

*NORTH-SOUTH:  
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS  
AND PRODUCER INTERACTION  
IN A COOPERATIVE MODEL  
FOR TELEVISION PRODUCTION*

by

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## ABSTRACT

Government deficit reduction among G7 countries, including Canada, and dwindling public funding for international development activities have meant severe cutbacks to international development aid agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). However, global environment imperatives dictate that the political, economic and social inequities between countries of the economic south and north be addressed.

The thesis examines and evaluates the Canadian international development television series, *North-South*, as a learning resource to help counteract Canadian withdrawal of support for countries of the economic south. It also studies the role that NGOs played in *North-South* and the factors that influenced their participation.

Through interviews with British Columbia NGOs about *North-South* and a retrospective of the series, the thesis concludes that *North-South* provided only an introduction to the topics presented. In addition, NGOs were severely underrepresented in both its production and utilization. The thesis identifies the NGO lack of interaction, not just as the result of little publicity and contact over the series, but as a failure to dispel NGO hesitancy towards the use of the television medium beyond community cablevision and crisis and disaster promotion.

In the light of the research findings, the thesis calls for all parties to examine their commitment to the public communication of development issues, as witnessed by their involvement in *North-South*. The thesis suggests that if Canadian NGOs wish to

take advantage of a series like *North-South* for the exchange of information between their northern and southern constituencies, they must overcome their historical bias that emphasizes funding over development education priorities and fails to acknowledge the interrelationship between communication choices and effective public education. In turn, the producers of such programming must share control over both content and distribution and more aggressively seek the involvement of NGOs and other likely-interest group in partnership if they want to increase audience outreach and the education potential of their material.

In addition to posing the hiring of an NGO Outreach Coordinator to facilitate collaboration, three models concerning publicity, audience participation and programming strategies are presented with a focus to developing an active relationship between 'development television' producers and their targeted communities.

## DEDICATION

I would like to thank my family and women friends for their never-failing encouragement around my thesis.

I'm blessed with a wonderful mother and am especially grateful to her for her patience and support that saw me through the last five years. This work is as much hers as mine.

I'm fortunate to have as a friend, mentor and colleague, Peter Flemington, who had the courage to develop *North-South*. His willingness to encourage me in my research and accept my criticism about the project is a tribute to his ability both as a teacher and listener.

**DISCLAIMER**

To meet the requirements of this thesis footnotes are included. However, further bibliography sourcing is not available due to collective agreements with VISION TV and IDRC with respect to confidentiality and the disclosure of privileged information.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

*North-South* was a nationally-syndicated television series produced for six seasons from 1988 to 1994 that aired weekly on VISION TV, Canada's Faith Network, a national satellite-to-cable television service. It was a collaborative venture of VISION TV, Metavidea Inc. (an independent production company), Radio-Quebec, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), and the Public Affairs Branch of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).<sup>1</sup>

*North-South* aimed to introduce viewers to development issues within countries of the economic south.<sup>2</sup> Broadly stated, the intent of the program was to establish: "...a tradition of taking a hard look at disturbing issues while at the same time providing a hopeful glimpse at how Canadians are necessary to creative solutions."<sup>3</sup>

The production of *North-South* was an attempt to address the global issue of sustainable and equitable development through the powerful medium of television. Though many of the dreams and expectations envisioned for *North-South* were never realized, the program merits review and consideration, both for what it did accomplish

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<sup>1</sup> The term "*North-South* producers" used in this thesis refers to these organizations collectively.

<sup>2</sup> 'Economic south' refers to countries with low per capita income. Similar terms used for this distinction might be 'Third World' or 'underdeveloped countries.' 'Economic north' refers to high per capita income countries. A similar terms might be 'developed countries.' None of these terms is particularly satisfactory as countries move from condition to condition; however, 'economic north' and 'economic south' are the terms commonly used at present.

<sup>3</sup> Richelle Wiseman, *Great Viewer's Guide* (Toronto: VISION TV, September/October/November 1990), p. 2.

and the lessons that can be learned from the struggle to connect various societal groups in partnership to promote public development education. *North-South* has been the only English-speaking international development series produced on a continuing basis for North American television. As such it is invaluable as a model for future television productions that seek to inform about the complexity of development problems and cooperative solutions through a north/south dialogue.

This thesis considers *North-South* over the course of a three-year investigation between 1991 and 1994 in the light of the expectations for the series as voiced by Peter Flemington, Director of Programming for VISION TV, in his submission to CIDA to attract year-one funding for the program. In comparing *North-South* to other offerings on mainstream Canadian media, Flemington saw the series as moving beyond the usual crisis and disaster television exposé on development issues to a presentation of the "systemic causes of underdevelopment."<sup>4</sup> In his words, "this proposal [*North-South*] represents a substantial move to reach a much larger constituency and to fill the existing media gap on a regular, ongoing basis."<sup>5</sup>

The focus of the thesis investigation is twofold. First, to examine and evaluate *North-South* as a learning resource for development education. In other words, how much information was *North-South* willing to provide to challenge the existing patterns of economic growth and political control that threaten environmentally sound

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<sup>4</sup> Peter Flemington, "The Media Context" in *Proposal re: North-South* (Toronto: VISION TV, April 4, 1988), p. 5. Flemington and I share a similar perspective on the "systemic causes of underdevelopment," that is, that current social, political and economic practices put profit before human need.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

development? The issue of equity in decision-making between the economic north and south is fundamental to any such discussion, as is the moral and ethical responsibility of both nations and individuals to take action to counter the magnitude of ecological disaster facing us. Second, to trace the interaction between non-governmental organizations (NGOs)<sup>6</sup> and *North-South* producers as it relates to production content and viewer development. If one considers, as *North-South* producers did, that NGOs should have been among *North-South*'s most supportive and committed audiences, then what is most striking from the research data is that ten of the twenty-two British Columbia NGOs interviewed had never heard about *North-South*. Startling results are also found in a 1993 Decima Research study commissioned by IDRC, which revealed that after five years on air, *North-South* wasn't well-known to respondents drawn from IDRC's own mailing list, although IDRC was the major funder of *North-South* from season two onwards.<sup>7</sup> Such data easily leads to the presumption that, if *North-South* was not recognized within sponsoring and international development communities then, probably, *North-South* was not reaching a broader Canadian audience.

IDRC's immediate reaction to the Decima study results was to withdraw funding for *North-South* and concentrate its shrinking budgetary dollars instead on two

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<sup>6</sup> Tim Brodhead, Brent Herbert-Copley, with Anne-Marie Lambert, Research Associate, *Bridges of Hope? Canadian Voluntary Agencies and the Third World* (Ottawa: The North-South Institute, 1988), p. x. As defined by this book, "...the term non-governmental organization (NGO) refers exclusively to any voluntary, non-profit agency involved in the field of international development cooperation, or in education and policy advocacy activities related to international development."

<sup>7</sup> Dondy, found in *Decima Research* (December 14, 1993), p. 1. The research indicates that of 133 respondents, only 6.8% watched *North-South* as "frequently/often" as possible, 24% "occasionally," 32% "seldom," and 33.1% "never."

international Agenda 21-based<sup>8</sup> television projects already in research and development — WETV, The Global Access Television Service and the international co-production series, *Agenda 21*. With the cessation of sponsorship, *North-South* collapsed. What can be learned from the *North-South* experience to help these and other international development programs succeed as consortium attempts to bring the issues of sustainability and development into the living rooms of Canadians?

Research from the first face-to-face visit with the British Columbia NGOs led to the conclusion that the program provided a weak introductory vehicle to issues concerning the economic south. In sum, the series presented a limited learning experience about the unequal relationship between north and south and the complexity of sustainable development. The information *North-South* provided failed to explicitly present "...[the] analyses of impediments to genuine development...in the Third World and their relationships to First World affluence...[to engender] attitudes which accept global interdependence as an irrefutable fact of life upon which action must be based...[and to] stimulate constructive social change by motivating citizens to address both short and long-term development problems...."<sup>9</sup> This includes suggesting the necessary institutional and personal actions which Canadians must undertake to change

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<sup>8</sup> David Nostbakken, *Ventures in Development Partnerships* (Ottawa: IDRC), p. 3. In 1992, the Government of Canada approved Agenda 21, the global plan for sustainable development put forward at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Prime Minister Mulroney appointed IDRC as Canada's official agency in that initiative. Agenda 21 considers "...public education and public awareness to be central issues in mobilizing support for sustainable development..." and recognizes the exchange of information between north and south, particularly through television and radio, to be crucial to that process. In doing so, Agenda 21 calls for "...countries in cooperation with the scientific community [to] establish ways of employing modern communication technologies for effective public outreach."

<sup>9</sup> Larry Minear, "The Other Missions of NGOs: Education and Advocacy" in 15, Supplement *World Development* (Washington: World Development Institute, 1987), p. 201.

the relationship imbalance (e.g., forming coalitions between social sectors to readdress the inequity by influencing public policy,<sup>10</sup> examining qualitative versus quantitative economic growth as both individual and collective choices, etc.).

The results from the second interview (by phone and fax) contains promising suggestions about using programs such as *North-South* to redefine media approaches on international development issues. The first interaction seemed to have sparked increased interest in the making of connections between the media and NGOs and for nearly half of them, it affected positively their use of *North-South*.

David Nostbakken, the then-Director of Communications for IDRC, proposed a tantalizing theory about the lack of NGO response to *North-South*. He speculates that, "[NGOs] need to be educated in their own interest [about VISION TV and the power of television]".<sup>11</sup> NGO blindness regarding television's potential for supporting NGO outreach was a major stumbling block to their involvement in *North-South*. It is supported by evidence in the second study that reveals, although fifteen of seventeen British Columbia NGO respondents were personally and professionally committed to using television for development education, all but one ranked their professional use of television third behind print and radio. This led Peter Flemington to conclude the need to hire an NGO Outreach Coordinator to "crack the NGO community[']s reluctance to

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<sup>10</sup> Dennis Howlett, "Social Movement Coalitions: New Possibilities for Social Change," *Canadian Dimension* (November/December 1989), p. 44.

<sup>11</sup> Tammy Carriere, "North-South Minutes" in *Consortium Funding for Development Television* (Ottawa: IDRC, January 23, 1992), p. 3.

get involved with television programming."<sup>12</sup> Such a person would have provided a direct link between the NGOs and *North-South* and would have represented the first step in a much broader process required to legitimize *North-South* as a significant development education resource.

The thesis research reveals various other factors that affected *North-South's* opportunity to maximize public outreach by using television — the broadcast medium by which most Canadians receive their information. I will argue, however, that responsibility for *North-South's* failure to mature into an effective development education tool ultimately lay in the failure of producers and NGOs to work together on *North-South* to achieve their objectives for sustainable and equitable development.

When evaluating whether or not *North-South* was a worthwhile venture, it is important to consider both qualitative and quantitative indicators. For IDRC, CIDA, and the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC), the rationalizations about participation in *North-South* related specifically to market considerations. Karen Spierkel, Director of Public Information Program at IDRC, gave four pragmatic reasons for IDRC's withdrawal from *North-South*: (a) IDRC felt *North-South* was not delivering a broad enough audience for IDRC and its research; (b) it was offering only Canadian exposure; (c) there was no partnership to share with IDRC in the funding of *North-South* or to help *North-South* achieve some of its production objectives; and (d) *North-South* was outdated. However, even Peter Flemington, the most philosophically committed player in *North-South*, would have withdrawn VISION's support for *North-*

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<sup>12</sup> Peter Flemington, Notes (May 27, 1993), p. 1.



*South* at the end of the 1993-1994 season (causing its demise) had IDRC not pulled out. His written depiction of a *North-South* just "lying there breathing"<sup>13</sup> expressed his frustration over the failure of IDRC, CIDA and NGOs to fund *North-South* 'enhancements'<sup>14</sup> and help the series realize its potential as a learning resource for international development.

I will further argue that it was in the struggle between "the production intention [and the] articulation of that intent"<sup>15</sup> that the possibility existed for *North-South* to become an effective learning resource. I postulate that significant inclusion of NGOs in a non-exclusive co-producer relationship with *North-South* would have introduced the skills and knowledge necessary for developing program content capable of challenging existing north/south patterns of interaction that still benefit the status quo. It might also have provided the constituency to increase audience numbers and funding possibilities for both VISION TV and *North-South*.

With a more consultative organizational model and education of NGOs about VISION TV in particular, and television, in general, a common vision of *North-South* might have emerged from producers and NGOs. This cohesive vision, in turn, might

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<sup>13</sup> Peter Flemington, Notes (April 16, 1993).

<sup>14</sup> Peter Flemington and Leo Rampen to the Public Affairs Branch, Canadian International Development Agency. *Proposal regarding North-South with Peter Trueman on VISION TV Season 2: 1989-1990* (Toronto: VISION TV, March 20, 1989), p. 8. 'Enhancements' refers to a set of outreach initiatives designed by Peter Flemington and Leo Rampen at the end of season one of *North-South* to make *North-South* more appealing to NGOs and the development constituency at large. See Chapter Three: A History of *North-South*, Season Two: 1989-1990.

<sup>15</sup> G. Thompson, "Interdisciplinary Case-Study Programmes" cited in Tony Bates and Margaret Gallagher (Eds.), *Improving the Effectiveness of Open University Television Case-Studies and Documentaries* (London: Open University, 1977), p. 24.

have ensured a commitment by both to the long-term planning of the series to help *North-South* become the significant catalyst of "the broadest possible public participation and political will in development-related study and action" that Flemington had hoped for.<sup>16</sup> In more practical terms, this means that both *North-South* and activities surrounding it could provide enough information, critical analysis of the systemic causes of underdevelopment, and opportunity for viewers to act upon that knowledge in a number of ways. For example, this means encouraging a variety of "participation" ranging from viewing *North-South* more and contributing funding and volunteer support of NGO development work, to engendering work in coalition to influence government recognition of equity demands from the economic south, to reducing personal product consumption that affects the environment, etc.

The picture painted so far of *North-South* is a fairly bleak one. However, there emerges from the retrospective a more positive overview of the series. In fact, *North-South's* accomplishments are quite amazing given the financial and societal obstacles the small production consortium had faced in the North American consumer-driven television market. In a period of government cutbacks and donor restraint, cooperation had led to the production of a twenty-six part series each year (at a cost of \$300,000 per series or approximately \$11,500 per episode) for five years. During that period *North-South* saw, in addition to its VISION TV multiple airings, partial sales to ACCESS Alberta, Saskatchewan Educational TV, and to the Discovery Network in the

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<sup>16</sup> Flemington, "The *North-South* TV Project" in *Proposal re: North-South* (Toronto: VISION TV, April 4, 1988), p. 3.

United States. A *North-South* development week special, *A Common Future? Canada and the Third World* was co-produced with CCIC (with some CIDA and OXFAM monies), and reciprocal relationships with NGOs such as UNESCO were slowly unfolding. In later years, three to five programs per series were shot on location in the economic south. These involved local crews and local NGOs in north/south collaboration on *North-South*. This movement towards southern production was especially significant given the southern NGOs' call for access to the northern airwaves at the Montreal conference which founded WETV in 1992.

Given the strengths and weaknesses of *North-South*, I propose in Chapter Ten three models concerning publicity, audience participation and programming strategies with a focus to developing an active relationship between 'development television' producers and their targeted communities.

### Section One: Thesis Questions

As *North-South* was the only continuing international development television series in North America, how then does one evaluate *North-South*? Other than those standards which the program sets for itself, what measures of effectiveness or success should apply?

This study evaluates *North-South* in terms of the following questions:

- 1) Could the program change conventional attitudes held by the general public toward international development issues?
- 2) Was the program an appropriate vehicle for developing a cumulative knowledge base about the causes and consequences of political, economic, and social linkages between north and south?

- 3) How deeply was *North-South* able to delve into these issues and north/south relationships given an unknown, amorphous audience?
- 4) What was the effect, if any, on content and production given IDRC's and CIDA's positions as government-funded institutions?
- 5) How did the relationship among the producers affect *North-South's* content and evolution?
- 6) Was there sufficient shared discourse to overcome organizational differences and objectives that might have had an impact upon *North-South's* ability to effectively communicate the complexity of sustainable development, both to a television audience and to organizations with an interest in international development?
- 7) Had *North-South* really reached the end of its productive life when it ceased production with its 1993-1994 season?
- 8) If long-term funding had been guaranteed, might the series eventually have evolved to realize the producer's various expectations and dreams?
- 9) What is the significance to the educational, awareness-building, and advocacy effects of the series of involving, or not, NGOs in *North-South's* production and use?
- 10) Would more active collaboration between *North-South* and NGOs, capitalizing on each others' strengths, have helped promote mutual development education interests and overcome some of the funding and outreach bottlenecks confronting both?
- 11) Should NGOs rethink their priorities and concentrate on information distribution rather than focusing on funding, will there be a television window open for their participation?
- 12) If television programming like the *Agenda 21* series develops in relative social sector isolation, how can it be expected, as IDRC hopes, to make a difference in achieving the critical mass capable of influencing public opinion on issues of sustainable and equitable development.<sup>17</sup> Or do new definitions of partnership need to be developed around the use of television for development education?

This thesis attempts to answer these questions through an examination of *North-South*.

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<sup>17</sup> *Media Unit Strategy, 1993-1996* (Ottawa: IDRC), p. 2.

## Section Two: Methodological Approach

Originally, the study was to have been based on interviews with viewers (who had written to IDRC or VISION TV about the program), with persons in key positions within non-government organizations (NGOs), and with members of the international development components of faith groups and educational institutions in the Lower Mainland area of British Columbia. Once in the field, it became apparent to me that many NGO respondents had limited or no knowledge of *North-South*. As a result, the original methodology was revised. Due to the increased amount of time required to complete many of the interviews, the study was refocused on the NGO community.

The final survey group included representatives from twenty-two British Columbia NGOs. Input concerning the questionnaire design was solicited from professors at Fraser Valley College, Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia. The initial study was carried out between January and April of 1991, and follow-up communication occurred between the fall of 1993 and the spring of 1994.

In the initial study, in cases where the subject was unfamiliar with the program, I showed one episode of *North-South* on video tape before the evaluation was conducted. Each participant, once familiar with *North-South*, was questioned according to a structured interview protocol that I had designed (see Appendix I).

The study sought to examine the effect of *North-South* on the development of an emerging relationship, that is, the creation of linkages (social, political, economic) between the Canadian audience and those living in the economic south. This is with a

particular focus to recognizing that our global survival depends on cooperation and mutual respect for environmental and economic growth issues. In order to determine the effect of the series on this relationship, various measures were used in the protocol design. The questions were designed to assess the development education potential of *North-South*, with attention to the following major concerns: (a) did the program just provide an introduction to the countries and peoples of the economic south; (b) did it provide an introduction to the concept of the interdependency of the north and south; (c) did it promote a recognition of the underlying social, political and economic changes that must occur in the economic north; and (d) did it make clear the role of political will and private action in the course of sustainable international development? Finally, did the program stimulate action on the part of individual viewers?

Though the study tried to account for external variables when evaluating how much was learned from watching *North-South*, these variables often took on undue importance in the evaluation of the program when the show had been previously "infrequently" or "never" watched by respondents. This called into question the reliability of data from such respondents. Thus, it became important to separate responses according to the number of times people had already seen segments of the series. An oversight may also have affected the data concerning responses to question(s) regarding "Scheduling."<sup>18</sup> I forgot to mention the Saturday airing on VISION TV of *North-South*.

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<sup>18</sup> See Chapter Five, Section One: Scheduling.

Respondent feedback was collected concerning evaluation of the series, suggestions for meeting the individual NGO organization's needs, and programming possibilities (both for possible future topics and the use of materials already in existence). This led to VISION TV sending out the VISION TV *Great Viewer's Guide* to the respondents and for IDRC literature to go directly to the British Columbia Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC) instead of through the national CCIC office. The study thus became a mechanism for interaction between the respondent and the producer. Such interaction is, more often than not, an anomaly in the world of television, particularly network television. Other than during the ratings period, audience evaluation is rarely sought.

### **The Problem at Hand**

A significant number of individuals representing B.C. NGOs (twelve out of twenty-two interviewed), had "never" watched *North-South*. Despite the fact that the series was in its third year in 1991 and the respondents held major positions within organizations concerned with international development, ten study participants were unaware of *North-South*.

This posed fundamental problems regarding the reliability of generalizations from the survey findings. The twelve respondents who had not viewed *North-South* previously based their reactions about content, format and host on the one *North-South* tape that I had shown to them rather than on opinions which might have been formed

after having watched the series on an ongoing basis. Some of the responses reflect this unforeseen problem.

Correspondence with Paddy Coulter of the International Broadcasting Trust in London, England, about *North-South* flagged another issue that needed consideration but which was not addressed in the initial study. He raised the possibility that the NGO experience and weak backing of *North-South* were not solely the result of deficient IDRC and VISION TV public relations efforts about the series. In his opinion, NGOs also have to explain their lack of support for *North-South*.

I must admit that I found it shocking to discover that nearly 50% of the NGOs you interviewed had not heard of *North-South*. If it was useful I could suggest some of our production initiatives which work here in the UK (and obtain NGO funding) and which may have some relevance in the rather different environment of Canada.<sup>19</sup> However I would want to know first whether the Canadian NGOs with which you are in contact are seriously committed or not to public education on NORTH/SOUTH issues, as such a commitment is a *sine qua non* for any support for development education work through the media.<sup>20</sup>

Was the NGO response to the interview questions a reflection of the lower priority that development education held among the functions of these particular Canadian NGOs? If so, then how would this variable have affected future relationships between NGOs and IDRC concerning *North-South*, even if the *North-South* producers had made a concerted effort to include NGOs?

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<sup>19</sup> Maureen Levitt, Fax Communication to Paddy Coulter (Duncan: October 19, 1993), pp. 1-2. I did fax Coulter to take him up on his offer, but I never received a reply to the request.

<sup>20</sup> Paddy Coulter, Personal Communication to Maureen Levitt (London: International Broadcasting Trust, April 5, 1993), p. 1.



A follow-up study was carried out between the fall of 1993 and the spring of 1994 to determine whether or not the respondents' use of *North-South* was at all affected by my first visits or by follow-up IDRC/VISION TV efforts in the form of public relations materials or programming changes. In addition, I sought information regarding what organizational support NGOs provided for development education on north/south issues (including the use of the various mass communication media) and how recent government cutbacks and CIDA's imposition of restructuring on NGOs had impacted upon NGO public education efforts.

### **Section Three: Thesis Support and Mapping**

This thesis draws heavily upon two sources for historical research concerning *North-South* and NGOs. The *North-South* correspondence files at VISION TV provided much valuable information, as did the book *Bridges of Hope? Canadian Voluntary Agencies and the Third World* by Tim Brodhead and Brent Herbert-Copley, with Anne-Marie Lambert as Research Associate.

Brodhead and Herbert-Copley provide a definition of development education to help evaluate the learning potential of *North-South*. Organized around the stratification of the many activities associated with that term, this definition has important implications for determining the effect of *North-South* on the viewer and understanding of the impact of the various producer choices (e.g., content, format, etc.) on the potential of *North-South* to educate that viewer about development issues.

The term development education has always been difficult to define, but broadly speaking it encompasses at least three categories of activities which, while often lumped together, have distinct goals and desired outcomes: Information:...the straightforward dissemination of factual information about Third World countries, or about the activities of NGOs...and its primary objective is fund raising or constitution-building....Education:...a critical analytical process of reflection upon that information.... Advocacy:...encouraging specific action by the public....<sup>21</sup>

Though the reliability of both of the research studies is limited by the small sample size, later research commissioned by IDRC supports most of the general conclusions of this thesis. In a December 1993 Decima Research poll entitled, *An Investigation of Attitudes Related to North-South*, 133 respondents from the IDRC mailing list answered questions similar to those found in the initial study. Thus, the Decima research (1993) is valuable in overcoming some of the methodological limitations of interviewing a maximum of twenty-two respondents from a single community (i.e., B.C. NGOs.).

The Decima Research data (1993) appears at the end of my thesis research sections as additional support for, or challenge to, the hypotheses that I present. However, any comparative analysis must be treated with caution. The Decima Research results do not categorize respondents' answers according to degree of exposure to *North-South*. Thus, for example, when Decima data (1993) are published about respondent reactions to content, it is impossible to take exposure time into account.

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<sup>21</sup> Brodhead and Herbert-Copley, p. 18.

Further, it must be kept in mind that Decima Research (1993) cautions readers in the conclusions of *An Investigation of Attitudes Related to North-South* to "Remember limitations of the sample...[and that] Key feedback [is] based on [a] single episode...."<sup>22</sup> These are the same constraints that affect this thesis. What is exciting, however, is that both draw immediate attention to the need to ask in any basic measure of audience outreach or development education success attached to *North-South*: Who amongst 'supposed allies' is watching *North-South* and how much?

