ceremony at St. Joseph’s Church in Harlem. After enjoying delicious lunch prepared by women of the parish, members of the core group evaluated the workshop.

Workshop Evaluation:

How have the events of this workshop enhanced our building a sustainable world? What other suggestions do you have?

Janice: We each came bearing our own neighborhood. It was like a potluck. We put our own individual neighborhood in the pot and we got a much bigger world. I think that is how it happens and we get a more sustainable world.
Jinny: A significant learning for me. When we were doing the values, I spoke with Lily… and she mentioned that several of the values did not sit in her gut, because they did not come from her culture. My great desire is to start to see what people of other cultures see.

Evelyn: One of the things that we talk about is that we may come from different neighborhoods, but we all have a lot in common. We learn from the perspectives of the other’s neighborhood. So maybe we don’t look to change a neighborhood, but support it to be the best it can be. The big problem is to help people sustain themselves in the very best way… not to change them. Then to share ideas.

Sara: There are people from a lot of communities from around the world. They have their passions to better their neighborhoods. Sharing your passions, your hopes and your desires is powerful. What I want people to take away are actions…a grocery list of what you want to do, and how you will communicate this with one another. Conversation only goes so far.

Frances: In my area we are connected to a great many people, but we still need to reach out to others and connect the groups.

Cesar: I have always been a student of Teilhard de Chardin. The transformation of man…what has happened to human beings and the transformations of their communities. I learned that there are situations that are able to bring about the best from us… new insights, new energies. There are also situations that cause us to stagnate. These days that have brought us together have provided a process for a big leap. We have mixed and blended in a way that creates something new in us. I have been renewed as a person and have a new energy to contributing to the process to bring about a better world. It is difficult to evaluate in terms of evaluating, like a list. But I wanted to describe what has happened in me and to us in this past 10 days.

Ute: I want to continue with what Evelyn has said. I contemplated what is happening here. What does it mean to me. In one way it clearly did not challenge my intellect to the fullest… not deeply, dialectically. On the other hand, there has been something it was more freeing and there was a new ability to let it happen. The insight may be not to change the other… but to allow something to happen in this global or local neighborhood… to be together, become near with one another… because I do not try to change the other. Thus I wouldn’t go into aggressive, intellectual intrusions. It will take me longer to evaluate this. Is it helpful short term, mid term. How does it help us to get things done???

Barbara: When I play with the word neighborhood… I do it in the context of this group. Some of my experience in the last 10 days is that this neighborhood, this group, is like my neighborhood at home. Some are close. Some are not. Some I ask what you mean, I try to understand my neighbors… their experience… in the positive sense their experience of diversity. The experience is too near to make a systematic evaluation. I have pictures in my mind. What makes it easy or difficult to work together?

Martina: My thoughts are also about how we experienced neighborhoods and neighbors in this group… learning about the differences. In the discussion in the action group the challenge that I take home is on the one hand to create relationships without creating new hierarchies… and how to respect the experiences of the new people coming together.
Helen: I was thinking that some of our work in coming together is preaching to the converted...about a sustainable world. We don't have to convert each other. The process, that we experimented, this open space to empower each of us to be leaders. It was a challenge. I think it was empowering. We're used to structures that don't always welcome or cherish or acknowledge our particular ideas. This process gave us a way to take back to our neighborhoods. This very collegial process has been a very helpful thing in working with people of different cultures and experiences. The values aren't universal. We make assumptions that people haven't had those values and we haven't recognized. By having this open space and ability to share...we can say those aren't my values or my dreams, but I can respect them. Whether we have challenged each other, I don't know. If the purpose was to come together to share, have insights, and have a new process to take back to our communities....I think this has succeeded.

Lily: When I was invited to attend this conference, I was kind of wondering what's going to happen...who are they. I wondered what would I share with “old” people. It is really sharing that I have brought the children's issues to this work. It is refreshing to be in a group where they will just listen to you...your ideas, your experience. Then we see the interconnections. Then we can cooperate. Here I am with 24 other issues, and we seem to say that we can meet each other here...we are now a community, our neighborhood. This is the beauty. It is how I can sustain being a part of the community.

Ndaiapaneyi. I read the communications about who is in the dialogue. I thought I did not have anything in common with the people here. So I evaluated each one. Then I came and talked about the trees. In my environment, we do not talk about the trees, but about the homes there. I found it difficult to understand what values were. After a long time I find we use different words but have the same topics. The one culture that I found in common is that we are all serving people who are voiceless or less privileged. What I can take home is the physical contact, the new relationships, the friendships. Everyone has been taking photos of Lady DI [Ndaiapaneyi]. This was absent before. Now we have the real relationship to take home.. the contributions of each one. The spirit of volunteer work really moved me...volunteering for national service.

Connie: Mother Earth has been a part of our relationship, our conversations, our neighborhoods...more strongly and in a more inspiring way than I have experienced before. I'm grateful.

Laine: I want to share, I used to think of myself as a patient person. Now I think I am more impatient. One of the things I have enjoyed with you is the listening. Maybe I'll learn to listen. I've been involved in peace and justice for a long time and have wanted to see results. Maybe I can be more patient. Maybe revolutionary change can happen in other ways. I often look at macro systems...but this has given me a perspective from the community, the neighborhood. I know that I don't have to only focus on the big picture now. I can see what is happening locally and can work to have both go together at once. I did not used to know anyone in the Philippines and Zimbabwe. But, when I read about those countries now, I know that my neighbor is there. Because there is a direct relationship now it is real for me.

Kathleen: Do we think our way into new ways of acting? Or, do we act our way into new ways of thinking? How does change take place? The older I get the more I think that it's feelings that get in the way of change. This workshop affirmed a new way of experiencing
a community and maybe changes will come more easily from this kind of process. It is challenging. On the practical level, I see that “Living Simply” is very difficult. We have been using Styrofoam plates and cups so we wouldn’t have to buy dishes and wash them. I’m going back to my little community, Incarcerated Mothers where we use lots of paper and Styrofoam and see what can be done.

Peggy: One of the advantages of the open space for me has been that it’s been easier than usual for me to put out my thinking. I’m a person who doesn’t do that. It worked for me to have a space to speak, to stumble, to say what’s on my mind without worrying too much about how it came out. It was also important for me to think about the reciprocity between rural and urban economies. The idea that the city has something to give to the surrounding countryside, not just be a parasite, was a relief to me.

Sara: I want to thank Jinny for connecting all these neighborhoods in New York. I feel really lucky to learn. This has touched on some great neighborhoods in New York.

Catherine: It’s been invaluable to have this interaction with so many cultures.

**Farewells**

At a farewell party, participants dined and were treated to music by the jazz duo of Leo Corbie and Roni Ben-Hur. Martina Gessner presented Virginia Dorgan with photographs of a project completed by CIL-Germany and partners in the Philippines. It was hard to say good-bye after 10 days of close and rewarding involvement.
The core group poses at the Museum of the American Indian