Chapter Two (A Contemporary Overview of Non-Governmental Organizations in Canada) sketches the political and economic climate that is forcing NGOs to prioritize development education and examine their communication choices. In transition, NGOs remain stuck in outdated organization and media practices but willing to venture into new relationships.

Chapter Three (A History of *North-South*) reviews the production of *North-South* in an attempt to discern the effect of producer decisions on both the effectiveness of *North-South* as a development education tool and on the exclusion or inclusion of NGOs in the process. It mirrors the struggle of trying to put together a partnership that balances organizational need with the greater societal interest of achieving sustainable and equitable development.

Chapter Four (The Initial Study: The NGO Audience, The User and the Use of *North-South*) introduces the British Columbia NGO community that was interviewed

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<sup>22</sup> "Conclusions" in *An Investigation of Attitudes Related to North-South* (Decima Research, December 1993), p. 12.

about *North-South* to determine their patterns of viewership and use of the series. The concept of linkage becomes important as one realizes the consequences of constituency attempts to interact with one another for recognition and support. Publicity is a paramount issue in this discussion.

Chapter Five (The Initial Study: *North-South* Producer Choices that Colour NGO Response) identifies the various program components that affected the viewer perception and use of *North-South*. It distinguishes the frequency that *North-South* was watched and considers reactions to each of the program's building blocks in the light of *North-South's* overall public education potential.

Chapter Six (Marketing, Publicity and the *North-South* Partnership with VISION TV and IDRC) looks at British Columbia NGO reaction to *North-South* as it pertains to the strength of public relations surrounding not only the program itself but also the producers. In this chapter, VISION TV and IDRC come under scrutiny about how their involvement affected the marketability of the series. This focuses attention on qualitative and quantitative expectations surrounding *North-South*.

Chapter Seven (*North-South* in the 1993/1994 Political and Economic Environment), is an account of the second study conducted with British Columbia NGOs. It seeks to examine reaction to *North-South* because of my first visit and to intervening program changes. The chapter proposes the need to broaden the discussion from *North-South* to include an examination of NGO relationships to the media, in general, and to VISION TV, in particular.

Chapter Eight (NGO Respondents in the 1993/1994 Political and Economic Environment) addresses British Columbia NGO use of the media for development education work. It considers factors that affect popular media use and that limit or heighten cooperative public communication approaches. Hesitancy to use television indicates the need for both broadcasters and NGOs to examine their ability to work together in a climate of restraint to achieve mutual benefits.

Chapter Nine (Conclusions and Implications) summarizes the research findings and attempts to answer the thesis questions posed in Chapter One. It moves beyond seeking to identify the factors involved in *North-South's* effectiveness as a development education resource and the effect of NGO inclusion or exclusion to examine *North-South* as a process rather than a product.

Chapter Ten (Models — Essential Elements for Collaboration between Development Television Producers and their Targeted Communities) offers new means for achieving partnership to produce television programming concerning sustainable and equitable development. Three strategic models for publicity, audience participation and programming are presented. When integrated, they present the opportunity for cooperative approaches to resolving conflicts such as found in *North-South* that weakened it as a development education tool.

## Section Four: Conclusions

Government and donor restraint, burgeoning debt loads and re-entrenchment of status quo interests are exacerbating an ever-widening disparity between the economic north and the economic south. Many international development organizations are struggling for survival. The commitment by IDRC, VISION TV, Metavidea Inc., Radio-Quebec and CIDA to help develop the *North-South* series underscored their willingness to try new ways to help the world community achieve balance between development and the environment. It is important to analyze *North-South* to see how small or large a contribution has been made towards educating viewers about sustainable development in order to benefit the whole of world society.

It became clear that the evaluation of *North-South* required a broader exploration of producer and NGO commitment to public communication about sustainable and equitable development issues through the use of the popular media.

The research suggests that NGO hesitation about *North-South* and the use of the television medium generally indicates their need to recognize communication and development education as priorities within their organizational structures and the impact of communication choices upon development education effectiveness. This is particularly important if an integrated strategy for survival is to be adopted by the NGOs rather than emphasizing fund raising over development education initiatives.

The *North-South* producers needed to recognize the value of community networking and public relations as part of their production development and not rely upon the program itself to initiate interest and participation from supposed 'allies.' This is

particularly important with a network like VISION TV — a virtual unknown to many of the respondents.<sup>23</sup> It is also not enough to assume that audience will ‘naturally’ learn enough from a series such as *North-South* to evoke institutional and personal action regarding sustainable and equitable development. There must be sufficient information, critical analysis and ways to stimulate such action built into the series.

Fewer donors mean less money not just for development but for public education about sustainable development. Both the Brundtland Commission and Agenda 21 conclude that access to information is necessary to sway public opinion. Given that television provides the widest forum for development education, it makes sense to utilize that medium. Educating NGOs and other organizations which have an interest in international development and bringing them into partnerships in the production of programs such as *North-South* might provide the collective skills, materials and funds to develop programming that invites viewer participation in achieving global sustainability. NGO involvement further opens the window for southern co-productions. However, forming new partnerships may be difficult. Differing institutional interests and entrenched practices appear to have intruded into the *North-South* producer relationships. According to Karen Spierkel, Director of Public Information Program (PIP) for IDRC, there is no provision by IDRC for networking with NGOs or other agencies (e.g., environmental) for production, public

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<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, VISION TV is further marginalized by its position on ‘extended basic’ rather than the ‘basic’ cablevision service.

relations, marketing, or distribution purposes of the *Agenda 21* series. That will be left up to the participating broadcasters.<sup>24</sup>

This suggests that all participants in sustainable development initiatives (in this case, television programs such as *North-South* or the *Agenda 21* series) need to examine their own attitudes and behaviour regarding information exchange before they can proceed to collectively design effective media outreach to the community at large.

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<sup>24</sup> Karen Spierkel, Personal Communication to Maureen Levitt (Ottawa: IDRC, September 8, 1994).



## CHAPTER TWO

### A Contemporary Overview of Non-Governmental Organizations in Canada

The Canadian NGO community is in transition due to both internal and external pressures which are necessitating a reorganization of both infrastructure and communication flows. Recent events within Canada and abroad are bringing about a redefinition of the practical role of Canadian NGOs in international development and their moral role in reorienting the economy and Canadian society towards sustainable and equitable development. Government cutbacks, CIDA reorganization, and pressure for equity from NGO partners in the economic south have already had significant impact upon local, national and global international development relationships and, no doubt, affected NGOs' response to *North-South*.

#### Section One: The Effects of Government Cutbacks on the NGO Community

The Canadian NGO community is undergoing major restructuring as it responds to continuing federal government cutbacks to Official Development Assistance (ODA) and the reorganization of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). At the heart of this reorganization is an attempt by NGOs to develop greater coherence with each other by defining their goals collectively to preserve the integrity not only of Canadian NGO organizations but also of their southern counterparts. The NGOs are both fearful and optimistic about the process and the eventual outcome.

## Foreign Policy Review

Several recent developments have encouraged Canadian NGOs to take coordinated and proactive action. Disproportionate ODA/Gross National Product cuts will result in international aid ratios falling to 1970-1971 levels by 1994-1995.<sup>25</sup> ODA funding priorities have shifted 'to regions' which, as Britta Gundersen-Bryden suggests in "The Three P's of Policy: Politics, Process, and Product," "...could most rapidly generate a return upon investment for Canada: Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and middle-income developing nations."<sup>26</sup> Additionally, NGOs are struggling with the consequences of diminishing public and corporate donations and uncertain organizational futures.

With their umbrella organization, the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC), taking the lead, NGOs have lobbied for a comprehensive and public foreign policy review that would recognize the input and policy recommendations of a broad Canadian constituency (the NGO community included) not only concerning ODA but also issues of the environment, trade, debt and human rights — all of which impact upon north/south relations and global sustainability. Popular participation and access have been emphasized, as detailed by Britta Gundersen-Bryden through a series of public forums across Canada sponsored by the North-South

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<sup>25</sup> Andrew Clark, *Notes to: Research Staff* (Ottawa: North-South Institute, March 12, 1993), p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Britta Gundersen-Bryden, "The Three P's of Policy: Politics, Process, and Product" in *BCCIC News* (Victoria, October 1993), p. 2.

Institute, the use of the CCIC WEB electronic network for contributing to working policy papers, and regional CCIC conferences and sponsored meetings.<sup>27</sup>

The result has been the creation of linkages between NGO members, other social sectors and concerned Canadians in a deliberate attempt to influence and democratize foreign policy. These efforts have paid off. The Liberal Government agreed to a comprehensive Foreign Policy Review, which has had hearings and written input from NGOs and others. Reports show that about seventy-five (75%) of the testimony came from representatives of NGOs.<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile, NGO organizations are seriously hampered in their programming, both in Canada and the economic south, by disproportionate cuts to ODA — cuts that appear to be distributed to NGO organizations unequally, according to government policies that are both populist-driven (in the name of recession restraint) and politically derived (e.g., geographic programming cuts in accordance with NAFTA commitments)<sup>29</sup>:

[In 1992 and 1993] Out of a total of 119 NGO organizations receiving ODA funds, 25 were increased, 15 received the same allocation as last year and 79 were reduced. Organizations were cut by amounts exceeding one million dollars....Canadian core contribution to UNDP will be reduced by twelve million...and its contribution to the UNDP Africa 2000 program reduced by \$1,400,000....The allocation to Eastern Europe and the former

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Robert Anderson, Personal Communication with Maureen Levitt (Vancouver: S.F.U., October 24, 1994).

<sup>29</sup> *ODA 1993/1994 Budget Analysis* (Ottawa: CCIC, March 4, 1993), p. 5.

Soviet Union has increased from \$100 to \$147 million. The increase of \$47 million has been taken from the ODA budget.<sup>30</sup>

A consolidation of infrastructure, staff and programs, and competition for funding, rather than cooperation to achieve development education objectives, have beset the NGO community affected by ODA cutbacks.

## **Section Two: The Special Role of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)**

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) — the government agency responsible for channeling ODA funds through various programs — is redefining its relationship to NGOs and other recipients.

In a call "for partnership with the Canadian NGO community to build and strengthen home and overseas linkages,"<sup>31</sup> CIDA has integrated administrative responsibilities, development education and overseas development through programming and funding mergers. Some of the most dramatic changes involve the disbanding of the Public Participation Program in 1994, the offering of Institutional Funding with 'one-stop shopping' on a three- to five-year funding basis to larger NGOs, and the disbursement of regional decentralized funds by regional managing agencies to NGOs whose funding is under \$200,000 per year.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-3.

<sup>31</sup> Ian Smillie, *Institutional Funding and Cost Sharing* (Ottawa: CCIC, September 1993), p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Tim Dramin, *CCIC Presentation to BCCIC Fall Conference and AGM Program* (Nanaimo: October 21, 1993).

Though in agreement with many of CIDA's administrative and program recommendations and changes, the Canadian NGO community is now questioning (after 20 years of compliance with CIDA rules) "...whether it is the responsibility of CIDA or the NGOs to shape the NGO community?...[particularly when] the assumption that shapes CIDA's NGO slate is that there are too many [Canadian] NGOs."<sup>33</sup>

Ian Smillie, in his review of the CIDA/CPB May 31 and June 2, 1993 *Draft Papers*, expressed his concerns:

In the parts of the draft policy that have been circulated, CIDA seems once again to have fallen into the trap of trying to massage the status quo into something that makes a bit more sense, rather than grappling with the larger and more difficult questions. One example of the latter — the exclusion of child sponsorship and relief fund raising from matching eligibility is courageous. But it is the only obvious one. The rest of the document retreats into a description of how allocations will be made to 'community organizations' as opposed to 'fund raising organizations'....But by describing the typology as one of 'fund-raising organizations' and 'community organizations', it only perpetuates the real problem: CIDA makes its own decisions in private about what really should be emphasized and what should be cut back.<sup>34</sup>

Though CIDA is evidently ahead of the NGOs in the redefinition process, the NGO community led by CCIC is responding through individual and collective positions on the various CIDA initiatives and required funding procedures that could produce a further erosion of NGO autonomy. Many of the elements in institutional

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Smillie, p. 5.

funding are welcomed and had, in fact, been called for by much of the NGO community, such as "...recognition of the importance of iterative planning and programming; increased emphasis on development education; the exclusion of child sponsorship and relief fund raising from eligibility for development cost-sharing; 'one-stop shopping'; [and] attempts to deal with inconsistencies and unfairness in CIDA funding practices." <sup>35</sup> The fear exists, as framed by Ian Smillie for CCIC, that "institutional funding," with its intense CIDA auditing requirements,

...means that the entire NGO will now be open to full CIDA scrutiny: structure, management, programmes, policies, attitudes, 'understanding of the development challenge'....Whatever the tangible implications, institutional funding, as described in the June 2 paper, represents a step forward in the ability of government to manage and control NGOs, and a major step backward from the concept of NGOs as independent expressions of civil society.<sup>36</sup>

Whether CIDA is compromising NGO effectiveness is also being asked. For example, in the transference of administrative tasks, CIDA not only raises the NGO administrative burden but also does not allow for "administration costs that are higher than the nominal 15% which CIDA will admit for discussion."<sup>37</sup> As Smillie points out, many NGOs currently have administration costs which exceed that 15%. At the same time, although CIDA requires that development education components be part of

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

the NGO's mandate and a necessary criterion for receiving institutional funding, there appears to be no additional monies allotted to support that extension of service.<sup>38</sup>

The NGO community knows from previous experience that dependence on CIDA contains risks, and the contradictions between ODA cutbacks and CIDA expectations make them even more suspicious of CIDA's intent. Clyde Sanger, of the North-South Institute, places their relationship in historical perspective: "The problem of NGOs in the 1980s was that they got drawn in and they became almost executing agents of CIDA and CIDA, in terms of wanting to involve them in order to cut down on their own staff time and recognizing the NGOs as a better place to do their work, have pulled them into an embrace like an octopus...."<sup>39</sup> The NGO community is now moving more cautiously as a coordinated body circumspect of its vulnerability to CIDA's outstretched funding tentacles.

### **Section Three: The Impact of Cutbacks and CIDA Reorganization on Development Education**

The term 'development education' as presented by Tim Brodhead and Brent Herbert-Copley in *Bridges of Hope?* is divided into three distinct activities according to their purpose and effect: information, critical analysis and advocacy.<sup>40</sup> However, the concept of their linkage is central to effective development education. For the most part, NGOs have concentrated on fund raising and not on development education

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>39</sup> Clyde Sanger, Audio-Cassette Communication to Maureen Levitt (Ottawa: North-South Institute, April, 1994).

<sup>40</sup> Brodhead and Herbert-Copley, p. 18.

activities aimed at involving the public, media, other NGOs and organizations with an interest in international development (e.g., women and environmental networks) in their work. The creation of long-term support for the programs and objectives of the NGOs has been sacrificed, as has the development of equitable relationships with their southern counterparts, in the absence of development education priorities.

NGOs now find themselves obliged to integrate development education into programming priorities if they wish to receive CIDA dispersed funding. Dwindling ODA funds over the past twenty years have heightened NGO fund-raising priorities and inter-agency competition. At the same time, effective public education initiatives and NGO cooperative approaches that might otherwise have provided other, more stable sources of income for achieving NGO objectives (including those of southern NGO partners) have been restricted. Brodhead and Herbert-Copley suggest that development education "remains in a weakened state"<sup>41</sup> because of the "difficulty of demonstrating the quantifiable impact"<sup>42</sup> of development education beyond agency fund-raising "compassion"<sup>43</sup> promotion. They also pose the broader notion that development education carries with it "...a risk, embarrassment or, worse, loss of an image that could impact upon fund raising..."<sup>44</sup> and, thus, they suggest NGOs are reluctant to pursue development education intently. It is much easier to depict the starving child than to graphically illustrate the systemic causes of underdevelopment

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.



(e.g., speaking directly about Canadian trade and individual consumptive patterns and the need for limits to northern growth to help counteract global poverty).

Brodhead and Herbert-Copley also confront the possibility that NGOs are hesitant to move beyond preaching to the converted to encourage "action based on understanding"<sup>45</sup> because it means rethinking the NGOs role both locally and globally to create sustainable impact. NGOs must now consider "...how to involve Canadians through (and not within) NGOs..."<sup>46</sup> in that development education process, as they critically rethink the meaning of partnership with NGOs in the economic south — NGOs who are not only demanding more autonomy and control of available funds but who will be crucial to the NGO development education analysis if it is to accurately reflect the economic south.

In 1994, NGOs were being told by CIDA:

In future, organizations receiving institutional funding will be encouraged to engage their constituencies and the wider Canadian public in a development education process. They will be encouraged to educate Canadians about the reality of the Third World and global interdependence, help Canadians to think critically about and analyze the causes and consequences of development problems, and encourage Canadians to get involved to change the situation. Canadians are to be encouraged to adopt a vision of global interdependence and cooperation in which they participate jointly with people in the Third World in addressing global and development problems in a sustainable manner.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>47</sup> Canadian Partnership Branch, CIDA, *Institutional Funding* (Ottawa: CIDA, June 2, 1993), p. 4.

The inability of NGOs to communicate the systemic causes of underdevelopment and their own *raison d'être* is tied to their dependency on fund-raising communication that fails to challenge the practices that marginalize those in the economic south. Though CIDA might have laudable objectives in demanding NGOs rectify this, CIDA funding cuts and the provision of no additional monies for development education cause me to question the sincerity of CIDA's commitment to educating Canadians about global sustainability. CIDA's demands are also problematic in the light of those northern-funded development projects in the past that have not proven to be particularly beneficial to the local environment, livelihoods, people's health, etc.

#### **Section Four: Redefining Media Relationships and Development Education**

Brodhead and Herbert-Copley in *Bridges of Hope?* note that since the 1970s the NGO trend has been focused on efficiency and inter-agency cooperation for donor dollars. This has resulted in less active donor involvement in fund-raising campaigns and an over-reliance on mass marketing approaches, such as direct mail and television appeals that are crisis-oriented, reflecting the management of information in mainstream television.<sup>48</sup> These impersonalized communication strategies have, in turn, resulted in NGO failure to create sustained interest in north/south issues beyond the immediate fund-raising appeal.

NGOs appear to be comfortable with the written press and CCIC has WEB, its own computer network. There is, however, among NGOs a dismissal of the mass

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<sup>48</sup> Brodhead and Herbert-Copley, p. 85.

medium of television for significant information sharing about issues facing the economic south. In the research, NGOs cite both the prohibitive cost of television and the popular use of that technology (with its limited and decontextualized information) as reasons for their hesitancy to interact with television producers. Brodhead and Herbert-Copley suggest other reasons for NGO failure to achieve a fruitful relationship with such a global communications technology. These relate to the communication and organizational practices and motives of the NGOs:

By and large, NGOs have lagged behind in recognizing this [that communications technology has shrunk the globe, and that it has become possible to talk to each other as never before in human history] and turning it to their own advantage. They have made little use of mass media (with the exception of one or two large fund raising agencies such as OXFAM-Quebec and World Vision); their contacts with overseas partners tend to be periodic and one-way and most have done little to develop independent sources of information that would shape a distinctive view of the world....Technology is no more than a means, however, to facilitate communication. For it to be really useful, NGOs must first decide, based on their own experience — what they have to say, how important it is for Canadians to hear their message, and how willing they are to serve as a channel for people in the south to voice their interests and concerns directly to Canadians.<sup>49</sup>

I suggest that NGOs need to go even further than Brodhead's and Herbert-Copley's description of information sharing by Canadian NGOs about southern concerns. Canadian NGOs must facilitate and support direct southern NGO dialogue with the Canadian public.

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

Development education through the mass media appears constrained not only by the way the media does business, but by NGO ideology and institutional self-interest — the same obstacles that Brodhead and Herbert-Copley suggest face NGO development education as a whole.<sup>50</sup>

CIDA's reorganization and its demand that NGOs educate the Canadian public on sustainable development issues if they wish to receive institutional funding, ODA and public funding cutbacks are challenging the NGO community to find ways to cooperate, including with the media, to build long-term support for development which involves reorganization of our institutional and personal ideologies to rectify north/south political, social and economic inequity. This applies to NGO practices as well. Pressure from southern NGO partners for more autonomy, including in media presentation, implies a rethinking of northern NGO development education messages. Anne Gordon Drabek reflects on proceedings at the London Symposium on "Development Alternatives: The Challenge for NGOs":

With regard to NGO use of the media, southern NGOs expressed extreme dissatisfaction with the northern presentation of Third World development problems, for example, the image of the starving, helpless Africans projected by some northern NGO campaigns. This stresses a fundamental contradiction of NGO development education: how to reconcile the need for short-term fundraising with the need to create a long-term educated constituency for development assistance. It was also asked whether the development principles advocated for the Third World in northern development education materials are consistent with the behaviour of those in the field? The new honest partnership between northern and southern NGOs should have as one goal the achievement of more accurate and constructive media cover-

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

age of Third World development....Southern NGOs would like to see northern NGOs development education directed at changing the policies of business and government.<sup>51</sup>

In addition, there is the realization that crisis-oriented fund-raising media appeals have not only perpetuated stereotypical images of the economic south but have led, as Brodhead and Herbert-Copley say, to donor "compassion fatigue [or] (a more accurate description might be 'fund raising cynicism')." <sup>52</sup> All of these developments have heightened the need for NGOs to examine their relationship to the mass media and their chosen communication conduits.

Many NGOs are, in fact, trying to work with the mass media in new ways. Recent examples of cooperation include a VISION TV and CCIC co-production of a *North-South* special with OXFAM's contribution; coverage of the Ethiopian plant breeders' Canada tour sponsored by the Unitarian Service Committee of Canada; the formation of WETV, The Global Access Television Service, whose members include NGOs; the joint week-long program-thon, *Fast-Aid to Somalia* by the Canadian Red Cross - B.C. and Yukon Region, UNICEF, and Rogers Cablesystems, Vancouver; and the agreement between BCCIC and Knowledge Network to air public service announcements as *Partners in Knowledge*, in this case about development issues. Clearly there are increasing attempts to use the mass media, but the productions are sporadic and many of them still fall into the cliché of crisis-oriented appeals such as the *Fast Aid to*

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<sup>51</sup> Anne Gordon Drabek (Ed.), "Development Alternatives: The Challenge for NGOs — An Overview of the Issues" in "Development Alternatives: The Challenge for NGOs" in 15, Supplement *World Development* (Washington: World Development Institute, 1987), pp. xii-xiii.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

*Somalia* programming. However, it is hopeful that the NGOs are making the extension to develop cooperative programming rather than waiting to be asked. Perhaps, the more comfortable NGOs become with the medium the more confident they will be to explore television messages that contain a more effective pedagogy that reflects and respects the 'partnership' demands of the southern NGOs.

### Section Five: Conclusions

As NGO organizational practices have traditionally encouraged isolated NGO activity and prioritized fund raising rather than development education activities, there is some difficulty, and, according to Tim Dramin from CCIC, also some excitement, associated with the rethinking of the NGO role in Canadian society and, in particular, with the creation of linkages with other social sectors.<sup>53</sup>

What becomes apparent in the examination of NGOs within the prevailing political and economic context (both international and national) is that if they are to contribute positively, NGOs must develop new communication strategies and recognize the critical relationship between information distribution and successful development education. Foreign policy initiatives that are, as Clyde Sanger suggests, entrepreneurial and market-driven in nature, amidst a dwindling public funding environment lend some urgency to NGOs' examination of the impact of their chosen communication venues.<sup>54</sup> However, NGOs seem slow to change their information management, as

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<sup>53</sup> Tim Dramin, *CCIC Presentation to BCCIC Fall Conference and AGM Program* (Nanaimo: October 21, 1993).

<sup>54</sup> Clyde Sanger, "Out of Africa" in *Canadian Forum* (July/August, 1993), p. 19.

witnessed by their hesitation to stop producing crisis-oriented development messages and make efficient use of television to increase their outreach and impact.

They might be more willing to act now that CIDA, in its shift from program to institutional funding, requires development education to be a specific organizational activity and sustainable development an objective.<sup>55</sup> In the CIDA document, *Institutional Funding*, this means NGOs are responsible for "...ensuring that southern partners have the capacity and resources to implement effective development programs/projects which contribute to sustainable development [and for] developing and implementing effective development education activities in Canada."<sup>56</sup> All of these are expectations, however, without increased funding.

The southern NGOs appear further ahead in the realization that information is a 'crucial resource'<sup>57</sup> in their demands that any notion of partnership with northern NGOs must respect an exchange of information and learning experiences.<sup>58</sup> However, such a notion of 'networking'<sup>59</sup> is, historically, not something that NGOs have identified with. As Brent Herbert-Copley points out, NGOs have not cooperated with each other, let alone in coalition:

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<sup>55</sup> *Institutional Funding* (Ottawa: CIDA, June 2, 1993), p. 11.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>57</sup> Drabek, p. xi.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii. Networking is "defined as the process of being willing to listen and learn from each other....The keys to successful networking were identified as common needs, unifying platforms, shared ideologies, democratization of information and global communication."

...an individualistic conception of voluntarism infuses the [Canadian] NGO community....One consequence of this is that development agencies frequently lack an identifiable domestic constituency whether political, religious or otherwise. In fact, an agency's constituency is more likely to be set by its choice of fund raising strategy than by links to any particular social sector. This in turn may be one reason for the weak support among Canadian NGOs for political advocacy at home.<sup>60</sup>

Two extremely vivid examples of the power of networking around sustainable development issues stand out to beckon the NGOs to continue their coalescing beyond the Foreign Review Policy: The International Baby Food Network and Live Aid. It is necessary to examine their characteristics to see how they achieved their massive results. Thierry Lamaresquier articulates the components of the International Baby Food Action Network that when combined made the Network a success:

...in respect of their structure, a broad constituency, active partnership between organizations in the North and the South and support for NGOs to work with other sectors of society; in respect of the working methods, the capacity to research, monitor and communicate, and in respect of their approach, a determination to show the interrelations between the northern and southern dimension of the problems and the need for structural change in health and nutrition and above all to work on the issue over a long period of time....<sup>61</sup>

According to many NGOs, Live Aid failed in that the type of message did not attract long-term public fund-raising support. However, Lamaresquier suggests that NGOs

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<sup>60</sup> Brent Herbert-Copley, "Canadian NGOs: Past Trends, Future Challenges" in 15, Supplement *World Development*, p. 22.

<sup>61</sup> Thierry Lamaresquier, "Prospects for Development Education: Some Strategic Issues Facing European NGOs" in 15, Supplement *World Development*, p. 195.



still need to examine why Live Aid was so wildly successful in raising huge sums of money for immediate relief to see if any of the reasons could be applied to long-term fund-raising strategies:

Live Aid succeeded in conveying simple messages to large numbers of people because it based its approach on the public's perceptions of needs, rather than causes and issues; it showed that the public needed to feel that they were part of a larger movement, a feeling which is not conveyed by organizations working on development and justice issues; it reiterated the need to use more methods in trying to popularize the development message than is possible through seminars, lectures or publications....<sup>62</sup>

Though I would not recommend Live Aid as a model for televised development education because it did not address the causes and issues of the Ethiopian famine I am intrigued for NGOs to explore further the notion of creating a larger movement around their development education objectives rather than continuing in their isolated approaches to the Canadian public.

Networking and communication strategies are vital components of the success of both the International Baby Food Network and Live Aid. Unfortunately, such an integrated development education strategy has not been adopted by the Canadian NGOs.

In Clyde Sanger's estimation, a lack of NGO emphasis on development education and comprehensive communication about it has resulted in an ill-informed

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

Canadian public that sees aid as charity rather than realizing the reciprocal benefits that Canadians receive in the distribution of aid:

Does the Canadian public understand development? I don't think it does. It's a terrible, almost indictment of development education that most of the Canadian public tends to look upon it as a form of charity. That Carol Gore still has to explain in the column of November 30th that, to quote from her, 'that few Canadians realize that sixty cents of every aid dollar spent in Canada or that foreign aid projects create close to 30,000 jobs a year, or that the food aid Canada sends abroad supports the output of about 3,000 average farms.'

To have to state that at this stage how many years after CIDA was formed — 25 or more years — is a failure on getting these points across.<sup>63</sup>

His revelation is rather startling and needs further examination. To suggest, as Sanger does, that the objective of development education should be to help Canadians recognize aid as beneficial to them seems to fall a considerable way short of educating Canadians as to the issues of trade, monetary practices, etc. that create and sustain aid dependency. It is my belief that NGOs must undertake structural changes, including engaging the communication media such as television, to support reorganization of personal and political ideologies that currently shape our self-interested interaction with the south and apathetic reaction to their concerns.

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<sup>63</sup> Clyde Sanger, Audio-Cassette Communication to Maureen Levitt (Ottawa: North-South Institute, April, 1994).

## CHAPTER THREE

### A History of *North-South*

*North-South* was born both of circumstance and personal interest. A new national television network, VISION TV, with limited means needed programming material quickly for its debut season just nine short months away. Peter Flemington, Director of Programming at VISION TV, had long involved himself in "the interpretation of world development issues for Canadian and foreign networks and agencies."<sup>64</sup> In collaboration with Leo Rampen, Executive Producer of Radio-Quebec's international development program, *Nord-Sud*, Flemington launched the *North-South* series when the network went to air September 1988 by acquiring, adapting and packaging *Nord-Sud* material.

Throughout *North-South*'s six-year history flexibility and ingenuity on the part of its producers kept the program running much longer than should have been expected given such circumstances. The loosely-defined structure continued to contribute to some of the production crises and affected the ability to secure stable funding and effective outreach to NGOs and other organizations interested in international development — all factors which might have kept *North-South* on the air.

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<sup>64</sup> Peter Flemington, "Project Personnel" found in *Proposal re: North-South* (Toronto: VISION TV, April 4, 1988), Appendix II.

### Season One: 1988-1989

For reasons of economy and expedience, *North-South* was produced taking core materials for the twenty-six programs per season from Radio-Quebec's *Nord-Sud* programs at a cost of two thousand dollars (\$2,000) apiece, then editing and translating them for *North-South* use. Host wrap-around opening and closing segments were then written and packaged with the *Nord-Sud* materials. Peter Flemington had an explanation for the reliance on *Nord-Sud*. "Rather than set about to reinvent wheels, it makes sense for us [Leo Rampen and Peter Flemington] to collaborate — drawing upon the experience and growing popularity of the *Nord-Sud* program."<sup>65</sup> Flemington also expressed the belief that "...the understanding of development issues in English Canada lags behind that in Quebec. Such [*Nord-Sud/North-South*] co-operation could well accelerate a national awareness to the benefit of the development cause."<sup>66</sup> The 'development cause' Flemington refers to is the creation of equity — political, social and economic — between the economic north and south.

The original funding was to have come from CIDA Public Affairs Branch and CIDA's Public Participation Project (PPP), which had provided some funding for *Nord-Sud*. The Public Affairs Branch eventually contributed \$214,000, but no funding was received from PPP. IDRC then joined in with fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) in May, 1988. Peter Flemington explains IDRC's involvement: "As the production process outlined in the proposal is time-sensitive and as the goals and nature of the

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<sup>65</sup> Peter Flemington, Letter to M. Gilles Chouinard, Project Officer, Public Participation Project, CIDA (Toronto: VISION TV, April 4, 1988), p. 1.

<sup>66</sup> Peter Flemington, Letter to Leo Rampen (Toronto: VISION TV, April 4, 1988), p. 2.

series are in tune with the long-range communication plans of the IDRC, that agency has offered to provide auxiliary funding and program resources to ensure satisfactory completion."<sup>67</sup>

IDRC's interest in television had been stimulated by a Decima survey conducted for IDRC in 1989 that concluded IDRC should "...make a coherent attempt to address specific, defined, informed and educated publics and....That a more realistic use should be made of television — the most accessible medium and, increasingly, the most credible."<sup>68</sup> According to Peter Flemington, the survey also indicated that only two per cent (2%) of respondents knew of IDRC.<sup>69</sup>

It was necessary to acquire program footage from other sources such as CIDA, IDRC, domestic and foreign producers. Many of the *Nord-Sud* tapes had been destroyed and others "lacked the 'international' [sound] tracks which facilitate[d] subtitling."<sup>70</sup> This was to complicate the original copyright and distribution agreement with CIDA, which stated that: "CIDA shall have: (a) access to *North-South* program insert tapes for duplication, at CIDA's expense for internal circulation; and (b) videocassette distribution rights for *North-South* programs in perpetuity."<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Peter Flemington to Andre Champagne, Deputy Director, Public Affairs Branch, CIDA, and David Nostbakken, Director of Communication, IDRC. *Memorandum re: Revised Proposal for "North-South" Series* (Toronto: VISION TV, May 23, 1988), p. 1.

<sup>68</sup> Pierre Beemans, p. 1.

<sup>69</sup> Peter Flemington, Personal Communication to Maureen Levitt (Toronto: VISION TV, August 19, 1994).

<sup>70</sup> Peter Flemington, "Process" in *Memorandum re: North-South with Peter Trueman Report on Series 1* (Toronto: VISION TV, March 20, 1989), p. 2.

<sup>71</sup> Peter Flemington, April 4, 1988, p. 11.

Radio-Quebec, the producers of *Nord-Sud*, now acquired: "All sales and distribution rights to adapted Nord-Sud materials upon provision of technical facilities for such adaptations...."<sup>72</sup> CIDA's and IDRC's rights were limited to: "Internal use of videotapes of *North-South* (provided at cost)."<sup>73</sup> Radio-Quebec later became the distributor for all *North-South* materials. Copyright and distribution rights would continue to cause acrimony throughout the life of *North-South* and affect or at least be used as an excuse to withhold funding.

In the original proposal to CIDA, recognition is articulated<sup>74</sup> for the first time about the need for:

- (a) Planning, preparation and dissemination of *North-South* promotional materials (through existing development-oriented publications, general media and special mailings). Design of VISION TV on-air promotion.
- (b) Development of a broad funding and support base (including film/video resources) for *North-South*'s second season and beyond, particularly among relevant Canadian NGO's and other national and international agencies.<sup>74</sup>

In order for *North-South* to be time-sensitive, a two-minute *North-South News* update was produced on a weekly basis by VISION immediately following the program. NGO national offices identified from IDRC's mailing list were sent a VISION TV public relations package. IDRC and CIDA also supplied information.

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<sup>72</sup> Peter Flemington, May 23, 1988, p. 11.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Peter Flemington, April 4, 1988, p. 7.

According to Leo Rampen, the *North-South* series producer, an invitation was extended to CCIC to participate in *North-South* during the initial development stages. This included having NGOs contribute to the update and fuller (albeit, undefined) participation. Rampen recalls a CCIC communications person saying that CCIC didn't have the time to participate in *North-South* because staff were all too busy putting CCIC's own computer network together.<sup>75</sup>

Chris Pinney, the then-Communications Director for CCIC, said he forwarded information about the opportunity to his regional offices. However, no response was ever received from CCIC about the spot and little unsolicited update content arrived from the individual NGOs,<sup>76</sup> much to Peter Flemington's and Leo Rampen's chagrin. "...We were disappointed with the information flow from CCIC, which we had anticipated to be a natural and comprehensive source of news related to NGOs."<sup>77</sup>

Money was no longer available for the proposed video/film on-line database, as it had been reallocated to cover the time delays and personnel costs associated with finding new material to fill the *Nord-Sud* program gaps. Consequently, and without luck,<sup>78</sup> Broadcasting for International Understanding (B.I.U.), another Canadian NGO,

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<sup>75</sup> Leo Rampen to Maureen Levitt, September 3, 1994.

<sup>76</sup> Peter Flemington, Personal Communication to Maureen Levitt (Toronto, August 17, 1994). Mark Haslam, VISION producer, was assigned to try to gather materials from the NGOs for the update. This was done over the phone with little result.

<sup>77</sup> Peter Flemington and Leo Rampen to the Public Affairs Branch, Canadian International Development Agency. *Proposal regarding North-South with Peter Trueman on VISION TV (Season 2: 1989-1990)* (Toronto: VISION TV, March 20, 1989), p. 4.

<sup>78</sup> Leo Rampen, Personal Communication with Maureen Levitt (Montreal, September 2, 1994). Rampen felt that this was because B.I.U. personnel had their own production priorities.

was asked to become "a national clearinghouse for information on 'development' productions"<sup>79</sup> to help deal with the "amorphous mass."<sup>80</sup> *Nord-Sud* went to air on September 5, 1988.

### Season Two: 1989-1990

As you know, there is a Chinese symbol for crisis: a Janus-like affair with one side looking forward with confidence and determination. So it is with yours truly, having received word from Blaine Marchand late Friday afternoon that CIDA is planning to limit its participation in season two of *North-South* to a selected versioning of materials obtained from *Nord-Sud*.<sup>81</sup>

In their desire to help *North-South* evolve according to lessons learned from the first production season and to make *North-South* more appealing in its outreach, Peter Flemington and Leo Rampen designed a list of *North-South* 'enhancements' they hoped CIDA and IDRC would fund in the second season. These included:

- (a) six 'current' interviews of ten to twenty-four minutes each with prominent (mostly Canadian) 'development' policy-makers, theorists and practitioners — from both government and NGOs to be produced and used throughout the year at a cost of up to \$30,000;...
- (b) three half-hours with host Peter Trueman reporting from the [south] field at a cost of \$150,000-\$200,000;...

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<sup>79</sup> Peter Flemington and Leo Rampen, Letter to Board of Directors, *Broadcasting for International Understanding* (Toronto: VISION TV, August 23, 1988), p. 2.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> Peter Flemington, Letter to David Nostbakken (Toronto: VISION TV, June 5, 1989), p. 1.



- (c) four *North-South* 'Specials' that would allow longer programs or panel discussion furthering 'analysis and debate beyond a mere introduction' at a cost of eighty thousand (\$80,000)-\$200,000);<sup>82</sup> ...and
- (d) public participation projects regarding, 'ways of enhancing the communicative power of *North-South* and taking advantage of its potential to reach, support, reflect and inform the grassroots within the "development" constituency...<sup>83</sup> [that included]...features on significant community and organizational activity across the country. Contests could be run, testing knowledge of the "south." Literature or videos could be offered...[and going] "on the road"...coordinating *North-South* "personal appearances" with CIDA or NGO-organized regional workshops or seminars.'<sup>84</sup>

Having just experienced a budget cut of fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000), IDRC agreed to commit only fifty-seven (\$57,000) to sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000).<sup>85</sup> CIDA was asked to contribute \$242,922. However, the proposal was erroneously considered under CIDA's Public Affairs Branch co-production program, other problems concerning copyright arose, and there was a lack of consultation on *Nord-Sud* segment selection during the first season. Thus, CIDA would only fund certain *Nord-Sud* segments which were to be approved by them.<sup>86</sup>

This meant a severe setback in the anticipated CIDA funding of \$85,000-\$125,000. IDRC's Communication Department two television priorities were: a

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<sup>82</sup> Peter Flemington and Leo Rampen, March 20, 1989, p. 8.

<sup>83</sup> Peter Flemington to Blaine Marchand, Letter re: *North-South with Peter Trueman* (Toronto: VISION TV, May 3, 1989), p. 4. 'Development Constituency' in this case refers to Canadians who have an interest in international development.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>85</sup> Peter Flemington, Letter to David Nostbakken (Toronto: VISION TV, June 5, 1989), p. 1.

<sup>86</sup> Blaine Marchand, Letter to Peter Flemington (Ottawa: CIDA, November 6, 1989), pp. 1-2. It is unknown why CIDA chose certain segments over others.

proposed series — *IDRC Presents* — which was to reproduce video material shot and produced in the Third World in as unaltered a state as possible, and for which Peter Flemington had been hired as a consultant; and *North-South*. Subsequently, IDRC decided to follow Peter Flemington's

...notion — in light of CIDA's less than sparkling response to this incredible opportunity [the enhancements] — of IDRC picking up the entire above-the-line tab and trumpeting in billboards top and bottom on each show that: 'Peter Trueman's *North-South* is presented in the public interest by the IDRC'! An immediate marriage — shotgun style — of your two top priorities, *North-South* and *IDRC Presents*. Also contemplated was an IDRC/CCIC tandem which could give you an entree to the NGO grassroots across the country.<sup>87</sup>

In effect, Flemington was selling audiences to IDRC to advertise its own role in development to the NGO grassroots constituency and other Canadians interested in international development. Flemington was well aware of IDRC's interest in television to raise its low public profile. David Nostbakken, the then-Director of IDRC Communication Division, was also Chair of the VISION TV Board of Directors.

Tim Brodhead, then-Director of the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, declined the opportunity extended by Peter Flemington to become a partner in *North-South*. Tim Brodhead reflected upon this in conversation with the researcher:

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<sup>87</sup> Peter Flemington, June 5, 1989, p. 1.

CCIC would have declined as it was not a funding agency and such a request would be dependent on the amount of requests out already. CCIC would have had to go to its members for that sum of money [\$85,000-\$125,000] and it would have made more sense for Peter Flemington to have approached the individual members directly for funding. They would have related better to a producer than CCIC intermediary request.<sup>88</sup>

IDRC, however, agreed and provided a total of \$217,000. The series proceeded into production with IDRC as sole sponsor.

In the early spring of 1990, CIDA eventually contributed sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000) for the *Nord-Sud* adaptation and translation that had already been done. CIDA was again offered the opportunity to sponsor any of the aforementioned 'enhancement' options, including the addition of "a series of films on development themes made by Third World filmmakers...[and making] a block grant to assist with field production of English-language items for *North-South*, which might then be eligible for versioning for *Nord-Sud*."<sup>89</sup>

According to Peter Flemington, the viewer reach for this season was about two hundred and twenty-five thousand (225,000) weekly. The series changed only "in small ways from year one to year two: better, more timely material of more consistent

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<sup>88</sup> Tim Brodhead, Personal Communication to Maureen Levitt (September 2, 1994). Peter Flemington, Personal Communication to Maureen Levitt (Toronto: VISION TV, October 28, 1994). Flemington said that the suggestion of an individual NGO approach was never communicated to him.

<sup>89</sup> Peter Flemington, Letter to Blaine Marchand (Toronto: VISION TV, December 14, 1989), p. 3.

quality [Sources: NFB, UN, Radio-Quebec], better host-link setting and performance, more host interviews."<sup>90</sup>

### Season Three: 1990-1991

IDRC again was sole sponsor of the series contributing \$299,904. Flora MacDonald, former Minister of External Affairs, replaced Peter Trueman (who had left for personal reasons) as host with an invitation from Peter Flemington to "...function as a 'development correspondent' for VISION, giving us the benefit of new insights and intelligence which you garner from time to time. I also want you to feel free to propose things which might upgrade our coverage at a reasonable cost or for which sponsorship might be found."<sup>91</sup> A *North-South* series was sold to Saskatchewan Education Television, as were twenty programs to the Discovery Channel in the United States. *Nord-Sud* was under threat of cancellation because of cutbacks at Radio-Quebec. Only vocal outrage expressed by series supporters, including those at *North-South*, prevented that from happening.

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<sup>90</sup> Peter Flemington, Fax re: *North-South* Evaluation Letter to Maureen Levitt (Proposal) (Toronto: VISION TV, February 14, 1994), p. 1.

<sup>91</sup> Peter Flemington, Letter re: *North-South with Flora MacDonald* to Flora MacDonald (Toronto: VISION TV, May 9, 1990), p. 1.

### Season Four: 1991-1992

IDRC, once again, as sole sponsor of the series contributed \$300,000. CIDA contributed money for selected *Nord-Sud* materials. A meeting was convened to discuss the formation of Canadian International Partners, a foundation to support development partnership with television producers from the south that would involve "development agencies, NGOs, private industry and others...for helping advance the global perspective of Canadians young and old."<sup>92</sup> *North-South* would be a logical venture with its new face for the 1991-1992 season:

The most significant new direction of *North-South* has been preparing for is the south/north perspective. This approach would not merely provide a window in the program for the south to speak directly to the north. It would be entrepreneurial. The whole production process would bring with it the dynamics of such partnership with its need for editorial dialogue, for technical resources, training and support as well as planning for continuity. Canadian partners who have a special commitment to any of these ventures could see the 'on air' products as an immediate and tangible result of their investment....This south/north partnership in the series should be affirmed at the outset by an early participation of representatives for the south in the crafting of the policies, the structure, and the process....<sup>93</sup>

This meeting, though it did not result in funding for *North-South*, resulted in a meeting of Like-minded Agencies, which became the springboard for what is now WETV, The Global Access Television Service initiative. During this year, it was possible to piggy-back on Flora MacDonald's travels and shoot in Vancouver, Sri

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<sup>92</sup> *A Roundtable on Communications for Development* (Ottawa: IDRC, November 26, 1991), p. 1.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

Lanka, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and South Africa. Collaboration with Video Tiers-Monde enabled *North-South* to work with local production crews and local NGO involvement in those southern areas. The producer of *North-South*, Ole Gjerstad, underwrote some of these costs by undertaking the "researching, writing and adaptation of many of the texts."<sup>94</sup>

Relationships with CCIC continued to be strained and non-productive, though CCIC was seen as the logical pipeline for *North-South* into the NGO community. For Development Week, CCIC had produced an insert that would "reach a distribution of 1.8 million readers through CCIC's mailing list, *The Citizen*, *The Globe and Mail*, *La Presse*, and *Le Devoir* ...."<sup>95</sup> Chris Pinney of CCIC had not informed VISION TV or IDRC about the insert, saying he was "not aware that VISION or IDRC were having Development Week specials."<sup>96</sup>

According to the *North-South* Minutes of January 23, 1992, Pinney said there had been discussion of "the use of the insert as promotion for *North-South* but with all the restructuring at IDRC, the discussions were put on hold....[David Nostbakken, the then-Director of Communications at IDRC stated that]...the Communications Division has not taken seriously enough the importance of advertisement for *North-South*."<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Leo Rampen to Peter Flemington, Letter re: *North-South*, 91/92 (Montreal: Metavidea, March 14, 1992), p. 2.

<sup>95</sup> Tammy Carriere, "North-South Minutes" in *Consortium Funding for Development Television* (Ottawa: IDRC, January 23, 1992), p. 3.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

With CCIC, it was decided to host a further meeting to design a cooperative plan to have six or seven NGO panel discussions per season to follow *North-South* with Tim Brodhead as the suggested host. Payment of the first two of these panels (ten thousand dollars apiece [10,000]) would be "partnership money"<sup>98</sup> for the NGO entry into *North-South*. Nothing further came of this suggestion. At the same meeting, David Nostbakken had strongly reflected on why NGOs had not become involved in *North-South*:

When you approach an NGO for support, they state they don't have the means to support just as the religious organizations said they didn't have the means to support VISION...the bottom line is that if you want to support, you will...the best thing to the NGO community is VISION TV but the point is that nobody has tried to convince the NGO community of much of anything. The type of things that were done to give VISION TV the profile it has need to be done to *North-South*....The fact is that the NGO community doesn't realize the power of television. They need to be educated in their own interest.<sup>99</sup>

Lyll Shields of IDRC met with refusal from CCIC when he suggested a two thousand dollar (\$2,000) matching funds initiative for CCIC members to co-produce with *North-South* five or six specials from the economic south to be decided upon by a joint *North-South*/NGO programming committee.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> Lyll Shields, Personal Communication with Maureen Levitt (Ottawa: IDRC, September 6, 1994).

The issue of copyright continued to cause grumblings. Both CIDA and IDRC expressed concern over the limiting of secondary use of *North-South* materials.<sup>101</sup>

A *North-South* poster was sent out via the IDRC mailing list to head offices of NGOs and to CCIC with extra copies for distribution to their constituencies.

### Season Five: 1992-1993

*North-South* changed dramatically in its fifth season. The name was changed to *North-South-North*. The program was lengthened to an hour. A co-host, Robbie Hart, was introduced. Flora MacDonald was now Chair of IDRC. All of these changes turned out to be controversial for *North-South*.

The original intent of renaming the program to *North-South-North* was to reflect a 'South/North transfer of material.' Peter Flemington wrote: "In previous seasons, we've looked at the countries and people of the developing world through sympathetic but western northern eyes, our eyes. This year we give the south and southern filmmakers a long-overdue chance to tell their own stories, the way they see them."<sup>102</sup>

Extending the program to an hour was designed to facilitate that objective. As Peter Flemington expressed it: "It will feature longer documentaries as well as field reports from the host Flora MacDonald and other correspondents, round tables and

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<sup>101</sup> Leo Rampen, Personal Communication with Maureen Levitt (Montreal, Metavidea, September 25, 1994).

<sup>102</sup> Peter Flemington, Notes re: A Whole New *North-South* (*South-North*) (Toronto: VISION TV, May 27, 1992), p. 1.



commentaries....It gives us a flexibility we didn't have in the past...to go longer and deeper, to make connections, and to really give Canadian viewers the background and motivation they need."<sup>103</sup> However, both the producer, Ole Gjerstad, and the host, Flora MacDonald, found the new title long and conceptually cumbersome. It was felt that a southern transfer was not really accomplished and that it was often difficult to fill the hour without 'padding and loss of focus.' Conflicts with MacDonald's other commitments made the lengthier productions prohibitive.<sup>104</sup>

Robbie Hart left the program in the middle of the season.<sup>\*</sup>In a letter to Peter Flemington, Hart gave his assessment of what went wrong. "On the conceptual front, it's clear the show wasn't planned or prepared properly. Just the notion of two hosts who don't communicate with each other is doomed to fail."<sup>105</sup> Peter Flemington agreed that although the changes were meant well that they "were neither interpreted nor implemented properly."<sup>106</sup>

At the end of the season and much at Flora MacDonald's request, the name of the series reverted to *North-South* and the program shortened to the former one-half hour — all this even though the audience rating had increased over the previous year to 300,000 viewers.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *North-South* Production Meeting 1993-1994 (Ottawa: IDRC, December 9, 1992), p. 3.

<sup>105</sup> Robbie Hart, Letter to Peter Flemington (Montreal, November 12, 1992).

<sup>106</sup> Peter Flemington, Letter to Robbie Hart (Toronto: VISION TV, December 1, 1992).

<sup>107</sup> Peter Flemington, Notes *North-South-North* Meeting (Ottawa: December 9, 1992), p. 1.

A Development Week Special, on the drought in South Africa, entitled *A Common Future? Canada and the Third World* was co-produced with CIDA and CCIC, with a contribution from OXFAM of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) and Video Tiers-Monde networking. It aired on February 2nd and 3rd, 1993 and attracted some 234,000 viewers with a fifty/fifty (50/50) gender split and fifty/fifty (50/50) under and over fifty years of age split.<sup>108</sup> In addition, four other programs were shot on location with some co-production money from CIDA.

It was heartening that Chris Pinney from CCIC had raised the co-production idea with Leo Rampen. He was included in both the drafting of the outline, MacDonald's texts, and editing. According to Leo Rampen, disputes arose with CCIC over the application for, and disbursement of, Telefilm and CIDA funding, the solicitation of interview subject and selection of program materials. Pinney did not "like Flora on camera and...tried to come up with a co-host."<sup>109</sup> However, according to Pinney, he enjoyed working on the co-production and would have done it again had his Board permitted it.<sup>110</sup>

Contact was made with other NGOs, such as Ten Days for World Development, concerning co-productions. Though a *North-South* special on Ten Days was produced, it was without their financial support. *North-South* had "contributor

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<sup>108</sup> Peter Flemington, Memorandum re: *North-South ODA 'Special'* (Toronto: VISION TV, April 28, 1993), p. 1.

<sup>109</sup> Leo Rampen to Peter Flemington, Letter re: *North-South-North, 92/93* (Montreal: Metavidea, December 22, 1993), p. 2.

<sup>110</sup> Chris Pinney, Personal Communication to Maureen Levitt (Toronto: September 20, 1994).

relationships with people such as Probe and Frontier in Manila, CADEC in Lima, IRIS in Dakar, Capricorn in Zimbabwe, New Dawn in Namibia, Video News in Johannesburg...URTNA in Nairobi...."<sup>111</sup> *North-South* supported Video Tiers-Monde in its application for funding of its Southern Africa Communications for Development Programs.

IDRC contributed \$300,000 to *North-South*. IDRC decided not to buy the rights to previous *North-South* series because, according to Louise Behan, Head of the Media Unit, there was "no way of knowing how much the series is being used or by whom."<sup>112</sup> Two IDRC-related *North-South* promos were produced: "...an advertisement in the March *Maclean's* magazine and a bookmark, to be stuffed into various 'development community' mailings, provided to bookstores, and so on [with a message from IDRC's President, Keith Bezanson on the back]."<sup>113</sup> IDRC adopted the Agenda 21 priorities (arising out of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro) with all funding now keeping to the themes of: more human development, better economic management, and sustainable use of the environment.<sup>114</sup> Under budget restraint, the Media Unit was now part of the Public Information Program. The Communications Division was dismantled, with Lyall Shields and David Nostbakken forming the

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<sup>111</sup> Peter Flemington to Nelson Price, Letter re: *South-North* Consultation (Toronto: VISION TV, January 29, 1993), p. 1.

<sup>112</sup> Louise Behan, Letter re: Rights to *North-South* Series to Peter Flemington (Ottawa: IDRC, July 7, 1992), p. 1.

<sup>113</sup> Peter Flemington, Letter re: *North-South-North* Promotion to Keith Bezanson (Toronto: VISION TV, January 27, 1993), p. 1.

<sup>114</sup> Lyall Shields, *North-South* Production Meeting 1993-94 (Ottawa: IDRC, December 9, 1992), p. 1.

IDRC-based secretariat for WETV, The Global Access Television Service initiative, which was supported with IDRC funds totalling one million dollars (\$1,000,000).

### Sixth Season: 1993-1994

IDRC's Public Information Project (PIP) recommended that IDRC's Board of Governors give consideration to a three-year funding proposal for *North-South* starting with the 1994-1995 season. The Board indicated that they wanted to see a "proposal for impact analysis, a comprehensive plan for bringing in new corporate and NGO financial partners and a fresh perspective on the future of the program."<sup>115</sup> These same concerns were expressed by all of the *North-South* producers. There was general agreement that without a solid, long-term funding base the program "could subsist but not grow,"<sup>116</sup> and would eventually "become stale and will cease to attract new viewers."<sup>117</sup>

It was suggested that WETV and *North-South* jointly hire a fundraiser and create a marketing tape that would be beneficial to both. According to Louise Behan, Head of the Media Unit of IDRC, *North-South* wasn't marketable by itself because VISION's small audience reach was considered prohibitive both by industry and by CIDA, "who doesn't even consider VISION a first window."<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Karen Spierkel, *North-South* Production Meeting (Ottawa: IDRC, April 16, 1993), p. 2.

<sup>116</sup> Peter Flemington, *North-South* Production Meeting (Ottawa: April 16, 1993), p. 3.

<sup>117</sup> David Nostbakken, *North-South* Production Meeting (Ottawa: IDRC, April 16, 1993), p. 3.

<sup>118</sup> Louise Behan, Personal Communication with Maureen Levitt (Ottawa: IDRC, September 2, 1994).

IDRC's Public Information Outreach Group hired Decima Research to undertake a survey of 133 respondents selected from the IDRC mailing list in "terms of its [*North-South's*] impact on Canadian viewers, the IDRC recognition factor, and other questions related to the Centre's role in television co-productions."<sup>119</sup>

The study indicated there was overwhelming support for IDRC to continue funding *North-South*. However, the survey also revealed that even after five years on air, *North-South* was not very familiar to IDRC's own constituency. There was also a low viewership of VISION TV.<sup>120</sup> How, then, could the series (or IDRC) be speaking to the general public? According to Louise Behan, Head of IDRC's Media Unit, "we just knew we couldn't go to the Board with the results — we would have been crucified with the results."<sup>121</sup> Peter Flemington validates Behan's view: "Whether the money was very well spent on Decima or not, it justified cutting to zero money to *North-South*."<sup>122</sup>

IDRC decided to cease funding *North-South* and shifted its television priorities to WETV and the *Agenda 21* series. Karen Spierkel, Director of the Public Information Program at IDRC, gave other reasons for IDRC funding withdrawal from *North-South*. She suggests that IDRC budget cuts narrowed production options, as well

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<sup>119</sup> Pierre Beemans, p. 3.

<sup>120</sup> Decima (1993) Research. *An Investigation of Attitudes Related to North-South*, p. 8. Only 7% of respondents watched VISION as "frequently/as often as possible"; 26% "occasionally"; 39% "seldom"; and 26% "never."

<sup>121</sup> Louise Behan, Personal Communication to Maureen Levitt (Ottawa: IDRC, September 2, 1994).

<sup>122</sup> Peter Flemington, Personal Communication to Maureen Levitt (September 3, 1994).

as "the feeling that television programs, whether they are *North-South* or *L.A. Law* can only attract viewers for so long."<sup>123</sup> More pragmatically, she put forward four overriding reasons for IDRC's withdrawal from *North-South*: (a) IDRC felt *North-South* was not delivering a broad enough audience for IDRC and its research; (b) it was offering only Canadian exposure; (c) there was no partnership to give IDRC funding respite or larger production support for *North-South*; and (d) *North-South* was outdated.<sup>124</sup> IDRC's prime goal for participating in *North-South* seemed to be as concerned with self-promotion as with promotion of development education. This is not surprising in the light of IDRC being a government-funded agency suffering under cutbacks. It does pose problems however, when a program such as *North-South* is not delivering the audience numbers to heighten IDRC visibility. Of course, if few are watching then the program's impact is also diminished.

IDRC's decision to cease funding support for *North-South* was withheld from those outside IDRC for a few months, according to Louise Behan, until everyone could be told together.<sup>125</sup> Leo Rampen's reflections about this time were vague: "In some mysterious way, the demise happened."<sup>126</sup> Peter Flemington experienced it as an incredibly complicated period, "almost Machiavellian."<sup>127</sup> Flemington had made a

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<sup>123</sup> Karen Spierkel, Personal Communication with Maureen Levitt (Ottawa: IDRC, September 8, 1994).

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> Louise Behan, Personal Communication with Maureen Levitt (Ottawa: IDRC, September 3, 1994).

<sup>126</sup> Leo Rampen, Personal Communication with Maureen Levitt (September 2, 1994).

<sup>127</sup> Peter Flemington, Personal Communication to Maureen Levitt (September 3, 1994).

personal decision to discontinue the fight for *North-South* and would have withdrawn VISION TV's support for the seventh season whether IDRC had chosen or not to continue the funding. The ongoing funding problems and lack of growth for *North-South* made continuing VISION support for *North-South* unattractive.

IDRC contributed \$300,000 to VISION TV towards programming for VISION TV's Friday International Development Evening — \$170,000 to help fund VISION TV specials with Flora MacDonald on development as part of the new *Agenda 21* series and \$130,000 to help VISION purchase rights to the *Agenda 21* series.

Everyone the researcher spoke to found the death of *North-South* painful.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### The Initial Study: The NGO Audience, the User and the Use of *North-South*

This chapter is intended to introduce the reader to the British Columbia NGO community that responded in the initial study and to gain insight into their viewing habits and use of *North-South*.

#### Section One: Defining the B.C. NGO Audience and its Participation

This brief thumbnail sketch of the NGO audience in British Columbia reveals their general lack of awareness and utilization of *North-South*.

All twenty-two B.C. NGO representatives interviewed classified themselves as independent viewers, not affiliated with a group utilizing *North-South*. The respondents were categorized by the amount of *North-South* programming they watched:

"never" — twelve respondents. The following three respondents: Mennonite Central Committee, British Columbia (MCC BC); Common Place (CMPL); and Victoria International Development Education Association (VIDEA) never saw *North-South*. They were not privileged to a showing by myself. These nine respondents: Link International Ministries (LINK); The Canadian Red Cross, B.C.-Yukon Division (X); The United Nations Association in Canada, Vancouver Branch, Africa 2000 program (UN2000); Save the Children Fund of B.C. (SCF); United Nations International Children's Educational Fund, B.C. (UNICEF); Tools for Peace (TP); Trade Union Group (TUG); Oxfam (OXFAM); and Amnesty International (AMNS) first saw *North-South* during the tape presentation at the research interview.

"once" — one respondent: B.C. Teachers' Federation (BCTF).



"infrequently" — seven respondents: Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA); United Church of Canada, B.C. Conference, Audiovisual Department (UCAV); Canada World Youth (CWY); Seva Service Society (SEVA); B.C. Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC); Global Village Nanaimo (GLVG); and Ten Days for World Development (TEN DAYS)

"sometimes" — one respondent: Canadian University Service Overseas, B.C. (CUSO)

"frequently" — one respondent: Canadian Institute of the Arts for Young Audiences (CIAYA)

Thirteen of the NGO respondents had "never" or "once" seen *North-South*. The reasons for not viewing the program varied: (a) not knowing the program was on (ten of thirteen); (b) not knowing what was on in upcoming shows (one of thirteen); and (c) they did not receive VISION TV with their cable subscription (one of thirteen). One respondent did not indicate why they did not view more (one of thirteen).

Three respondents classified under "never" were not privileged to a *North-South* viewing by me or otherwise. However, Waldo Neufeld from the Mennonite Central Committee, British Columbia (MCC BC) had learned of *North-South* during his former position as representative to the Canadian Interfaith Network.

With nine respondents, viewing was limited to the initial screening that I presented. Of those "never" or "once" respondents, only Cam Matheson from the Canadian Red Cross B.C.-Yukon Division (X) and Patrick Clarke (BCTF) knew the show was on (they had seen it in the *TV Guide*). Though "his interest was sparked," Matheson did not watch *North-South* because VISION was not available on his TV. Prior to the interview, Clarke had watched *North-South* only once and not again,

because he did not know what was on upcoming shows. This lack of pre-publicity made it difficult to incorporate the show into his busy schedule. Since the interview, Clarke has attempted to watch on a regular basis.

Of the seven NGOs who had watched *North-South* "infrequently," two did not answer why they did not view more. The remaining five cited a number of reasons: lack of pre-publicity; inconvenient timing (sharing the TV with family or evening meetings); and being uncommitted TV viewers. Only Leslie Campbell from the United Church of Canada, B.C. Conference Audiovisual Department (UCAV) taped the show in order to view it at her convenience at work (she did not have a VHS machine at home).

Moffat Clarke from Canadian University Services Overseas (CUSO), a "sometimes" viewer, cited lack of pre-information as his reason for not watching more. If he happened to encounter *North-South*, he watched it. Norma Graham from the Canadian Institute of the Arts for Young Audiences (CIAYA), as the only "frequent" viewer, did not respond.

When those who reported watching "sometimes" or "frequently" were asked to explain their interest in *North-South*, comments were favourable and surprisingly similar. The series stimulated learning at both the personal and professional levels. It introduced issues and areas of the world marginalized by the traditional media. Lesley Anderson of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) said that *North-South* gave "...broader access to information not found in other infrequent media... sometimes spiritual component...like reading *New Internationalist*...."

Moffat Clarke from CUSO reflected: "...One of most memorable [*North-South*] shows *Via El Salvador* sometimes renewed faith in the concept of development...refreshing and inspiring look at right issues...." Norma Graham of CIAYA, one respondent who viewed "frequently," mentioned she was "generally impressed with VISION."

Though the percentages vary widely, it is obvious from both the research and the 1993 Decima data that *North-South* did not attract a regular viewership. Only 6.8% of Decima (1993) respondents watched "frequently/often as possible," while as few as five per cent (5%) of the initial study's respondents reported they were "frequent" viewers. Some twenty-four per cent (24%) of Decima (1993) respondents said they watched *North-South* "occasionally," while five per cent (5%) of the initial study's respondents classified themselves as "sometimes" viewers. Thirty-two per cent (32%) of Decima (1993) respondents "seldom" watched *North-South*, while thirty-two per cent (32%) of the initial study's respondents were "infrequent" viewers.

A significant percentage of respondents in both studies had not watched *North-South* before the initial episode that I had presented to them in the research. Some fifty-nine per cent (59%) in the initial study and some 33.1% in the 1993 Decima study had never watched. Of 133 respondents in the 1993 Decima study, twenty-two per cent (22%) had never before heard of *North-South*. In the initial study, forty-five per cent (45%) learned of the program from me.

In the 1993 Decima research, two other reasons stand out to explain the lack of viewing; 24.8% "tend to forget that the program is on" and eighteen per cent (18%) of

respondents "don't watch TV." These are supported by similar comments from "infrequent" and "sometimes" respondents in the initial study.

Lack of interest in the series did not seem to be the root cause to explain the lack of repeated viewings. In the Decima research (1993), eighty-six per cent (86%) of respondents' interest in the program was in the range between "neither good nor poor" to "very good." Though less inclined, some forty-one per cent (41%) of the initial study's respondents indicated positive interest in and support for *North-South*.

While two respondents in the initial study suggested *North-South* presented information outside of mainstream media, this is not confirmed by the Decima research (1993). In fact, only 2.3% of respondents felt *North-South* "...covers less mainstream issues."

## Section Two: Audience Use of *North-South*

Generally, respondents did not tell others about *North-South* and encourage them to watch. Not only were many unaware of the show, out of those who did know about the program, only four out of nine informed and encouraged others to watch.

Though Dawn McLean (BCCIC) did not inform her constituency on a regular basis, she did verbally publicize *North-South* programs which had key implications for her work. The fact that her office would "only hear a few days before" (from the CCIC office) about specific upcoming program content was a limiting factor.

Most of the respondents could not name anyone else who watched *North-South*. The highest number cited (twenty) were members of Ten Days for World

Development (TEN DAYS), and most of these were from the Anglican community. Norma Graham from the Canadian Institute of the Arts for Young Audiences (CIAYA), the self-reported "frequent" viewer, stated she knew three or four. Even though Gary Henkelmann from Canada World Youth (CWY) asked his four field staff to watch *North-South* so as to be able to give the researcher feedback, they did not view the program.

Of the thirteen respondents, only Leslie Campbell from the United Church Audiovisual Department (UCAV) and Gary Henkelmann (CWY) had recorded the program. Campbell recorded it because she was unable to watch it when broadcast; Henkelmann to show to others. Moffat Clarke (CUSO) said he would have taped segments if he could, but did not have either cable or a VCR.

David Odhiambo of the United Nations Africa 2000 Program (UN2000) said that if tapes were available he would show them in his AFRICA 2000 school symposium participation program.

Fourteen out of fifteen respondents thought that supplementary written materials would be of value to them. Only Shirley Kepper (UNICEF) disagreed. Four of the seven "infrequent" respondents qualified their answer with a "maybe." When asked to describe what would be useful, Dawn McLean (BCCIC) summed up in a few sentences the broad range of suggestions that emerged: "Simpler, popular education format (not simplistic)....TV very intimidating. *North-South* needs to provide all of the following: education, outreach presentation; guideline...."

The 1993 Decima data suggests that the research for undeclared reasons will change the viewing patterns of the respondents. Those who watch "frequently/as often as possible" will increase from seven to thirty-two persons; those who watch "occasionally" will increase from twenty-four to forty-one; those who watch "seldom" will decrease from thirty-two to twenty; and those who watch "never" will decrease from thirty-three to four respondents. This appears to be speculation on the part of the respondents as no reason is given for their change in behaviour.

The initial study data suggests that some forty-four per cent (44%) of respondents who knew about *North-South* before the researcher's visit did not necessarily change their viewing habits just because they knew of the program, but their knowledge of the program had allowed them to spread word of it to others, though not widely.

### Section Three: Conclusions

The foregoing examination of the British Columbia NGO response to *North-South* and its use among that community suggests that *North-South* was not effectively eliciting participation from that audience, either in viewing the series or telling others about it. The NGO respondents cite a number of factors which could account for low viewing rates. Foremost, it appears that there was insufficient publicity to foster an awareness about the series and upcoming programs. To a lesser extent, VISION TV being on extended basic cablevision and subject to carriage by the individual cable

operators hampered viewership, as did a lack of commitment among the NGO communities to watch television in general.

However, I feel that even more publicity about *North-South* would probably not have been a sufficient catalyst to evoke a more sustained viewership. Even those respondents who knew of *North-South* and watched — did not (with the exception of Norma Graham [CLAYA]) become committed viewers, nor did many of them (only four) tell others to watch.

Obviously, *North-South* had not fostered a commitment from even these NGO respondents previously aware of the series. The NGO respondents, for the most part, did not use *North-South* for either personal or professional use, even though it pertained to a subject — international development — that should have been near and dear to their hearts. The following chapters probe further into why *North-South* failed to create linkage with the B.C. NGO respondents.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### The Initial Study: *North-South* Producer Choices that Colour NGO Response

IDRC, VISION TV, Metavidea Inc., Radio-Quebec and CIDA co-produced *North-South*. Their decisions concerning *North-South* scheduling, content, hosting, formatting, and production values directly affected viewer response to the program, and the potential of *North-South* to reach and teach a broad television audience.

#### Section One: Scheduling

At the time of this research, 1991-1992, *North-South* appeared on British Columbia television on the VISION TV channel (other than to those areas governed by Mountain Time) Mondays at 16:00 and 21:00. It was repeated Tuesdays at 07:00 and 12:00 and Saturdays at 17:30 and 21:30. Of the fourteen respondents to the question, "Is *North-South* on at a convenient time for you?", eleven stated, "yes."

Only two respondents said they were aware of the shows immediately preceding or following *North-South*. Leslie Campbell (UCAV) did not watch *Spirit Connection* immediately following *North-South* but taped it through her department and watched it at her convenience. She was one of three NGO respondents to receive the VISION TV *Great Viewer's Guide*, but the only one having knowledge of the surrounding programs. Shirley Rokeby (TEN DAYS) received a copy as Vancouver Island Coordinator for her organization, as did Norma Graham (CIAYA) as a VISION



TV member. Moffat Clarke (CUSO) (the only "sometimes" viewer) watched *Spirit Connection* following *North-South*.

Fourteen respondents, including Norma Graham (CIAYA), the most "frequent" viewer of *North-South*, did not know about either the preceding or following shows. Six did not respond, giving no indication why they did not.

It can be inferred from the limited data that the scheduling of *North-South* (and repeats) was at favourable times. What is missing is knowledge of both VISION TV and of *North-South* — its existence, content and upcoming episodes which would help stimulate viewing.<sup>128</sup>

The 1993 Decima research data is of little value as a comparative analysis concerning scheduling. Though eighty per cent (80%) of Decima respondents rated convenience of viewing time in the range of "neither good nor poor" to "very good," only 5.3% of respondents were from British Columbia.

In the initial study, a lack of awareness of either preceding or following shows among those who watch *North-South* on an "infrequent or more" basis indicates a highly selective viewing context among NGO respondents (i.e., those who are interested in information about international development and have specifically selected *North-South* from the schedule).

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<sup>128</sup> Duncan McKie, pp. 16, 18. Of ninety-six (96) respondents in the Decima (1993) research study, thirty-three (33) or approximately one-third (1/3) never watched *North-South*. Twenty-two per cent (22%) of 133 respondents had not heard of the program before.

## Section Two: Content

This section is about the 'educational effectiveness' of *North-South*'s content and is thus critical to any analysis of the series as learning resource material or its potential. It also asks whether *North-South* is entertainment or educational programming? What factors influenced its effects on the audience's ability to recognize 'connections' between north and south and, subsequently, act upon them whether that meant sending in a donation or adopting 'green' consumer habits, etc. What was the interplay between individual NGO respondent expectations for the series and the producer intent?

### Series Background

Many factors that determined *North-South* content were dependent upon the interaction among key players: IDRC, VISION TV, Metavidea Inc., Radio-Quebec, CIDA, and the host, the Honourable Flora MacDonald. The series was shaped by financial, footage and time frame limitations. According to Peter Flemington, Director of Programming for VISION TV and of *North-South*, "The series (subject matter) has been determined largely by what has been available to us from Radio Quebec [*sic*] and other independent suppliers [including IDRC itself]."<sup>129</sup>

IDRC through its contribution of \$25,000 per episode had, "by contract, the right to contribute its ideas and participate in the shaping of the series and individual

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<sup>129</sup> Peter Flemington, Fax to Maureen Levitt (Toronto: VISION TV, May 9, 1991).

program themes."<sup>130</sup> David Nostbakken, IDRC's then-Director of Communications, outlined the production of the series:

VISION, Meta Video [sic], the host and IDRC meet several times to discuss themes and approaches of the series....To some extent, the decisions taken on stories covered are determined by the kinds of events that actually occur. That is, there is no predetermined viewpoint which we wish to impose on the Third World to take the viewer from Point A to Point B over a period of time. Rather, we see the series as an exposition of issues and activities as they occur. We do, however, draw up a list of 26 names and 26 episodes in advance, in an attempt to follow that schedule.<sup>131</sup>

Metavidea Inc. produced *North-South* on contract from VISION. VISION TV owns the copyright to *North-South* and contributed "the hosting segments plus a number of interviews the host undertakes in relation to the stories contained in each episode."<sup>132</sup> The rest of the footage was either "acquired or adapted,"<sup>133</sup> although Peter Flemington had earlier noted that this was changing during the fourth season. "We have already shot stories with Flora in South Africa and she is now in Sri Lanka. Probably one-third of the shows will have an item with Flora on location as host."<sup>134</sup>

Though VISION TV had final editorial control over content, Peter Flemington recognized "in practice, much is delegated to METAVIDEA [sic]. Programs are,

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<sup>130</sup> David Nostbakken, Fax to Maureen Levitt (Ottawa: IDRC, May 27, 1991), p. 1.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> Peter Flemington to Maureen Levitt (May 9, 1991), p. 1.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

occasionally but not always, viewed by VISION. IDRC gets dubs...."<sup>135</sup> David Nostbakken explained why IDRC did not view the final product before it aired. "IDRC wishes to act at arms length [*sic*] as a sponsor in this respect. Meta Video [*sic*] and VISION TV need to be respected as having real content and editorial control for the purposes of journalistic integrity."<sup>136</sup> Conflict of interest was also thereby minimized for Nostbakken, as he was also then-Chair of VISION TV.

Radio-Quebec contributed between \$1.8 and two million (\$2 million) dollars worth of video-taped material from the French version of *Nord-Sud*. Although *North-South* relied heavily on this footage, the worldwide distribution rights were and are held by Radio-Quebec (with contract rights negotiated to other distributors, such as Film West, which is handling the Anglophone Canadian non-theatrical market). This clause was a source of much chagrin for CIDA and IDRC, who wished to circulate *North-South* among their constituencies and for broader educational purposes.

According to Peter Flemington:

Funding has precluded the opportunity, as yet, for an educational 'master plan' although we hope that the package is interesting and attractive enough to hold an audience on a competitive basis and to leave them with the feeling they've learned something they didn't know before.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> David Nostbakken to Maureen Levitt (May 27, 1991), pp. 1-2.

<sup>137</sup> Peter Flemington to Maureen Levitt (May 9, 1991), p. 2. Flemington has never elaborated on the meaning of educational 'master plan.' I had asked him how he intended the viewer to learn from *North-South*. This was his response.

## Content Evaluation

Respondents were asked a number of questions concerning *North-South* content designed to probe the contribution the program was making to viewer learning of *North-South* issues and to search out the variables affecting this.

Most of the nine NGO respondents who had seen *North-South* more than once felt that the programs contained the most current information on the subject. Only Norma Graham (CIAYA) felt the information was sometimes outdated. However, all fourteen respondents questioned the meaning of 'authentic' information, as stated in the interview protocol. I defined 'Authenticity' as "without deliberate intrusion into the economic south's 'ownership' of program content, that is, in the video portions of the program, people from the economic south were allowed to 'speak for themselves' without heavy editorializing." In fact, none could commit an unequivocal "yes" regarding authenticity of information. Personal knowledge limits and a lack of comparative programs prohibited evaluation.

Those who responded most positively regarding *North-South's* presentation of authentic information represented most of those in the "infrequent," "sometimes" and "frequent" categories (eight out of nine). They did so cautiously and also tended to view *North-South* as a source of information about international development alternative to the mainstream media. Marjorie Stewart of Global Village Nanaimo (GLVG) said "yes," because *North-South*, "didn't offend," and Moffat Clarke (CUSO) found he, "tended to believe *North-South* knowing IDRC's involvement."

Those six respondents who felt *North-South* did not present the most authentic information on the subject tended to be first-time viewers, except for Lesley Anderson (YWCA), an "infrequent" viewer. They cited various reasons for their criticisms: a lack of a broad framework for analysis; looking at the wrong issues; lack of complete information; misinformation; and misleading information. David Odhiambo of the United Nations Association in Canada, Africa 2000 program (UN2000), and Miriam Palacios (OXFAM) were the most vocal in opposition to the presentation of the material in the respective programs they viewed. In reaction to the segment entitled *Burundi*, Odhiambo said: "...he didn't get information of other than democracy issues."<sup>138</sup> Palacios was extremely agitated over the content in a segment called *Overcoming Illiteracy*. She said:

The scenes contained misinformation. Honduras has 74% illiteracy, therefore, government funding of schools is not great [narrator states 'government funded school']. The illiteracy project in Eritrea went underground because of the war. Nicaragua needs discussion of how much can be achieved; how much is needed...the program focuses only on north cuts in funding: I would recommend to OXFAM's constituency that they not watch this program because of the line about World Bank ['Now the World Bank and regional banks are finally realizing illiteracy and poverty go hand in hand.']. ...Family planning is a north cultural concept. What really needs to be mentioned is the poverty and economic conditions wrought chiefly by northern exploitation....Video propaganda about birth control pills, sunning, and colonialism...Flora ends talking about cuts in funding and the Commonwealth of learning. Certainly the establishment of that body suggests cuts in funding are not here in north. Her plea focuses only on North, other than giving aid to school....Generally (when not misleading) the program had

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<sup>138</sup> See Discussion with David Odhiambo, Section 4, Host; and Transcript of *Burundi*, Appendix I.

some good points: education equals power; emphasis on women  
 ....Good preliminary step — it spurs one onto further analysis.  
 Need one program that is harder hitting, then gauge reaction

<sup>139</sup>  
 ....

I agree with Palacios that the *North-South* discussion presented in *Overcoming Literacy* appears to have a northern bias. It seems this is due to lack of information and/or misinformation, which suggests both content conceptualization and editorial problems with *North-South*.

When questioned whether *North-South* explained the economic, social and political links between the nations of the economic north and economic south, most respondents felt *North-South* presented only an introductory overview of this challenge. More comprehensive social analysis was necessary to provide such connections. Patrick Clarke (BCTF) was the only participant to respond positively. With the exception of Lesley Anderson (YWCA) and Deidra McDevitt (SEVA), those respondents who watched only one episode tended to be more negative than the heavier viewer.

Most respondents felt *North-South* could do a better job. Marjorie Stewart (GLVG), Shirley Rokeby (TEN DAYS) and Leslie Campbell (UCAV) were more positive. Marjorie Stewart and Shirley Rokeby felt, "*North-South* puts a human face on things." Leslie Campbell was more explicit: "*North-South* needs to try to compare us to them rather than them to us. Only the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops attempts such....The connection is made better than other media....Problem as seen in

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<sup>139</sup> See transcript of *Overcoming Illiteracy*, Appendix II.

lying with IDRC being a publicly-funded agency. How do you walk the fine line between government political propaganda and attempting to establish linkages and still stay on the air...?"

There was positive support from six NGO respondents (infrequent viewers) about *North-South* program topics. Most significant was agreement from the only "frequent" viewer, Norma Graham (CIAYA). All respondents expressed interest in the *North-South* program descriptions found in the *Great Viewer's Guide*. When the NGO respondents were asked by the researcher for subjects which could be addressed or explored by *North-South*, the responses were enthusiastic. Many respondents were surprised that their input was being solicited.

Only one respondent was motivated to take personal action by any of the issues raised in the series. Norma Graham (CIAYA) occasionally sent in a cheque after watching a program and had become a VISION TV member. Six of the seven "infrequent" viewers felt *North-South* had no direct effect on the level of their personal action because they were already involved in development education within their own constituencies. However, there was general agreement that *North-South* supplemented their knowledge, which they felt was useful "ammunition." Dawn McLean (BCCIC) mentioned that with more information about *North-South* programs she would have "put it in *BCCIC News*." Gary Henkelmann (CWY) felt that *North-South* enabled him to not just "keep abreast of what is happening," but transfer that knowledge to people he works with (twelve field staff). Moffat Clarke (CUSO) said he was encouraged



after viewing *Via El Salvador* to speak with people from interest groups who might have an interest in seeing and using the program (e.g., women in Peru).

When asked whether or not *North-South* should sustain an issue over several programs, the majority of the respondents (twelve of fifteen) felt that "sometimes" would be appropriate depending on the topic. Respondents expressed the belief that a more provocative examination of issues would be possible in an ongoing series, as one-half hour per subject was insufficient and merely an introduction to particularly complicated and interconnected issues. For example, David Odhiambo (UN2000) suggested a series related to the debt program with an examination of structural re-adjustment programs (which he thought mistakenly treat all African countries alike). The benefits of such a series would be furthering understanding of the topic, possibly encouraging people to sustain viewing, and in providing an opportunity for dialogue in between. If publicized, interest groups could structure discussion around and along with the series topic. Norma Graham (CIAYA) felt the programs would have to be more engaging if in series format. Lesley Anderson (YWCA) and Dawn McLean (BCCIC) gave an unqualified "yes" because of greater time allowance for in-depth analysis of issues. Gary Henkelmann stated "no" — "hard enough to see one." Patrick Clarke (BCTF) cautioned the "problem with a series approach is in seeing them all....A one-half hour format is usable in schools and numerous issues can be covered."

Respondents felt a series format (whether inclusive or on a "sometimes" basis) needed a more lengthy planning process than individual programs demand. Cathy Taylor (VIDEA) suggested:

[that *North-South* producers]...need a process to create a three-year plan. You must aim for a series (eight parts) which in the end will be able to self-teach the fundamental background of global education. It is problematic if the audience is not informed in the first sessions about the global economic situation. An 'integrating' cyclical format is needed. Don't assume what the audience is thinking. The audience needs to share the same framework, same historical analysis at any entry stage. Each series needs to conclude with transcripts.

The question, "Do you feel that *North-South* fairly presents both sides of an issue and is journalistically sound?" was posed; clear answers were not elicited because, first of all, respondents felt objectivity was impossible, and also, that "the other point of view" (i.e., not normally shown by mainstream media) merited attention. Therefore, they did not mind if *North-South* was considered biased. Lorri Rudland (TUG) suggested that "if there are two sides to an issue..., the 'other' side must be the underlying causes and questioned [along with Lesley Anderson (YWCA)] the ability of the *North-South* program on *Zimbabwe* and the *Guatemalan Orphanage* to articulate them." Moffat Clarke (CUSO) liked *North-South* because "it enabled people to speak for themselves." Gary Henkelmann (CWY) felt that a "left-of-centre-bleeding-heart-liberal" point of view was being presented.

Five of the "infrequent," "sometimes" or "frequent" respondents ranked *North-South* as "good" when asked to evaluate it in terms of effectiveness of presentation of the basic needs of the world's poor. This included the most "frequent" viewer, Norma Graham (CIAYA). Deidra McDevitt (SEVA) gave it a "fair" rating, while Lesley Anderson (YWCA) gave it a "poor."

Of the four who spoke to the ability of *North-South* to convey "the richness of their [Third World] culture," Marjorie Stewart (GLVG) felt *North-South* did an excellent job; Gary Henkelmann (CWY) and Norma Graham (CIAYA) felt it did a "good" job; and Leslie Campbell (UCAV) gave it a "fair ranking" because she felt the economic analysis often overwhelmed the cultural depiction.

*North-South* fared less well in the assessment of the role of Canada's people and government (responsibility and connection). Two of the six respondents gave it a fair rating and four a poor one. There clearly is a perception among respondents that the linkage between north and south was not well-established by the series. When asked to comment, most felt "the full picture" was not being given; more information and analysis and suggestions for action were needed about Canadian involvement and about the issues from an "indigenous" (i.e., people from the countries being portrayed) perspective. David Odhiambo (UN2000) questioned whether or not the producers of the footage were from Canada or from the country being portrayed.

When asked in what area respondents felt *North-South* was strongest, reactions were almost evenly divided between research and discussion/review. Most of the "one-time" viewers tended to choose "research," while five out of eight "infrequent" respondents supported "discussion/review." One hundred per cent (100%) of the respondents felt *North-South* was weakest in "action," as elaborated upon by Leslie Campbell (UCAV) who said: "[T]here is no structure through which the viewer can be active. I often provide people with material and talk to them over the phone; they are not interested in a charity model."

All respondents saw *North-South* as an educational program. Only Lorri Rudland (TUG) and Murray Reiss and Phil Wiseman of Tools for Peace (TP) thought it was a travel show as well. This is significant because even those who had been critical of its content for various reasons (particularly citing omission of systemic causes) recognized its prime *raison d'être*.

Three of nine respondents felt that *North-South* was a call to action. These were all "infrequent" viewers and included Lesley Anderson (YWCA). Her response is somewhat contradictory to her previous opinion that *North-South* did not present "the other side." Ironically, Moffat Clarke (CUSO) felt *North-South* was not a call to action and Norma Graham (CLAYA) debated its potential as such, yet both responded with action after watching specific programs. Clarke told others about the *North-South* program *Via El Salvador*, and Graham sent in donations after watching some *North-South* programs.

Sixty per cent (60%) of respondents (six of ten) felt *North-South's* content did not sufficiently explore the subject matter to induce change in their attitudes about a subject. However, the more consistently respondents viewed the program the more positive their response about its potential to do so. One hundred per cent (100%) (even from more sceptical "once" respondents) felt *North-South* would now motivate them to seek further information on the topic. Marjorie Stewart (GLVG) and Shirley Rokeby (TEN DAYS) emphasized a need to "know where to find that further information." Four (the others did not respond) of the first-time viewer respondents felt *North-South's* content would not influence their political, economic or social actions. Those

who watched more frequently were more open to the possibility, although three out of seven respondents did not think they would be significantly influenced.

The Decima research (1993) data regarding response to *North-South's* content reveals there are areas of obvious agreement with the findings of the initial study.<sup>140</sup> Both sets of data confirm that *North-South* is perceived as an educational program. The Decima research (1993) states that 114 out of 132 respondents or eighty-six per cent (86%) saw the educational value of *North-South* in the range of "neither good nor poor" to "very good." What the 1993 Decima research did not do was clarify what is meant by educational value. By using the assessment protocol as introduced in Chapter One: Introduction, Section Two, Methodological Approach and applying it to the Decima research, some comparative insight can be gained. Under "General Comments about a *North-South* episode" (Decima, 1993), four answers stand out because of their high percentage response: no answer/solutions provided; more focus on recipients; unclear/lack of detail/focus; and educational/informative/provoking. Four responses to "Suggest How Program can be Improved" also obtained significantly higher percentages: provide solutions/alternatives; more dialogue with recipients; more background/information; and no opinion. More detail/depth/focus needed is the next highest percentage. A low percentage of the 1993 Decima respondents (4.5%) stated the *North-South* episode they viewed "increased [their] awareness of issues" and that it

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<sup>140</sup> However, it is necessary to remember the limitations surrounding any comparisons between the two. These have been stated previously under "Methodology." In the Decima (1993) Research data the confounding particulars are: no categorization of respondents by number of times watched; pre-selected responses to choose from concerning general comments about and ways to improve *North-South*; the limited sample size; and viewing of a single episode.

was "an important issue" (5.3%). This suggests *North-South* did not supplement their knowledge to any extent. From this comparative analysis, it suggests the Decima (1993) respondents, like respondents in the initial study, felt *North-South's* subject matter required further information and critical analysis to move the series beyond its "introductory" focus.

However, *North-South* seemed to spark the interest of respondents. In the initial study of the thesis research, respondents said it would "motivate them to seek further information on the subject." Decima Research (1993) respondents found the show "informative" and "provoking." "Discussion/Debate" is a fuzzy area for comparison. "Infrequent," "sometimes" and "frequent" respondents in the initial study felt *North-South* was strongest in discussion/review. Of the respondents in the Decima research (1993), 3.8 per cent did not feel more discussion/debate was needed. Does this mean agreement? It is difficult to determine when Decima's definition of discussion/debate is not more fully defined.

The two studies offered significantly different views on the issue of Canadian involvement in the program. Only 3.8% of Decima's research (1993) respondents felt they "need more on Canada's involvement." Only 4.5% felt that in order to improve the program, it should "relate...to Canada/Canadian involvement." In the initial study, respondents felt linkage between Canada and countries of the economic south was ill-defined.

### Section Three: Format

A resounding number (15 out of 16) affirmed the *North-South* program format when presented with the host introduction, film report(s), host review and look-ahead. The major criticisms centered around the program's flat imagery and audio (not as "entertaining" as what's generally available on TV) and lack of critical analysis.

Nine out of eleven respondents (9 of 11) felt the current format provided sufficient introduction of the subject matter to keep their interest throughout the show. The response was mixed (divided among "yes," "no" and "possibly") regarding the show's ability to change their attitudes about the subject. There was no correlation between respondent attitudes about the influence of the show and time spent watching the program.

Most respondents saw potential in the *North-South* format for action and change in its ability to provide the viewer with critical analysis found within the program and from outside sources. When asked whether or not persons or panels should be invited into the studio to speak with the host on selected topics, "occasionally" was the response heard most often. The degree of enthusiasm for panels depended on the topic.

Moffat Clarke's (CUSO) view was "if no 'connector' [to Canadians] then it is important specialized knowledge be brought to the viewer which a panel could do." Norma Graham (CIAYA) cautioned: "All depends on the panel and moderator." A need to broaden the base of panelists usually used in international development forums was identified. This included selecting individuals from the regions of Canada; from

grassroots organizations; and from the countries under discussion. Dawn McLean of BCCIC in the program on the Horn said it was not necessary to go "with best known names on issue,...but with spokespeople who are comfortable with the medium and fairly knowledgeable about the issue." For example, both David Odhiambo (UN2000) and the Reverend Paul Ndukwe (LINK) thought that Burundian nationals, not Yves Payette and Flora MacDonald, should have been called upon to analyze the problems raised in the *Burundi* program. "The problem is both in Burundi and here. The call to action of elites here will result in action there."

Respondents who were leery of any panelist involvement felt 'talking heads' were not effective for imparting general knowledge. There was also a feeling that time constraints made it impossible to pursue all interests and only a general awareness could be raised by the program. Among those favourably disposed, they felt the panel should appear at the end of the show, or respondents who thought the show should be extended to an hour felt it should be at the end of the first half-hour. Lesley Anderson (YWCA) thought that live panel discussions presented an opportunity to conduct phone-ins.

Four specific formatting recommendations were: (a) to raise questions for discussion (by the viewers) at the end of the program; (b) to invite regional panel participation after the video segment; (c) to do "out-of-studio segments" (e.g., by getting panelists to comment on the similarity of their problems with the country under review); and (d) to lengthen the program to one hour.



Fifty-three per cent (53%) of respondents (eight out of 15) felt the show should be extended to an hour. Those who did so recognized the 'Catch-22' in doing that. Specifically, interest would have to be stimulated and held for much longer than the current format; therefore, format changes would likely be necessary to make *North-South* more exciting/captivating. Would this occur at the expense of content considerations? The "sometimes" respondents suggested such a decision would depend on the topic under consideration, whether or not the story could be adequately told in one-half an hour, and further suggested three to four one-hour "specials" per season might prove interesting. Shirley Kepper (UNICEF) felt that with a format expansion program publicity and audience feedback would be crucial. Leslie Campbell (UCAV) suggested program expansion "to one hour once every quarterly viewing period."

The format elicited respondent enthusiasm for *North-South*. Ninety-four per cent (94%) of initial study respondents affirmed the format, with eighty per cent (80%) of Decima (1993) respondents rating the style/format of the program between "neither good nor poor" to "very good." Only 1.5% "disliked the interview format." The initial study is detailed in its examination of the format's impact on interest and information-seeking, while the 1993 Decima study does not permit that correlation.

In the initial study, fifty-three per cent (53%) expressed enthusiasm for an hour-long format. In the 1993 Decima research, a scant 5.3% to 6.8% call for it.

#### Section Four: Host

Most respondents (nine of twelve) felt the Honourable Flora MacDonald lent credibility to the issues raised in *North-South*, though many (seven of twelve) thought she lacked dynamism. Fears that her political background would unduly influence program content and detrimentally affect viewer perception of *North-South* was counter-balanced by respondents who felt her public recognizability was an overriding asset. Those who knew both Peter Trueman and Flora MacDonald in the host role found Trueman a more affable and knowledgeable figure because of his previous role as GLOBAL TV News anchor (four out of five). Only Gary Henkelmann (CWY) felt MacDonald was more credible than Trueman, because "she was perceived as a neutral person." There was a general lack of knowledge about MacDonald's involvement with the international development community.

The Reverend Paul Ndukwe (LINK) suggested the producers of *North-South* might want to sponsor "nationals" who would return to their own countries to help produce *North-South* segments.

The more that I go to Africa the more that I am burdened with responsibility to do something. There are 11,000 Africans in British Columbia who have no say in their home countries. Get them involved in decisions that will affect their own leaders. Give them access to both grassroots and elite. Take the leadership to mother's kitchen.

Thus, MacDonald's role would be more as a moderator commentator. Ten out of thirteen respondents (10 of 13) felt the host clearly introduced key concepts to be presented in the program. Gary Henkelmann (CWY) reported he tended to "tune in

after the introduction by Flora." He suggested: "Rita Deverell's *Stopwatch* could be longer to bring the audience up-to-date on development issues to be examined in the *North-South* program that follows her synopsis."

Six out of ten (6 of 10) felt the host summarized during wrap-up, though whether it was carried out "effectively" or "simplistically" was debated. The shallowness of the discussion as to the systemic problems of the topic being reviewed was challenged. Norma Graham (CIAYA), the most "frequent" viewer, felt that the host intro and host review were fairly well done and important. "The questions posed were important for pondering; it was an attempt to bring home the issue to Canadians."

David Odhiambo (UN2000) was most critical of the host's role in presenting misinformation because of a failure to present information. In analysis of the *North-South* program on *Burundi*,<sup>141</sup> he said the program was misleading about problems facing the country.

He found the closing between the producer, Yves Payette, and the Honourable Flora MacDonald most disturbing. Payette's closing words to MacDonald stated: "Fundamentally, I don't think it is an ethnic problem...because they all belong to the black race anyhow. It's not a racist problem it's a power game...." Odhiambo and the researcher discussed racism/ethnicity as it pertained to German and Jewish communities in the Second World War, both being white communities. Odhiambo felt the program needed "a historical discussion of how tribes are nations...the ethnic

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<sup>141</sup> See Appendix II *North-South* program on *Burundi*.

conflict...population division." Miriam Palacios (OXFAM) was also extremely critical of the host dialogue in the *North-South* program, *Overcoming Illiteracy*.

There is no breakdown of the 1993 Decima data so that the research can ascertain reaction to the content and host/interviewer segments. In the initial study, this was possible. Therefore, no comparative analysis can be made, even though the host/interviewer introductory and wrap-up dialogue is an important reflector of producer attitudes and understanding about the issues.

MacDonald's role as host/interviewer appeared fairly well<sup>\*</sup> accepted by respondents in both studies. In "General Comments about *North-South* episode," only 5.3% of respondents disliked the host/interviewer, while 4.5% of respondents thought a better host/interviewer would improve the program. Some seventy-five per cent (75%) of respondents in the initial study thought MacDonald was "credible" (though fifty-eight per cent [58%] thought she lacked "dynamism"), while eighty-three per cent (83%) of Decima (1993) respondents rated her performance in the range of "neither good nor poor" to "very good."

### **Section Five: Production Values**

Repeat viewers gave *North-South* a "good" rating in relation to other programs about international affairs on other networks or stations. Those who rated *North-South* "poor" were new viewers. When questioned further, most respondents cited difficulty making judgments when little else was available. They tended, therefore, to compare *North-South* with individual programs on international development. Respondents

could not name any other series on international development but vaguely remembered one with Alan Gotlieb in the summer of 1991 on Knowledge Network and another on International Debt in 1990. Though Lesley Anderson (YWCA) felt *North-South* didn't present "as wide a range of viewpoints" in comparison to other programs, Leslie Campbell (UCAV) was pleased "areas were presented not covered in other places." Gary Henkelmann (CWY) felt: "It was better than most seen. Others [international development programs] are opinionated in support of the network or that country that wanted the project. Here is still some level of objectivity."

David Odhiambo (UN2000) raised the issue of "...tremendous responsibility that goes with the assignment of presenting *North-South* issues...[in the context of the program on *Burundi*]...which seems to be an attempt to address misconceptions but creates, instead, what it should attempt to eradicate."<sup>142</sup>

Nearly all respondents gave a good rating to *North-South* production of "visuals" (13 out of 16), "sound" (14 out of 16), and "editing" (16 out of 26). Surprisingly, Norma Graham (CIAYA) rated all these elements as "fair." Shirley Kepper's (UNICEF) comment was complimentary. "The shots told the stories. Excellent development education material."

Both studies indicate respondents felt *North-South* could hold its own in comparison to other international development programs. In the 1993 Decima study, the breakdown of comparative reaction into percentages is helpful: 18.2% felt *North-*

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<sup>142</sup> See Discussion with David Odhiambo, Section Three, *Host*.

*South* was "a lot better"; thirty-three per cent (33%) felt it was "a little better"; and thirty-three per cent (33%) felt it was "no better or no worse."

Response to *North-South's* audio and visual quality is favourably compared between the initial and Decima research (1993). In the Decima research, the program's sound and visuals garner an eighty-two per cent (82%) rating in the range of "neither good nor poor" to "very good."

## Section Six: Conclusions

In the conclusion to Chapter Four, lack of publicity was singled out as the main factor inhibiting viewership. However, the research suggested a need to look further into the low response to *North-South* by British Columbia NGOs. It was apparent that once respondents had watched *North-South*, they still did not become hooked into regular viewing. Could it be the program did not motivate respondents to action (e.g., increasing viewing or causing viewer advocacy about the issues presented in the program, etc.)?

The *North-South* protocol was designed to examine the program's potential in educating the viewer. How much did respondents learn from watching *North-South* as a cumulative learning experience? The hierarchy of learning was defined as: introduction to the countries and people of the economic south; introduction to the interdependency of the north and south; recognition of the social, political and economic changes that must occur in the economic north; and the role of political will and private action in the course of sustainable international development.

Though *North-South* was seen as an 'educational' program, the limited research suggests it did not educate respondents beyond an introduction "to the countries and peoples of the economic south."<sup>143</sup> In the research, there was almost unanimous agreement, with one exception, that *North-South* did not explain the economic, social and political links between the nations of the economic north and south. Most felt that northern complicity and responsibility were clouded by a failure to examine the underlying causes of the issue(s) raised in the program.

Although the portrayal of basic needs among the world's poor and *North-South's* ability to convey the richness of their culture received "good" ratings, "fair" to "poor" ratings were given by respondents on the effectiveness of *North-South's* portrayal of the role of Canada's people and government.<sup>144</sup> Evaluation of the wrap and, to some extent, the host also repeats the preceding criticisms.

Failure to watch the show on any regular basis suggests that while *North-South* is perceived as 'education,' it is not, in itself, effective in motivating the respondents beyond superficial professional interest. In fact, one hundred per cent (100%) of respondents felt *North-South* was weakest in "action," though three of the "infrequent" viewers felt the program was meant to be a "call to action."

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<sup>143</sup> The Decima (1993) findings support this evidence. A high percentage of Decima (1993) respondents gave as their comments about the *North-South* episode they watched: "No answers/solutions provided; more focus on recipients; and unclear/lack detail/focus." In their suggestions as to how the program could be improved, they suggested: "Provide solutions/alternatives; more dialogue with recipient; more background/information and more depth/detail focus."

<sup>144</sup> This finding was not supported by the Decima (1993) research, where only 3.8% of respondents felt more discussion/debate was needed on Canada's involvement; and 4.5% of respondents felt it was needed in order to improve relations to Canada/Canadians.

More frequent viewing, however, did elicit a more positive response toward *North-South* as an 'alternative' to the traditional media with regard to presentation of *North-South* issues. The program was considered by some as 'biased' in its oppositional format and presentation of life in the economic south, though none could commit to 'authenticity' of information (i.e., "without deliberate intrusion into economic south ownership of content"<sup>145</sup>).

More frequent viewers also felt *North-South* was strongest in discussion and review, in contrast to one-time viewers who elected "research." Those watching more frequently were more open to the potential of *North-South* to change their attitudes about a subject and influence their political, economic and social actions. Those viewers watching *North-South* for the first time during the interview were the most critical of *North-South*. Fifty per cent (50%) of them, in addition to general agreement that a broad framework for analysis was lacking, felt *North-South* either presented incomplete information, misinformation, and/or misleading information. Possible explanations for their more critical perspective include: the specific program watched (either *Burundi*, *Overcoming Illiteracy*, or the *Zimbabwe/Guatemalan Orphanage* program); personal or organizational ideological preferences; and their lack of familiarity with the series as a whole.

Those one-time viewers most critical of *North-South's* ability to control information were originally from the economic south. Miriam Palacios (OXFAM) was

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<sup>145</sup> The Decima (1993) findings re: 'authenticity' suggest from a high percentage of respondent support that more focus on the recipients and more dialogue with the recipients was necessary.



from Central America. David Odhiambo (UN2000) is from Kenya, and the Reverend Paul Ndukwe (LINK) is also from Africa. They used specific examples to illustrate their fears that *North-South's* content has been shaped by a western ideological perspective, thereby denying any ownership from the economic south. These respondents felt that representative indigenous communities, both abroad and within Canada, should be active in determining and evaluating *North-South* content.<sup>146</sup>

In my view, the significance of the preceding finding must not be dismissed. The concerns and accusations of misinformation by Odhiambo and Palacios must be considered. They suggest the need for the inclusion of people from the countries being portrayed, either at the content development stage of *North-South* or, at the very least, in screening the shot footage for accuracy of information.

The most problematic area for shaping people's beliefs and assumptions about the economic south lay in the host wrap (though the introduction and voice-over should also be evaluated). Here, analysis needed to be carefully constructed and reviewed because of its potential to shape opinion. As seventy-five (75%) of research respondents found Flora MacDonald credible, it was then even more important that what she said was accurate.<sup>147</sup>

The above data gathered from NGO respondents suggests *North-South* producers needed to review the program's ability to meet its stated objectives ("...a

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<sup>146</sup> As mentioned previously, a significant percentage of the Decima (1993) study respondents recommended that *North-South* focus on more dialogue with recipients.

<sup>147</sup> Eighty-three per cent (83%) of Decima (1993) respondents gave Flora MacDonald a "neither good nor poor" or "very good" rating.

tradition of taking a hard look at disturbing issues [of the economic south] while at the same time providing a hopeful glimpse at how Canadians are contributing to creative solutions"<sup>148</sup>) in light of its limitation as a teaching tool for sustainable international development. Rather than significantly contributing to viewer understanding of the supreme causes of underdevelopment and the solutions which they could adopt to help achieve sustainable and equitable development, the series was little more than a vehicle for selling development aid.

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<sup>148</sup> Richelle Wiseman, p. 2.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Marketing, Publicity and the *North-South* Partnership with VISION TV and IDRC

#### Section One: Publicity

According to Peter Flemington:

*North-South* reaches a quarter of a million viewers each week (combining the Monday/Tuesday and Saturday numbers). The Average Minute audience is about 110,000. These figures are from Nielsen "people meters": 6 week spring/91 average.<sup>149</sup> The Saturday broadcast ranks 19th in VISION program audiences; Monday's ranks 23rd. It attracts virtually equal numbers of men and women and the profile is heavily weighted to the educated and managerial.<sup>150</sup>

A significant segment of the market was captured, especially when one considers the limited funding available for publicity. Peter Flemington described the *North-South* public relations network, which "...consists largely of an annual launch release for the series, a mention in our weekly press hilite package (averaging one every three weeks), descriptive listings in our *Great Viewer's Guide* (circulation 40-50,000) and goodwill which emanates from Flora's travels and appearances."<sup>151</sup>

David Nostbakken from IDRC elaborated:

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<sup>149</sup> By the end of 1993, the numbers had risen to 300,000.

<sup>150</sup> Peter Flemington to Maureen Levitt (May 9, 1991), p. 2.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*

...[Public relation is] essentially on [sic] 'air notice' from VISION TV and notice from *TV Guide*....IDRC, for its part, makes reference to *North-South* in its various publications to government and non-government agencies and through its own internal mailing system. Public relations specifically targeted at the NGO community has consisted of meetings between VISION, IDRC, and the NGO community (including the [NGO group] BIU — Broadcasting for International Understanding) to solicit their interest in participating in the series through contribution of their footage and funding...[and] in the positioning of *North-South* to serve the needs and interests of the NGO community....[They have also been requested to keep *North-South*] up-to-date on activities and events that may be of interest to be included in the series.<sup>152</sup>

According to Peter Flemington: "For a number of reasons they [the meetings] have not been too successful, although CCIC has provided some grant money for the occasional 'special' on VISION."<sup>153</sup>

Ten of the twenty-two NGO respondents heard about *North-South* from me during the interview. Of the twelve who had previous knowledge of *North-South*, one (Shirley Rokeby) knew about it because her organization, Ten Days for World Development, received a copy of the *Great Viewer's Guide*; one (Dawn McLean) heard of it through CCIC in her role as coordinator of B.C. Council for International Cooperation; one (Leslie Campbell) knew of it because of her position with the United Church of Canada, B.C. Conference Audiovisual Department; one (Waldo Neufeld) had heard of it because of his former position as Mennonite Central Committee

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<sup>152</sup> David Nostbakken to Maureen Levitt (May 27, 1991), p. 3.

<sup>153</sup> Peter Flemington to Maureen Levitt (May 9, 1991), p. 1.

representative to CIN; one chanced upon the program in the *TV Guide*; six happened upon it on their television sets while channel-flipping; and one did not say.

Gary Henkelmann (CWY) stated that if publicity about *North-South* was available, he would mail it out to his constituency throughout the province. It was unanimously agreed that there was not enough advance information on upcoming *North-South* shows. Shirley Kepper (UNICEF) felt if *North-South* was advertised more extensively, it would reach a larger audience.

The 1993 Decima research challenges the above finding that more publicity is needed about *North-South* in order to secure viewership. When asked to suggest how the program could be improved, only 4.5% of respondents mentioned the "need to advertise the program" and only 3.8% requested an "address for more information." This discrepancy between the studies may be due to the fact the Decima research (1993) drew its sample from the IDRC mailing list — they should have been assured of IDRC *North-South* mailings. It is unclear whether any of those respondents were from NGOs. NGO respondents from the initial study who knew of *North-South* seemed to have received information from VISION TV and not IDRC.

## **Section Two: VISION TV — A Marketable Concept?**

The British Columbia NGO respondents were given the opportunity to reflect in confidence on the VISION TV and IDRC partnership in *North-South*. The reaction to the participation of VISION TV in *North-South* and that of IDRC's participation was very different.

For those viewers unfamiliar with VISION TV programming, respondents felt airing *North-South* on VISION TV restricted the potential audience for the program. A common perception that VISION TV is solely a religious network (due to a lack of knowledge about VISION in British Columbia), along with its limited reach, hampered marketability — VISION is not available on basic cable service. If shown on CBC, GLOBAL, or CTV, twelve out of fifteen respondents believed *North-South* would have had more credibility; all felt it would certainly have had a larger audience. Though one respondent said that she "wouldn't like to see it [*North-South*] moved to any other network," another questioned, "the other side of the coin [which was] could it be put on another network at a convenient time?"

### Section Three: Congratulations to IDRC

Twelve out of fifteen respondents felt IDRC monies had been well spent in producing *North-South*. Included were some individuals who had been fairly critical of *North-South* throughout the evaluation. While in agreement, some respondents added specific caveats to their comments regarding the appropriateness of IDRC funding: "In terms of quality of programming, 'yes,' in terms of viewer's, 'maybe not...'" "Really well spent if videos available at no or low cost..." Those who questioned IDRC wisdom in funding *North-South* felt if viewership had been restricted by being on VISION, then the money had not been well spent. One respondent criticized *North-South* for not probing deeply enough to "show truths [about international

development]," but did not see this as a constraint imposed by *North-South's* limited budget. All three dissenting NGOs were first-time viewers.

Most respondents would like to see *North-South* continue on air, and any negative comments about IDRC support for *North-South* echoed previous comments: a need for more publicity and analysis. Two respondents posited the need for more NGO involvement:

NGO input in programming would be valuable...good collaborative tool to hook IDRC and NGOs together, for example, YMCA President in South Africa imprisoned for a long time (video produced by youth in South Africa)...I'm surprised they [IDRC] are doing this. Glad IDRC doing this rather than CIDA. Why aren't CCIC constituencies across Canada doing this with IDRC in collaborative effort...? •

Suggestions to IDRC about ways to educate the Canadian public about developing countries from first-time viewers included: (a) creating linkage with a development education network, such as CCIC; (b) getting 'internationals' involved (i.e., sponsoring people from this country to go back to their home countries to produce programs, thus allowing for different educational perspectives); (c) asking relevant questions about issues not usually raised by mainstream media; and (d) producing a harder-hitting program and then gauging audience reaction to it.

Viewers who watched more frequently seemed more concerned about how to "reach beyond the converted" and "how to find a way to bring the message home." Practical issues raised were: regional involvement; ways to get into the popular media;

targeting groups and creating relationships; and establishing, as one respondent suggested, "pre-receptivity to an idea [which] is what actually matters."

When asked what *North-South* was trying to achieve and whether or not that objective was proper, most viewers agreed *North-South* was trying to foster awareness of north/south development issues. Only two respondents, newly introduced to *North-South* by the researcher, felt "it was unclear what *North-South* was trying to achieve and this was the problem." Those more conversant with *North-South* expressed some scepticism over whether the objective was to effect a change of attitude and, ultimately, action on issues raised on the program among Canadians. One respondent felt the program was "weaker" if this objective was not expressed. Another felt "fostering awareness was more likely to be reached as a goal, but developing a relationship of issues to Canadians was more difficult." One respondent saw *North-South* accomplishing both.

In a comparative analysis between the initial study and the Decima research (1993), it becomes apparent there is obvious support in both studies for IDRC in its funding of *North-South*. Questions arise about VISION's involvement as the distribution channel and how that affected the program's credibility and market audience. Seventy-six per cent (76%) of Decima (1993) respondents felt IDRC's sponsorship of *North-South* was "very appropriate." Fourteen per cent (14%) felt it was "somewhat appropriate." Only 6.8% watched VISION TV "frequently/often as possible"; 26.3% "occasionally"; 39.1% "seldom"; and 25.6% "never."



In the 1993 research, Decima respondents were asked to clarify their response to the question, "How appropriate is IDRC sponsorship?" Fifty per cent (50%) felt IDRC's sponsorship of *North-South* "promotes awareness and informs public." This is the same objective that respondents in the initial study thought IDRC was trying to achieve by funding *North-South*.

#### Section Four: Conclusions

Is there a correlation between NGO awareness of *North-South* and how much respondents previously knew about VISION TV? Did the amount of VISION TV they watched affect the frequency of viewing *North-South*? The research suggests there is. It also pointed to a need for more extensive marketing about VISION TV, as well as *North-South*, in order to increase series viewership. The low audience reach seemed to be more of a factor for CIDA, CCIC and IDRC in assessing *North-South*'s impact than concern with VISION's religious roots. Perhaps, this is because they know VISION's Cornerstone programming which is non-faith-specific and showcases series such as *North-South*.

Support for IDRC to continue funding *North-South* was surprising, given how little use the British Columbia NGO respondents made of the program. Affirmation of IDRC sponsorship for *North-South* suggested a niche for such programming among the NGO community, particularly, if the program further probed the issue of global/local connections surrounding sustainable and equitable development. The generally agreed-upon assessment that *North-South*'s objective was to create "awareness of *North-South*

development issues" suggests that characteristics of the program's content do not lend themselves to supporting more substantial development education. Respondents expressed such concern in their call for *North-South* to help create linkages among the Canadian NGOs and with NGO partners in the economic south, the Canadian public, other social sectors, and organizations with an interest in international development. Though *North-South* was publicized at the local level and, more specifically, to the NGO agencies (via IDRC's various publications and internal mailing list), it was unanimously agreed by respondents that there was not enough advance information on upcoming *North-South* programs to encourage the respondents and/or their constituencies to watch on a regular basis.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### *North-South* in the 1993/1994 Political and Economic Environment

#### Introduction

The second study was meant to build upon the initial research and examine not only effects of the researcher's first visit to the B.C. NGOs, but the larger political and economic context influencing NGO activities three years later. Since my initial visit in 1991 and 1992, many changes had occurred, not only in the NGO community but also in *North-South*. Though I had originally interviewed twenty-two NGOs, the second set of interviews, conducted by phone and fax in late 1993 and early 1994, reached only nineteen of the NGOs. The United Nations Association, Vancouver Branch, Africa 2000 program, no longer had permanent staff due to budget cutbacks and, therefore, were not included in the interviews. Neither the Trade Union Group nor Commonplace were listed with BCCIC or in the phone directory. Miriam Palacios of OXFAM would not participate at all. She cited a busy schedule and lack of interest as her reasons. She was the first-time viewer most critical of the *North-South* program I had shown her for what she considered to be its presentation of misinformation. I was unable to connect with the United Church Audiovisual Department and so contacted, instead, the United Church Global Concerns (UCGC).

Six interviewees in this second study were new, because five of the initial interviewees were no longer with the NGOs, and a sixth had moved to a different department within the United Church. It was necessary to introduce the study to: Ron

Dart of Amnesty International (AMNS); Joe Tannenbaum of CUSO; Christopher Saben of SEVA; Terre Flower of Global Village Nanaimo (GLVG); Jeannette Dubé of Tools for Peace (TP); and Julie Graham of United Church Global Concerns (UCGC). Four of the six had no awareness of *North-South*. Only Terre Flower (GLVG) and Jeannette Dubé of TPBC had heard of *North-South* before. Flower recorded it for staff after my first visit to Global Village Nanaimo. Dubé had attended a conference where part of her workshop was filmed by *North-South*.

Since the initial study, *North-South* had undergone several reincarnations. In its fifth season (1992-1993), the program was renamed *North-South-North* to reflect IDRC and VISION TV's hope for dialogue between the economic north and economic south. Robbie Hart was introduced to co-host with Flora MacDonald. Program times were also changed in accordance with VISION's new schedule. The program was lengthened to an hour. In the following season, the show reverted to its former name, *North-South*. Flora MacDonald was again sole host, and the half-hour format was reinstated.

Discounting the three NGO respondents who could not be contacted and the seven respondents who had not previously participated, four of the remaining thirteen previous respondents (approximately, twenty-five per cent [25%]) were not as keen as they had been in the initial study to answer all, or at least most of, the questions.

Questionnaires returned by Patrick Clarke of the B.C. Teachers' Federation (BCTF), Norma Graham of the Canadian Institute of the Arts for Young Audiences (CIAYA) and Waldo Neufeld of the Mennonite Central Committee, B.C. (MCC BC)

were incomplete, although reasons for this were not given. Patrick Clarke (BCTF) had always been a vocal supporter of *North-South* and said BCTF used the *Great Viewer's Guide* "all the time." However, in the second study, he said: "[T]he change in time slot has made it more difficult to see it — in fact, I rarely watch it now." Norma Graham's (CIAYA) response could be partially explained because she had been the only "frequent" viewer of *North-South* and the only respondent to have sought out personal membership in VISION TV. As she stated in the second study when asked whether my visit had at all affected CIAYA response to *North-South*, "...they had always screened the *Great Viewer's Guide* for programs and circled them to watch." Waldo Neufeld (MCC BC) had started to watch *North-South* after my first visit, but subsequent schedule changes meant he "has not been able to watch it. Also, the channel doesn't show up in the local listings."

The following respondents gave reasons for not replying, so are considered full participants: Liz Bannister of Save the Children Fund, B.C. (SCF) "still doesn't watch TV"; Dawn McLean and Britta Gundersen-Bryden of B.C. Council for International Cooperation (BCCIC) "were personally aware of, and promoted, *North-South* in their work," even before my initial visit; and Leslie Anderson of the YWCA still "watches the show from time to time," as she had when first interviewed.

A determining variable for different responses between the first and second studies might have been the way interviews were conducted. The primary research happened face-to-face. Contact in the second study was made by phone and/or fax, and was less personal. Of course, almost two years had passed between the first and

second interviews. Many of the respondents (including Patrick Clarke) appeared glad to hear from me again. Ten of them are eager to explore development of a British Columbia NGO cablevision series, as suggested to them by me.

### **Section One: The Effects of the Initial Visit on NGO Participation**

I was interested to find out whether or not the personal contact of my first visit to the B.C. NGOs had affected respondents' use of *North-South*. If so, how? Could this information be used to help *North-South* producers establish relationships with NGOs for the benefit of *North-South*?

Out of the ten respondents to the question, "In your estimation was the researcher's visit worthwhile?", seven out of ten, or seventy per cent (70%), replied, "Yes." The other three were: Jim Rader (AMNS), who knew neither about *North-South* nor the initial study; Liz Bannister (SCF), a respondent in the initial study who still did not watch television but was "interested in the fact that the message was going out"; and Leslie Anderson (YWCA), who continued watching of *North-South* on a sporadic basis. Her overall viewing time of *North-South* had not increased due to my initial visit. Five of the seven cited the making of connections between the media and NGOs as the source of their excitement and response. The comments of Cam Matheson (X), Britta Gundersen-Bryden (BCCIC), Shirley Rokeby (TEN DAYS) and Cathy Taylor (VIDEA) reflected on the potential for uniting the two. Cam Matheson (X) thought it was "...interesting to find out what's happening...part and parcel of education...trends in media." Britta Gundersen-Bryden (BCCIC) in her reflections felt

"...on the topic of north/south [issues], no, but on connections to media and VISION, yes." Shirley Rokeby (TEN DAYS) thought the visit was worthwhile. "Yes, it gave me some concept of insight on world development — what other people are doing to try to raise awareness." Cathy Taylor (VIDEA) agreed: "Yes, good to know about *North-South*...sent letter to VISION asking if there was possibility to have access to programming they do...no *North-South* reply ...would want to have them available to show along with reading lists...." Norma Graham (CLAYA), who had been the most frequent viewer of *North-South* in the initial study, stated that "opening doors" was the result of my visit.

Of the two respondents who thought raising awareness of *North-South* was the most worthwhile effect of my initial visit, Gary Henkelmann (CWY) was the most forceful in his description: "Yes, I think that after I talked to you in conversation and questions, I became more of a proponent of the program...influenced people to watch it...say 'heard on'...never did that before."

My visit seems to have been positive for both respondents like Cam Matheson (X), Shirley Kepper (UNICEF) and Cathy Taylor (VIDEA), who had not seen *North-South* before having been shown a program during the initial visit and for "more than once" viewers such as Britta Gundersen-Bryden (BCCIC), Gary Henkelmann (CWY), Shirley Rokeby (TEN DAYS) and Norma Graham (CLAYA), *North-South's* most "frequent" viewer.

When asked, "Did the researcher's visit at all affect your response to *North-South*?", eleven NGO respondents replied. Three respondents stated, "no," two of those

(Britta Gundersen-Bryden [BCCIC] and Norma Graham [CIAYA]) because they already received the *Great Viewer's Guide* and promoted *North-South* in their work. The third, Waldo Neufeld (MCC BC), did not give a reason. His response is somewhat contradictory to a previous one he gave, where he stated that he had begun to watch *North-South* as a result of my first visit but because of the change in "timing has not been able to watch it. Also the channel doesn't show up in the local listings." Leslie Anderson (YWCA) felt she would not watch *North-South* more unless "she could read about it." Liz Bannister (SCF) again stated she didn't watch TV but "was interested in the fact that the message was going out." Shirley Rokeby's (GLVG) answer was unclear.

Of the five NGO respondents (five of 11, or forty-five per cent [45%]) who replied positively, three — Cam Matheson (X), Gary Henkelmann (CWY) and Shirley Kepper (UNICEF) — stated that they had watched more *North-South* programs as a result of the initial contact. Reverend Paul Ndukwe (LINK) was spurred on to watch two African programs on Knowledge Network and publicize them to his constituency. Cathy Taylor (VIDEA) felt that "when someone brings something to your attention, it gives it [in this case, *North-South*] more credibility."

When asked, "Do you tell more people about *North-South* as a result of the researcher's visit?", four of the seven respondents to this question answered, "No." Both Cam Matheson (X), Gary Henkelmann (CWY) and Shirley Rokeby (TEN DAYS) said, "Yes." Matheson told people who phoned the Red Cross-British Columbia and Yukon Region about *North-South*. Henkelmann informed his Canada World Youth



constituency more about *North-South* as a result of my visit. Rokeby (TEN DAYS) mentioned *North-South* and announced it when speaking. She estimated that seventy-five per cent (75%) of the Ten Days for World Development constituency probably already watched it. She "highlighted *North-South* programs she felt people should see." Telling others about *North-South* did not dramatically increase, but for about forty-three per cent (43%) of respondents who replied it did. One more would have been willing to inform others had more information about *North-South* been made available.

It appears that only Cam Matheson (X) now used *North-South* as a public education vehicle, and Terre Flower (GLVG) recorded it for in-house use and felt Global Village Nanaimo utilized *North-South* more since my first visit. Waldo Neufeld (MCC BC) felt "other than alerting people of its existence," his use of *North-South* had remained unchanged. Liz Bannister (SCF) felt that there was still no way of linking the program to NGOs — "Where can you [the NGO] have access? What could we [the NGO] do for it [*North-South*] and it for us?" Respondent answers concerning utilization pose somewhat contradictory findings to previous information, where Gary Henkelmann (CWY) and others noted that they watched *North-South* more since my visit and told more people about the program as a result.

Only three NGO respondents: Gary Henkelmann (CWY); Cam Matheson (X); and Shirley Rokeby (TEN DAYS) were spurred on to record the program by my initial visit. Henkelmann recorded the program more following the initial visit. Matheson showed a *North-South* program at an international symposium for children. Rokeby had recorded it for others and for personal use.

The preceding three respondents also told their constituencies more about *North-South* after the initial study, and Henkelmann and Matheson watched it more. Cathy Taylor (VIDEA) could not record *North-South* because VIDEA has a rule that there can be no programs "in the video collection that [VIDEA] does not have a legal right to." To her, clearance of copyright on *North-South* was essential, and she wrote to *North-South*, c/o VISION TV to try to get it. She never received back a reply to her concern.

The statistical body of evidence is small (with a maximum of eleven respondents to a question) concerning audience participation in *North-South* following my initial visit. However, it appears that seventy per cent (70%) had been positively affected by the original visit. The number of respondents who participated in both the first and second studies was seven (32% of the original participants). The positive response includes respondents who had not been exposed to *North-South* before the original visit, as well as who had been more frequent viewers. For some, this also meant more knowledge about *North-South* and a greater awareness of how the media and NGOs can interconnect. For a few — thirteen per cent (13%) (three out of 22) of NGO respondents — this visit meant *North-South* began to be used in the broader NGO constituency as a development education tool. Cathy Taylor (VIDEA) would have also incorporated *North-South* into her development education package had she been able to obtain copyright permission.

The initial visit did not seem to change the way NGOs used *North-South* if they had already been using it fairly regularly within their organizations before the

initial visit. Similarly, the 1993 Decima data suggests respondents will watch more *North-South* in the future — presumably because of having participated in the study (though the reasons for the positive changes in viewership are not stated).

## Section Two: NGO Response to *North-South* Changes

There was an unfavourable response from three respondents to the change in time slot for *North-South*. Waldo Neufeld (MCC BC) stated that, "because of timing [change] he has not been able to watch it." Shirley Rokeby (TEN<sup>10</sup> DAYS) liked the previous 21:00 time slot and found the new times awkward. Cam Matheson (X) did not indicate the reason for his displeasure. Research data from the initial study indicated that eleven out of fourteen respondents found the original scheduling of *North-South* to be at favourable times. A similar response was garnered concerning the name change to *North-South-North*. Matheson did not like the new name; Rokeby found it confusing. Gary Henkelmann (CWY) found the name a problem in that [we] "don't identify 'south' with the third world."

Neither Matheson, Henkelmann, nor Rokeby liked the addition of a co-host, though Matheson and Henkelmann felt it did not affect their response to *North-South*. Rokeby felt that having a co-host lost focus for her — she had "identified the program with Flora." Patrick Clarke (BCTF) felt that "having a co-host made *North-South* more watchable." Most respondents (nine of 12) in the initial study had found the Honourable Flora MacDonald credible, and none had suggested bringing in a co-host. When asked whether having a co-host at all affected the presentation of issues, Gary

Henkelmann (CWY) felt that if the co-host had been "talent," say a person from CCIC, then interest would have been added to the series and MacDonald would not have been the only "expert." Shirley Rokeby (TEN DAYS) felt that a co-host tended to divert interest away from the issue.

Two of three respondents felt that the change to an hour-long format was good. However, Shirley Rokeby (TEN DAYS) said she was not certain lengthening the program improved it. *North-South* now appeared to her to be more of a "travelogue" with "less substance." Almost fifty per cent of respondents (eight of 15)<sup>\*</sup> in the initial study felt that the show should be extended to an hour. When asked how the changes to *North-South* had affected NGO respondent perception and use of *North-South* as an educational tool, both Cam Matheson (X) and Gary Henkelmann (CWY) felt that the hour-long format provided a "more appealing and in-depth tool" that allowed for the airing of "interesting and proactive issues" — more so than the former half-hour program length. Shirley Rokeby (TEN DAYS) found the hour-long format detracted from *North-South* as an educational tool: "Not as focused, not as much punch. Better to deal with one or two [issues] in-depth than wander around in one hour. Big is not always better. Must decide what is the aim of the program. Development education should be a different kind of a travelogue." Matheson felt that the hour-long format might provide for more depth of international development issues for the viewer. If the program was to revert to one half-hour, he recommended a series on a particular subject. However, the downside of that would be getting consecutive viewers. Henkelmann felt that "perhaps, more viewers were garnered because of the lengthening to an

hour." Rokeby felt that *North-South* was now on "par with *National Geographic*" because of the extension.

When asked about reaction to the current selection or mix of program topics, three of the four respondents — Cam Matheson (X), Gary Henkelmann (CWY) and Pat Clarke (BCTF) — felt that *North-South* satisfied them. Shirley Rokeby (TEN DAYS) felt that the audience would be held better if they were connected by theme for at least two three-week periods. Henkelmann also suggested a linkage needed to be made between local and global concerns. He suggested having a five-minute period about women in Vancouver who have AIDS at the end of an "AIDS in Africa" program.

Of the ten NGO respondents offering topic suggestions for *North-South*, six suggested issues of common concern to both the economic north and south. These included: AIDS, women, cultural survival, refugees and immigrants, the rights of children, trade, NAFTA, GATT, unemployment, and the changing place of Eastern Europe in the international community.

Use of the *Great Viewer's Guide* varied. Cathy Taylor (VIDEA) posted it up on her wall for public use. Terre Flower (GLVG) often used it to select programs for taping. Waldo Neufeld (MCC BC) felt the *Great Viewer's Guide* would be more helpful if it was part of the regular TV listings. Although a comprehensive NGO mailing list was sent to IDRC after the initial study, not all NGOs received the *Great Viewer's Guide*. With the exception of BCCIC, none of the NGOs had received supplementary materials about *North-South* subsequent to my initial visit.

### Section Three: Conclusions

Research from the second study suggests that British Columbia NGOs might well overcome their hesitancy to interact with the media in programming if they are approached by a networker/outreach coordinator as a constituency to be nurtured and welcomed into program development beyond merely acting as a funding and publicity conduit. Certainly, *North-South* could have benefitted from NGO insights regarding format, scheduling and content.

Some 70% of respondents (representing 32% of the original NGOs) said that my original visit had been worthwhile. Though fifty-five per cent (six of 11) of respondents felt the visit had not affected their response to *North-South*, forty-five per cent (45%) had been affected. The effect of the outreach to British Columbia NGOs is most striking in the actions of Gary Henkelmann (CWY), Cam Matheson (X), Shirley Kepper (UNICEF) and Shirley Rokeby (TEN DAYS) around their use of *North-South* subsequent to the initial visit. They reported watching *North-South* more often, recording the program, and encouraging others to watch. It appears that *North-South* can hold a person's attention over a period of time. This is evident in the actions of the preceding four persons and those who continue to use it regularly (e.g., Britta Gundersen-Bryden [BCCIC] and Norma Graham [CIAYA]). The 1993 Decima study supports the research assumptions with its evidence that respondents (IDRC-affiliated viewers) will "now" watch *North-South* much more than they did. No definite reasons are given for the change but, presumably, they relate to the phone interaction between

interviewer and respondent or the exposure to *North-South* through the interaction, or a combination of the two.

I conclude that it was my interaction with NGO respondents such as Henkelmann, Rokeby and Matheson that brought alive possibilities for their interaction with the media. These efforts were aided by the publicity sent to the NGOs in the form of the *Great Viewer's Guide*.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### NGO Respondents in the 1993/1994 Political and Economic Environment

The following research examines NGO use of the media within a climate of restraint.

#### Section One: Development Education Work Through the Media

For 12 of 17 or seventy-six per cent (76%) of respondents, public education concerning north/south issues was a stated priority in their organizations. For three NGOs — CUSO, VIDEA and UNICEF — the emphasis had shifted from development education to fund-raising priorities due to funding cutbacks. With a consolidation of programming, CUSO had become a resource organization rather than being able to pursue regional activities. VIDEA had gone from receiving seventy-five (75%) of its funding from CIDA ten years ago to forty per cent (40%). Fund raising and public education had always been interwoven at Tools for Peace. SEVA had done very little public education but was in the process of developing educational activity in response to the political climate.

A wide variety of methods were employed by NGOs for public education on north/south issues that included: using volunteers, media materials and promotion; networking; workshop presentations; public speaking engagements; a school focus; and creating community linkage with those from the economic south experiencing similar problems. BCCIC, the provincial NGO body, attempted to educate decision-makers at



the provincial, federal and municipal levels. Amnesty International networked with other agencies representing teachers, unions, the medical professions, and women. Ten Days for World Development tried to network with other organizations with like-minded goals. Tools for Peace linked up with groups in Nicaragua, youth, churches, and teachers.

Seven NGOs — CWY, CIAYA, CUSO, LINK, MCC BC, TP, and VIDEA — tried to get people involved by exposing them directly to southern issues by having north/south exchanges and/or guest speakers from the south, and by linking north/south initiatives and issues at the community level. CUSO, for example, was working with the Sustainable Forest Project in the Kootenays on the CORE process. This project included inviting participation by indigenous peoples from the economic south. TP went down to Nicaragua to look for possible linkages with community organization activists there that might provide new strategies for implementation in Canada.

When asked whether they supported development education work through the media, all seventeen respondents said they did, in principle. However, five were hesitant. Cam Matheson (X), Joe Tannenbaum (CUSO) and Shirley Rokeby (TEN DAYS) were sceptical of obtaining mainstream media coverage due to a perceived lack of access. In addition, Matheson felt the media didn't address underlying issues. Leslie Anderson (YWCA) and Norma Graham (CIAYA) saw development via media as very limited due to the costs involved.

Thirteen of sixteen respondents ranked print as the communication medium of choice for public education. Radio was second, followed by television. All NGOs had

access to computer and fax technology, with six NGOs — BCCIC, AMNS, CWY, CUSO, TEN DAYS, and VIDEA — hooked into WEB, the CCIC network. VIDEA was also a member of FREENET. Most NGOs sent out press releases, and some had their own newsletters. TEN DAYS used to have a weekly column in the local Nanaimo press, since cancelled by the paper. Much of the radio exposure was through public service announcements and coverage during special events (e.g., CBC's *Almanac* presented development clips during International Development Week).

Though television ranked number three in use, fifteen of seventeen respondents were personally and professionally committed to using television for education. Only Norma Graham (CIAYA) and Leslie Anderson (YWCA) were not. Graham mostly used study guides. She felt that the lack of access to television — the money, power, and need for technical expertise — made it unfeasible. Anderson liked videos because of the convenience and timing of them for use in schools. Waldo Neufeld (MCC BC), though supportive, had not pursued televised education because of the cost.

Mainstream television did not provide a great deal of access, except through public service announcements and news coverage. CHEK TV provided coverage for VIDEA events. CIAYA and AMNS got special events coverage (e.g., the Children's Festival sponsored by CIAYA). LINK got limited exposure for some visiting guests on Bernice Gerard's program on VISION TV. A *North-South* program on Jean Moffat, the founder of TEN DAYS, was not well received by TEN DAYS. According to

Shirley Rokeby, the program was thought "to have had the stringent points edited out, direction was lost, and it seemed a pale thing."

Cablevision seemed to be the most accessible medium for NGOs interested in entering joint programming ventures. Canada World Youth, through a cable work placement program, involved youth of the economic south in programming in the Kootenays and Campbell River for the local cablevision station. At the conclusion of the project, the Jamaican youth were able to take some discarded Kootenay cable television equipment back to Jamaica with them. The Canadian Red Cross and UNICEF, in conjunction with Rogers Cable 10 Vancouver, produced a week-long program-thon called *Fast Aid to Somalia* — the largest telethon of its kind ever mounted on North American cable. Global Village Nanaimo, Amnesty International, Save the Children Fund, and Ten Days for World Development also received programming opportunities to appear on Shaw Cable. Ten Days and United Church Global Concerns had both appeared on *Pressure Point*, the ecumenical program on Rogers Cable 10 Vancouver.

Nine of twelve or seventy-five per cent (75%) of respondents did not know about the CCIC special on *North-South*, even though four of those were members of BCCIC and the special was advertised in the *BCCIC News*. Dawn McLean and Britta Gundersen-Bryden (BCCIC) were both pleased with the program. McLean told BCCIC members she was "glad that we're into television." Information about the special ended up in other organizations' newsletters.

When asked whether the respondents had heard of, or had participated in, any other successful media ventures (including International Broadcasting Trust [IBT] and One World broadcasting ventures), five of twelve respondents or forty-two per cent (42%) were vaguely aware of IBT and One World. Jim Rader (AMNS) used fax machines to send out lobbying letters to the federal government from his Robson Street Amnesty International display. Issues included human rights in Iraq, the Philippines, Serbia and El Salvador. The campaign garnered 500 signatures in two days.

## **Section Two: NGO Response to Government Cutbacks**

Most NGO respondents gave strong replies as to the effects of government cutbacks on their organizations and their public education programs. Of the eighteen NGOs who replied, eight did not receive CIDA funding — Amnesty International, Tools for Peace, Link International Ministries, Mennonite Central Committee, B.C., United Church Global Concerns, SEVA Service, and the Young Women's Christian Association. However, of those eight: Tools for Peace was struggling to survive; Reverend Paul Ndukwe (LINK) had received no salary for two years and his wife was forced to go back to work full-time so that he could "volunteer"; United Church Global Concerns had received cutbacks in their matching funds from the National United Church Office which had resulted in the local congregations contributing to help make up the deficit; and the YWCA was cut ten per cent (10%) by its national office, forcing Leslie Anderson to a four-day week. SEVA was holding ground with a

three-year plan but were looking to reorganize their structure so it would include public education programs.

Five NGOs had experienced no CIDA cutbacks, though both Canadian Institute for the Arts for Young Audiences and the B.C. Teachers' Federation expected them in the 1994-1995 budget. If CIDA did not extend funding for BCTF, then Patrick Clarke foresaw that the Global Education Program would close. UNICEF had, in fact, received a CIDA Grant for a Speaker's Bureau Workshop. However, because UNICEF was not allowed (a UNICEF ruling) to use more than 8.9% of funds for administrative costs (including media), any diminishment of funds meant a further emphasis on fund raising. In response to the possibility of future CIDA cutbacks, the focus of the last Annual General Meeting of Ten Days for World Development was to examine where TEN DAYS should go in the future. The decision was made to emphasize creation of "social solidarity with other movements...coalition-building efforts...and collective energy...in challenging social values...and announcing a vision of alternatives." Save the Children Fund of B.C. was looking for non-traditional funding sources as part of a strategic plan to maintain the current level should CIDA funding be withdrawn. Development education levels had been maintained by integration into each of SCF's program areas.

Five NGOs suffered cutbacks to their CIDA funding, which directly limited their development education programming. The Canadian Red Cross had CIDA funding cut by ten per cent (10%) for the last two years, which resulted in discontinuing production of its newsletter to teachers. With further cuts anticipated, the

choice became whether to downgrade the quality of education programs or chop one or more education programs completely. Canada World Youth was facing a twenty-three per cent (23%) cut over a five-year period. This had resulted in an increased emphasis on fund raising but not on programming. Four or five programs have already been cut. Gary Henkelmann summed up the effects of the cutbacks: "[M]ore competitiveness [for monies] and not cooperation; less public relations due to less time; more demands on staff; and development education becoming a low priority." For CUSO, cutbacks had meant an eight per cent (8%) reduction in funds in 1993 and an anticipated ten to fifteen per cent (10%-15%) reduction in 1994. This resulted in a consolidation of infrastructure, staff and programs, and an increased emphasis on fund raising. Funding for development education in British Columbia was dropped by ten thousand dollars (\$10,000). The twelve per cent (12%) cut to Global Village Nanaimo had meant a staff reduction in order to maintain programs. As VIDEA was growing by 'leaps and bounds,' Cathy Taylor was looking for outside funding to make up the three per cent (3%) cutback in order to support both existing volunteers and new services. The only NGOs that appeared unscathed by cutbacks were Amnesty International and the Mennonite Central Committee, British Columbia.

### **Section Three: Conclusions**

All but two of eighteen British Columbia NGOs surveyed had felt the weight of cutbacks. A few NGOs (such as Save the Children Fund and Ten Days for World Development) were looking for innovative ways to build stable funding sources

through public outreach and coalitions. Sadly, what appears to have suffered most was NGO development education and public relations activities.

The hesitancy by NGOs to use television for development education is not surprising, considering the popular view of television as entertainment. However, there is a growing body of research that suggests television is a site of learning. For example, "The Annenberg School of Communications argues, on the basis of 20 years of research, that television is the 'hidden curriculum' through which the mass of people, particularly the young, learn and where beliefs, attitudes and intentions are formed."<sup>154</sup> If this view is accepted, then NGOs, if they are serious about development education, must commit to the use of the television to inform the public through a variety of message forms. The current NGO print communication focus bodes neither well by fitting with popular media trends nor for educating Canadians about international development.

Given that NGOs are willing to enter into community cablevision programming, it seems that many of them recognize the power of the television medium to reach people in a different way from the usual mainstream TV crisis appeals. Research suggests that British Columbia NGOs have shied away from using television for specific reasons: high cost; lack of access to the medium; and distrust of media approaches. With cablevision, some of these difficulties are minimized — access is offered, there is little cost involved and NGOs have a say in content. However, *North-South* offered NGOs an opportunity to participate at no cost (through the *North-South*

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<sup>154</sup> "Why is it Needed?" found in *WETV, The Global Access Television Service* (Ottawa: IDRC, WETV Secretariat, September 1993), p. 2.

*News* updates) or relatively cheaply (as members), but there was little response. This suggests that, in addition to lack of knowledge about VISION TV and *North-South*, there is a more entrenched NGO opposition to television than first meets the eye. Again, David Nostbakken's theory that NGOs needed to be educated in both VISION and the use of television merits some attention when considering how to reach the Canadian public about such a crucial issue as sustainable and equitable development.

The fact that NGOs are exploring popular media use (e.g., fax machines and community cable) for mobilizing public support is hopeful and suggests that NGOs are looking at ways to confront the issue of accessibility to technology and that NGO degree of comfort with new media is increasing.



## CHAPTER NINE

### Conclusions and Implications

There should be two prime considerations for production of educational programming: what the program does to the viewer or listener; and what the viewer or listener does with the program.<sup>155</sup>

*North-South* was a pioneer being the only English international development television series in North America and, therefore, has been evaluated in light of its broadly-stated intent to establish "...a tradition of taking a hard look at disturbing issues while at the same time providing a hopeful glimpse at how Canadians are necessary to creative solutions"<sup>156</sup> and the series' objectives, as seen by Peter Flemington, Director of Programming for VISION TV, who felt "...[*North-South*] represents a substantial move to reach a much larger constituency and to fill the existing media gap [about the systemic causes of underdevelopment] on a regular, ongoing basis."<sup>157</sup>

The initial study was prompted by a desire to determine whether *North-South* might redefine conventional attitudes to international development issues, not just by its use of the television medium, but also in providing a cumulative base of knowledge

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<sup>155</sup> Solomon (1981) as found in Anthony Bates, *Broadcasting in Education: An Evaluation* (London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1984), p. 171.

<sup>156</sup> Richelle Wiseman, Editor, *Great Viewer's Guide* (Toronto: VISION TV, September/October/November 1990), p. 2.

<sup>157</sup> Peter Flemington, "The Media Context" in *Proposal re: North-South* (Toronto: VISION TV, April 4, 1988), p. 5.

about the political, social and economic issues that delay sustainable and equitable development.

Using a set of measurements that I developed, which complemented Tim Brodhead's and Brent Herbert-Copley's division of development education into the three stages of information, education and advocacy,<sup>158</sup> I discerned from the first interviews that *North-South* provided little more than an introduction to the countries and peoples of the economic south. Though its prime *raison d'être* was seen to be educational, *North-South* did not provide the critical analysis to justify that title. Even more glaring was that nearly fifty per cent (50%) of British Columbia NGO respondents had never heard of *North-South*. This led me to examine what effect their non-participation had on the development education potential of *North-South* and to further seek to learn why NGOs had not been more involved in *North-South* production and utilization.

What is the relation between NGO involvement and the ability of *North-South* as a development education media resource? The research shows that B.C. NGO respondents had serious concerns about *North-South's* capability as a learning resource. Concerns ranged from "not knowing the program was on" or "where to access scheduling information" to David Odhiambo's critical charge that *North-South* was presenting misinformation. On the other hand, support was shown for *North-South's* ability to convey an alternative view to the usual mainstream presentation of the issues. This input reflects the practical experience of those involved daily in

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<sup>158</sup> Brodhead and Herbert-Copley, p. 18.

international development work and merits attention. It is my contention, therefore, that had NGOs filled a co-producer role or, at least, a consultancy role about *North-South* content, then the learning potential of *North-South* might have been bolstered due to NGO expertise and community connections. Without NGO involvement, *North-South* risked the exclusion of important knowledge about north/south issues that might have deepened the information flow between the series and viewer to help mobilize awareness, support and action for sustainable and equitable development. These NGOs were also the logical link with their counterparts in the economic south, as *North-South* moved towards more programming originating in the economic south. Further benefits of NGO presence may have included more funding for program development, a larger audience for *North-South*, and greater visibility for IDRC, VISION TV, etc.

Why were NGOs not involved to any notable extent in *North-South*, except for one CCIC co-produced special and the ongoing work with Video-Tiers Monde and southern NGOs? The thesis findings, coupled with historical reflection about *North-South*, Canadian NGOs and CIDA, point to a combination of factors that may have influenced prospects for NGO participation in *North-South*. The important conclusions from this analysis are that both *North-South* producers and NGOs were responsible for the low-NGO profile within *North-South* and that *North-South*'s failure to mature into an effective development education tool ultimately lay in the failure of both to work together on *North-South* to achieve their objectives for sustainable and equitable development. Peter Flemington's musing on the enigmatic relationship between NGOs and *North-South* in the first year of production continued until the show's demise.

What stands out and what is supported by the research is his view that more publicity and networking were needed to get NGOs involved with *North-South* and that NGOs could not be overlooked as culprits contributing to their own weak presence in the series:

We overestimated the promotional assistance *North-South* would obtain from its 'natural' friends in the development constituency. We believe the reasons are both systemic and psychological. On the one hand, the brief period between project approval and on-air presence did not allow time for adequate flow to potential information suppliers. This deficiency was compounded by a relatively meagre promotional budget at VISION, where *North-South* was just one of thirty or more new programs hitting the airwaves.

But what of the 'natural constituency' itself — the development agencies and NGOs? We noted little initiative in the seeking of program information or the placing of stories in periodicals. Could they have been rendered speechless by the fact that someone was finally catering to their interests in a systematic manner on television? Or might some be blinkered by a kind of clubbiness which places their own 'provincial' agendas and maintenance before a more general appreciation of the whole? This continues to mystify me and if we have learned anything, it is that we should have included substantial information, promotional and networking funds in our budget proposal.<sup>159</sup>

More specifically, Flemington's reflections suggest that production considerations, budget restrictions, NGO lack of television experience and institutional isolation from other social sectors hampered NGO involvement in *North-South*. Further examination of *North-South* history suggests that NGO participation was restricted by

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<sup>159</sup> Flemington and Rampen, *Proposal regarding North-South with Peter Trueman on VISION TV Season 2: 1989-1990*, pp. 6-7.

disjunctive notions of partnership, information exchange, organization and individual priorities.

Certainly, 1988-1994, the term of *North-South* production, was not a halcyon period for either CIDA, IDRC, NGOs or VISION TV. None of the international aid organizations managed to escape the 'broadbrush' of escalating Official Development Assistance and donor cutbacks.<sup>160</sup> In 1989, IDRC had suffered a fifteen per cent (15%) cut across the board. This led to internal restructuring and caused its Public Information Program (PIP) to give priority to television programming which could, as Karen Spierkel, Director of PIP, said: "...deliver the most bang for the buck."<sup>161</sup> The reorganization of CIDA, which required development education to be integrated into program development, still provided no money to do so. In fact, due to the cuts, less money than ever was available for this purpose. VISION TV went to air with *North-South* in September 1988 — a fledgling non-profit multifaith network which, in 1994, only employs thirty-six people, many of those on contract. It is evident that financial belt-tightening meant fewer people, less money and less time for CIDA, IDRC, VISION TV and NGO program development.

The research suggests that *North-South* partnership, consisting of VISION TV, IDRC, CIDA, Metavidea Inc., and Radio-Quebec, lacked any formalized administrative structure which would have provided for coordinated long-term financial or production planning to support community outreach, including to the NGOs. Instead, decisions

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<sup>160</sup> Clyde Sanger, *Out of Africa*, p. 2.

<sup>161</sup> Karen Spierkel, Personal Communication to Maureen Levitt (Ottawa: IDRC, September 8, 1994).

were often reactive, being made because funding cutbacks required a response. For example, according to Blaine Marchand, CIDA's cutbacks to *North-South* in the second season from \$214,000 to sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000) relate to a faulty grant process, a lack of consultation over *Nord-Sud* items, and irritation over VISION TV giving full distribution rights to Radio-Quebec.<sup>162</sup> Radio-Quebec had been given the distribution rights because *North-South's* quick and rudimentary start-up budget had required the acquisition of existing footage (from Radio-Quebec's *Nord-Sud* and others) rather than the use of original productions. In turn, CIDA's diminished role presented the opportunity for IDRC to become sole sponsor of *North-South* through, as Peter Flemington had proposed to David Nostbakken, the then-Director of IDRC Communications, "...an immediate marriage shotgun style of your two top priorities [*North-South* and *IDRC Presents*]...."<sup>163</sup> The intent of *North-South* then immediately broadened. It would now not only introduce Canadians to issues of the economic south but also provide a window for southern producers and productions. This expansion proceeded, as seemed to be the situation throughout *North-South's* production life, without the funding to see it realized in the way envisioned by the producers.

A lack of common vision for *North-South* seems to have stymied the series' development and manifested itself in disputes over copyright/distribution rights and tension between qualitative and quantitative programming objectives. Both VISION's limited ability to deliver a sizeable audience (that included the development

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<sup>162</sup> Blaine Marchand (November 6, 1989), pp. 1-2.

<sup>163</sup> Peter Flemington (June 5, 1989), p. 1.

constituency) and the low viewership of *North-South* limited IDRC's and CIDA's involvement in *North-South*, as did the prevention of its secondary use because of Radio-Quebec's hold over distribution.<sup>164</sup> IDRC's decision to withdraw *North-South* funding was directly related to the 1993 Decima Research survey's discovery that neither *North-South* nor VISION TV sustained a regular viewership from persons on IDRC's mailing list. According to Louise Behan, Head of the IDRC Media Unit, *North-South* wasn't marketable by itself because VISION's small audience reach was considered prohibitive, both by industry and by CIDA, "who doesn't even consider VISION a first window."<sup>165</sup>

Highlighted by the retrospective comments is the inability of the *North-South* producers to deal with these obstacles and the lopsided responsibility and risks that developed among the partners for *North-South* in its journey. Peter Flemington of VISION TV assumed most of the managerial responsibilities in keeping *North-South* alive as well as donating \$750,000 worth of airtime. It would appear by their actions that CIDA and IDRC didn't feel the same sense of ownership for *North-South*. In a conversation that I had with Lyall Shields, formerly of the IDRC Communications Division, Shields stated that: "It was in IDRC's interest to have pursued TV Ontario

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<sup>164</sup> Chris Pinney, Personal Communication to Maureen Levitt (September 26, 1994). According to Pinney, the CCIC Board would not agree to further *North-South* CCIC co-produced specials because of what they considered to be poor audience ratings for the South African co-production.

Cathy Taylor, Personal Communication with Maureen Levitt. Cathy had written to VISION but had not heard back about releasing copyright hold on *North-South*. VIDEA cannot use material where copyright is not cleared for educational purposes.

<sup>165</sup> Louise Behan, Personal Communication with Maureen Levitt (Ottawa: IDRC, September 2, 1994).

about production monies in exchange for a second window and CCIC and CIDA for funding but, due to time limitations, he had not approached corporate sponsors.... [Shields]...had always meant to, but it hadn't happened...."<sup>166</sup> Tim Brodhead, former Executive Director of CCIC, felt that CIDA was the institution that should have been held most accountable for not supporting *North-South*.<sup>167</sup> Certainly, CIDA's withdrawal of full sponsorship at the end of year one, lack of money for the enhancements, and funding thereafter of only selected items are not sufficiently explained by the excuse Marchand gave that payment delay related, in part, to a "faulty grant process."<sup>168</sup> Peter Flemington felt that CIDA should have paid for the enhancements and that CIDA and IDRC should have brought together the consortium of NGOs.<sup>169</sup>

Both institutional and individual differences appear to have intruded into the *North-South* decision-making process and networking attempts. For example, as the research and Decima (1993) studies indicate, Flora MacDonald was a boon to *North-South's* image. Thus, her discomfort with the changes in the 1992-1993 season (i.e., the new co-host, series' title and program length) led to their reversion in the 1993-1994 season, even though the changes had brought about an increase of viewership for *North-South*.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Lyall Shields, Personal Communication to Maureen Levitt (Ottawa: IDRC, September 6, 1994).

<sup>167</sup> Tim Brodhead, Personal Communication to Maureen Levitt (September 2, 1994).

<sup>168</sup> Marchand (November 6, 1989), pp. 1-2.

<sup>169</sup> Peter Flemington, Personal Communication to Maureen Levitt (Toronto: VISION TV, October 28, 1994).

<sup>170</sup> Peter Flemington, Personal Communication to Maureen Levitt (Toronto: VISION TV, August 17, 1994).



It is obvious that a clear agreement was missing between the founding participants of *North-South* (known as the "producers") about the program intent and how to fund it, including the costs of networking and publicity to involve such natural friends as NGOs at the development stage. Going to air so quickly with a pre-production period of only nine months left little time to develop a strong *North-South* partnership model, even if there had been the collective will.

However, given all of the foregoing circumstances, NGOs were invited to involve themselves in *North-South*, both in the *North-South News* update and as partners in the series. For the most part, they declined the offer. Why? The research about Canadian NGOs, their development education work and their relationship to the media and, in particular, the second interview with British Columbia NGOs give some explanation for NGO hesitancy towards *North-South*.

The second study asked what effect my first visit had on the B.C. NGO respondents' use of *North-South*. It also sought information about their response to ODA and donor cutbacks, and their use of the media for development education to elicit some sense of the larger political and economic effect on NGO organizational strategies, including communications.

The research revealed that for four respondents the initial visit had stimulated some further interest in *North-South* and impacted positively upon their professional and personal reaction to the series (e.g., in watching and publicizing it). However, for them and three others, the visit had caused a broader linkage — their excitement lay in "the making of connections between the media [including VISION TV] and the

NGOs." It is unclear whether it was the face-to-face interaction, the extension of an invitation to them to act in a consultancy role in the interview, or the heightening of awareness about *North-South* (and its benefits for the NGO community) due to the visit that made a difference in respondent reaction. The personal nudge I gave them about *North-South* seems to have affected some British Columbia NGO reaction to the media — both to television, in general, and VISION TV. This finding has particular significance for the approach that was used by *North-South* producers to NGOs.

The *North-South* producers had unsuccessfully attempted to utilize CCIC as an 'intermediary' with the NGOs. Tim Brodhead's recommendation that NGOs should have been contacted directly about *North-South* rather than through CCIC affirms the historical view that Canadian NGOs act in isolation from each other. I agree with Brodhead and believe that dealing through CCIC may have contributed to the low NGO participation, both regional and national, in *North-South*. This position is strengthened by such graphic examples as the failure of CCIC to include any mention of *North-South* in their insert mailing<sup>171</sup> and the finding that nine of twelve British Columbia NGO respondents had not heard of the *North-South*/CCIC co-production. CCIC itself had shown little interest beyond the South African Drought special in the invitations to participate in *North-South*. Even before *North-South* went to air, CCIC had been approached but had cited what would be their continuing refrain to remain uncommitted to *North-South* — the costs involved and other media interest (computers and print).

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<sup>171</sup> Carriere, p. 3.

The research shows that though most (15 of 17) British Columbia NGO respondents professed a personal and professional commitment to using television for development education, nearly all use the print medium. Television and radio both took a backseat to print, with television ranking third in fifteen of seventeen responses. Though they are reluctant to participate in mainstream television and are rarely offered the opportunity by the broadcasters, except for crisis appeals, special events or development week promotion activities, B.C. NGOs appear to feel comfortable working with community cablevision. Perhaps this is because the major obstacles NGOs say face them in mainstream television use (i.e., access, the cost of participation and manipulation of the NGO message) are avoided in cablevision. In other words, the cablevision process allows NGOs to feel a sense of ownership of their production which encourages their further involvement in cable programming. This suggests that for such programs as *North-South*, a delicate balance must be found between broadcaster and NGO needs that allows for joint ownership.

Considering that NGOs were offered access at low cost (for television) and say over subject matter (in the updates and in the South African Drought special), why wasn't *North-South* more attractive to NGO participation? Instead, *North-South* and VISION were devalued by CCIC and the B.C. NGOs because of small audience reach. On the one hand, *North-South* offered what NGOs saw as the "other side of the issue" to mainstream television. On the other hand, they felt *North-South* would have had more credibility had it been on GLOBAL TELEVISION or CBC. This suggests that NGOs did not understand VISION TV and its value in giving access to marginalized

social sectors. Was the invitation to participate legitimate? NGO ambivalence also suggests that having been given the offer to participate in *North-South* and having declined, NGOs' need to re-evaluate their commitment to public education on north/south issues.

Tim Brodhead and Brent Herbert-Copley in *Bridges of Hope?* feel that NGO failure to respond to technological change (including the medium of television) is the result of NGO ideology and organization and communication practices which are out of sync with the demands of today's world.<sup>172</sup> Thesis research supports their view. Even when faced with government cutbacks and ODA redistribution, withdrawal of public support for NGOs and international development *per se*, and mounting pressure from southern NGOs to share power, the Canadian NGOs appear unable or unwilling to act upon several key points: fund raising and development education are interdependent and essential for NGO survival and future independence from CIDA; the popular media must be used for effective communication; and NGOs must re-think their public communication efforts, whether they want to or not, to meet the demands of CIDA (as long as they continue to depend on CIDA funding) and the southern NGOs for educating Canadians about the causes of underdevelopment and cooperative sustainable solutions. Instead, fund-raising priorities dominate without a concurrent emphasis on development education, and media use has a confirmed print orientation. Promotion activities continue to portray vivid symptoms of underdevelopment without engendering long-term public support for the particular NGO cause (e.g., Ethiopian

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<sup>172</sup> Brodhead and Herbert-Copley, pp. 49-50.

Famine) or for helping the economic south to achieve parity with northern living standards. They continue to be at the expense of creating an honest partnership with southern NGOs.

David Nostbakken, the then-Director of Communications for IDRC, was much more black and white in his analysis of why the NGOs didn't participate in *North-South* and what to do about it:

When you approach an NGO for support, they state you don't have the means to support just as the religious organizations said they didn't have the means to support VISION...the bottom line is that if you want to support, you will...the best thing to the NGO community is VISION TV but the point is that nobody has tried to convince the NGO community of much of anything. The types of things that were done to give VISION TV the profile it has needs [*sic*] to be done to *North-South*....The fact is that the NGO community doesn't realize the power of television. They need to be educated in their own interest.<sup>173</sup>

The small, but hopeful, response in the second study indicates that interest in the media, in general, and in VISION TV might have been piqued by my first visit, and for a few respondents, their personal and professional use of *North-South* might have been significantly affected. These findings suggest that the personal nudge of a NGO Outreach Coordinator might have begun the bridging between the NGOs and the *North-South* producers to produce an atmosphere of trust leading the NGOs to being more comfortable with television — more specifically, VISION TV and *North-South*.

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<sup>173</sup> Carriere, p. 4.

By examining NGO practices surrounding development education and their response to *North-South* producer outreach, it is obvious that NGOs, as well as *North-South* producers, must be held accountable for the near-absence of NGOs in *North-South* production and utilization. Collaboration and consultation needed to be essential elements in establishing any *North-South* co-producer relationship that included NGOs.

In hindsight, it is evident that the process surrounding the development and evolution of *North-South* should have been considered as important as the product, if *North-South* was to achieve the objectives set for it by its founders. In other words, the product was only as good as the process. For example, concerning *North-South* stability and growth, this meant taking such obvious actions as allowing more lead-in time for an agreed-upon *North-South* plan of action for funding and program development. It also meant challenging the normal way of doing things (e.g., not proceeding with *North-South* unless NGOs were involved or unless monies were available for relationship-building over time). For *North-South* producers and NGOs alike, the paradigm shift is substantial in moving *North-South* from being an information exchange to presenting critical analysis to encouraging advocacy. I wonder how acceptable it would be for producers to leave women out of the development of a television program on women and risk losing the authentic ideas, competency and mobilizing ability that come with women. For similar reasons, why should NGOs have been left out of program development that speaks (even if only in a consultancy role) to their concerns?

Kingston Kajese in "An Agenda of Future Tasks for International and Indigenous NGOs: Views from the South" defines networking as referring to "alternative ways of approaching definitions, alternative ways of solving problems and, more particularly, alternative ways of sharing information...[in a] non-hierarchical approach to the use of power and knowledge."<sup>174</sup> *North-South* offered the rare opportunity for broadcasters and international development organizations to link together for mutual benefit to surmount some of the difficulties facing each in reaching and teaching people to help resolve north/south imbalances to achieve global sustainability. Such a commitment, however, requires that all parties accept the notion that communication must be an integrated part of that networking strategy and central to the program's success as a catalyst for public response to the issues presented. Communication with the audience is not just the end result of the program(s) being broadcast but of a larger coordinated effort.

I view with some excitement and apprehension the well-intentioned *Agenda 21* series that, according to Karen Spierkel, Director of the Public Information Program for IDRC, "... will be a fast-paced magazine format with an eclectic mix of thirteen to fourteen topic segments with a youth focus...[which] will not do more than just scratch the issue surface."<sup>175</sup> It is also meant to heighten IDRC's visibility worldwide and begin the information process about sustainable and equitable development. It is refreshing to see that format being used to popularize the development education

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<sup>174</sup> Kingston Kajese, "An Agenda of Future Tasks for International and Indigenous NGOs: Views from the South" in 15, Supplement *World Development*, p. 84.

<sup>175</sup> Karen Spierkel, Personal Communication to Maureen Levitt (Ottawa: IDRC, September 6, 1994).

message. Unfortunately, Canadian NGOs have yet to be included. According to Spierkel, NGO involvement will "...be left up to the broadcasters."<sup>176</sup>

Bernard Ostry, in an article entitled "Can public TV save freedom in the new global era?", makes the argument that with the end of the cold war and triumph of capitalism over communism comes the threat of the common marketization of world politics and American imposed cultural uniformity. He laments a world devoid of cultural diversity and calls for international agreements to fund public broadcasting and communication that would allow pluralism to be secured in both the developed and developing world.<sup>177</sup> Though such idealism is difficult to manifest on a large scale, *North-South* did offer the possibility to speak to cultural freedom within the broader issue of sustainable and equitable development. *North-South* didn't evolve into the significant catalyst of public participation that Peter Flemington had hoped for because of the reasons outlined in the thesis. However, the community extensions that were made to the NGO constituency are not something that is normally done by network television. The partnership itself was unique for North America — broadcasters and international development agencies (IDRC and CIDA) working together on a television series about international development. The collaboration with NGOs and broadcasters from the south was a step towards their cultural freedom of expression.

Leo Rampen spoke gently and perceptively of *North-South's* passage. In a strange way, it was a natural moment for *North-South* to fizzle away. You needed to

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<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> Bernard Ostry, "Can public TV save freedom in the new global era?" found in *Canadian Speeches* (January 1990).



look at what it stood for, where it came from, what it was called.<sup>178</sup> By doing so, you become aware of what *North-South* was not, but also what it was — a small but significant model of communication for sustainable and equitable development and global pluralism.

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<sup>178</sup> Leo Rampen, Personal Communication to Maureen Levitt (September 8, 1994).

## CHAPTER TEN

### **Models — Essential Elements for Collaboration Between Development Television Producers and NGOs**

*North-South* producers and NGOs failed to connect for a variety of reasons.

What emerges from the thesis findings though, is that a more holistic or integrated approach to communication might have seen a different result. I suggest that the three problematic areas of publicity, audience participation (NGO) and programming are, in fact, interrelated and needed to be carefully nurtured according to that perspective. I propose models for productively managing information in each of those areas that will contribute to a meaningful relationship between 'development education' producers and NGOs or other target communities.

The end purpose of development education is to gather people together in action to make change. I feel strongly that television programs concerning subjects such as international development must reflect the same intent. They should not just be thought of as programs, *per se*, but as one of the means of creating such community. In essence, the process surrounding the production, its utilization and its distribution becomes more important than the product, if linking the community together is the desired outcome. The program is merely a vehicle for networking over sustainable and equitable development issues. Each of the models is shaped by this philosophy.

## Section One: Publicity Network Model

The Publicity Network Model suggests that publicity needs to be accurately targeted at organizations with an interest in international development. Their involvement would mean access to their constituencies, possible funding, and provision of their expertise and ideas. Most importantly, it might make the program a collaborative venture to stimulate learning and participation by a wider scope of general viewers (in other words, to reach beyond the converted). Though the NGOs are referred to as a targeted audience, the intent is that they will be brought into the producer partnership once their level of comfort with television has developed.

### Specific Publicity Network for NGO Community

- 1) Contact umbrella organization (in this case, CCIC) for a list of all provincial councils and member organizations. Input contacts and addresses into a database.
- 2) Contact provincial CCIC councils and ask for a list of members. This information is found within the BCCIC's *Global Concerns A Directory of B.C. International Development Groups and Resources*. Input contacts and addresses into a database.
- 3) Contact members of provincial CCIC councils for a list of their organizations' corresponding bodies in other regions/locales.
- 4) Contact CCIC member organizations (e.g., CUSO) and ask for a list of their regional/provincial/local representatives. Cross-reference on mailing list with contacts from provincial council directories, so as to not duplicate. Note that some members of provincial CCIC councils will not be members of CCIC.

Included in all packages should be:

- Letter from development television producers extending an invitation to other NGOs to participate
- Letter from broadcaster
- Broadcaster schedules
- Publicity reviews about broadcaster and relevant program(s); if possible, include comments from the NGO community
- A ready-to-fax copy of the advance program schedule as found in *Great Viewer's Guide*
- A more detailed description of upcoming programs
- List of suggestions as to how the program might be used in development education
- List of past programs

In the initial stages of developing a publicity network for specific program series, NGOs need to be informed of the existence of the program (i.e., where and when the program can be found) and ways it can be used in their communities. This requires copyright clearance and making the program more accessible, both in terms of cost and distribution.

During this early contact period the program will benefit if NGOs take an active role in creating a public relations network. For example, this might include disseminating the ready-to-fax advance program schedule to their own networks. They should also be asked to suggest others (individuals, groups and networks) to whom the program might be of interest.

Ideally, responsibility for seeing that the advance schedule gets printed in constituency newsletters and is received by other interested organizations should fall upon the NGOs. The researcher found that personal contact and solicitation of public relations and programming suggestions from the NGO respondents to be a positive experience for both parties. Feelings of interaction and equality were generated. The interviews piqued the respondents' interest. The positive role which can be played by NGO outreach coordinator cannot be underestimated. The above model can certainly be applied by faith, environmental, peace and education groups, and their partnership should also be encouraged.

### General Publicity Network Suggestions

A more comprehensive public relations network should draw people's attention to the program. However, as a next step, the taped programs have to be affordable and easily obtained at the community level. The clearance of copyright for educational purposes, banking the series at both regional and local outlets (e.g., N.F.B.; libraries/Learner Centres) and making programs available on free loan at minimal cost must happen. Though such suggestions appeared to threaten revenue possibilities from selling a program, the question needs to be asked as to what the function of the program is? If it is educational, then one should consider applying the *Agenda 21 Helsinki Group Rights Blueprint*, which recommends the "non-exclusive non-theatrical and video...rights in perpetuity for non-commercial educational use worldwide."<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> *Agenda 21 Helsinki Group Rights Blueprint* (November 1992), p. 1.

Distribution possibilities not usually sought by video distributors need to be explored (e.g., distributing directly to the coordinators of all the Global Education Projects in Canada, printing the advance program schedule in teacher news-magazines, such as *Teaching Our Common Future*, a copy of which is distributed to every school in the province, to librarians and to another 1,000 individuals, mostly NGOs and teachers, and distributing information to all school superintendents through the Ministries of Education).

Other recommendations include:

- Examine the differences between the broadcaster campaign in eastern/central Canada and the West
- Determine whether the lack of any knowledge about broadcaster and program amongst NGO respondents can be explained by east/west differences
- Determine whether publicity about broadcaster enhances program distribution and utilization.
- If appropriate, extend publicity campaign beyond central Canada to the peripheries
- Distribute schedules to newsstands
- Design more detailed *TV Guide* descriptions of program episodes
- Develop more extensive publicity materials about upcoming episodes

Possible suggestions for extending public relations programs include: pre-viewing programming and eliciting public relations comments from Canadian sources and/or from individuals from the country being portrayed; previewing and then

obtaining comments from Canadians experiencing similar problems; and distributing more detailed program descriptions.

- In public relations materials, stress any involvement the host and sponsors might have with the targeted community
- Negotiate wider cable distribution of broadcaster and/or negotiate wider distribution of program on other networks
- Explore more ways to utilize popular media

## Section Two: Audience Participation Model

In his book, *Broadcasting in Education: An Evaluation*, Anthony Bates presents the idea that the degree of educational experience gained through television corresponds to how actively the viewer is able to interpret and analyze the program content and suggests ways to activate response to a program<sup>180</sup>:

- Develop comprehensive publicity about program series
- Create a 'collaborative' program team that represents voluntary organizations, the broadcasting organization and educators (researchers)<sup>181</sup>
- Appoint a full-time 'liaison officer/ animator' to act as a bridge between voluntary organizations, educators and broadcast organizations<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Anthony Bates, *Broadcasting in Education: An Evaluation* (London: Constable and Company, 1984), pp. 179-180.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113. WETV, The Global Access Television Service has somewhat the same team model.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

- Target specific audience groups whose participation is wanted and then undertake "formative research"<sup>183</sup> to determine their "likely response to program topics and approaches"<sup>184</sup> and their specific learning needs
- "'Education by stealth' [that is] — starting where the viewer is with respect to needs and experience and then using the format of the program to stimulate interest in the subject"<sup>185</sup>
- Conduct "pre-test[ing] and formative evaluation. Program ideas...[should be] tested and changed if necessary before transmission"<sup>186</sup>
- Build a "coherent teaching strategy"<sup>187</sup> into the program, using such devices as "repetition, summaries, feedback and clear and simple structure"<sup>188</sup>
- "Develop support materials...prepared, either by the existing public department in broadcasting organizations or by external agencies with a particular interest in the series. Broadcast an announcement [about them] before and following the programs ...indicating the availability of support materials and permission to record for educational purposes"<sup>189</sup>
- Prepare "short pre-broadcast notes...provide frame of reference from which students [viewers] can approach the program...include one very short paragraph describing the context of the program and three to four key questions or points to be borne in mind while viewing"<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>190</sup> Tony Bates and Margaret Gallagher, *Improving the Effectiveness of Open University Television Case-Studies and Documentaries* (London: Open University, 1977), p. 33.



- Prepare "post broadcast notes [which include]...summary of key points, important points of detail, visual reminders (photographs, graphs), how program made, what producers and academics trying to do [a self-critique]"<sup>191</sup>
- "Educators should be closely involved in editing process — so that it [the program] can be structured in most appropriate way and so that accompanying written material relates as closely as possible to it"<sup>192</sup>
- "Ease copyright and royalty agreements for strictly non-profit educational purposes"<sup>193</sup>
- Allow for "easier access to pre-recorded materials"<sup>194</sup>
- Create teacher/broadcaster relationship. "Broadcasters need to give more advice to teachers [tutors, study group leaders, etc.] as to: the use of broadcasting for learning purposes; on how such material might be used, specific to the series; allowing for adequate time and advance warning to incorporate the program into project or syllabus"<sup>195</sup>
- Offer "clear follow-up activities" for target audiences<sup>196</sup>
- Form "Swedish study circles"<sup>197</sup> in communities at time of airing and/or to later view taped programs "as a means of reinforcing the contents of the programme through active discussion and involvement immediately afterwards...[of] theoretical concepts it [program] illustrates and in terms of reliability and validity of evidence it presents"<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133. "A characteristic of Swedish adult education is the establishment of local study circles in practically every town or village in Sweden and most of the continuing education broadcast series make full use of this dynamic and independent infrastructure."

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

- "Create course teams [including academics, target groups, broadcasters] [to] indicate to regions the importance of such sessions...which programs are most appropriate for discussions...guidelines on how to analyze such material...personal visits from academic professors [and producers]"<sup>199</sup>

Other suggestions include highlighting significant information during the program; attaching a bibliography of related materials (including in-depth articles as found in the *New Yorker*); providing a list of responses to the questions raised by the program; giving relevant statistics, economic indicators, historical perspective, human rights performance, and a current update on the program subject (e.g., Rita Deverell's *Stopwatch*); tagging local pertinent international development activities after the credit roll; and producing a group discussion guide.

Bates places great emphasis on support services for keeping viewer interest sustained over a series and for "progressing learners beyond the basic stage."<sup>200</sup> He speaks of "a study carried out by Rybak (1983) [that is] therefore particularly important":

She managed to cut by half the drop-out rate on a BBC language series through the provision of support services. Almost single-handedly, she organized a variety of support schemes for people following the BBC series 'Ensemble'. She had very little direct help from the BBC, who even initially refused a request for broadcast publicity for the support services. Rybak edited and distributed a regular magazine/newspaper ('La Vue d'Ensemble') for subscribers, organized self-help study groups, a telephone request service and, in conjunction with the National Extension College, a Home Tuition Pack. The newspaper was the most successful scheme, and the self-help groups were also

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<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>200</sup> Bates, p. 155.

moderately successful, particularly when they were led by an amateur who spoke French reasonably well. Better broadcast publicity in advance of the programmes would have made a lot of difference to the success of the support schemes, particularly the self-help groups, in that the larger numbers attracted would have enabled more local groups to have been set up. Rybak, though, was able to show that even the relatively thin support schemes she was able to organize on her own reduced drop-out by over half, compared with previous BBC language courses.<sup>201</sup>

Encouraging audience participation in programs means encouraging the target groups to assume some degree of responsibility. For the 'development television' producers, it means divesting some degree of ownership for the series. Enacting some of Anthony Bates' suggestions (such as easing of copyright, etc.) would be impossible without rearranging most television production teams. Obviously, a new acquisition and distribution arrangement has to occur from the one most normally adopted. The *Agenda 21 Helsinki Group Rights Blueprint* suggests "rights in perpetuity for non-commercial educational use worldwide [of non-exclusive non-theatrical and video]."<sup>202</sup> Target groups, in turn, would have to commit both funding and organizational structures to facilitate their expanded role (e.g., they can help with financing, contribute to content, facilitate economic south's participation in production, and provide support services to enable viewers to become active in international development in their communities).

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<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 155-156.

<sup>202</sup> *Agenda 21 Helsinki Group Rights Blueprint* (November 1992), p. 1.

### Section Three: Programming Model

And those who recognize, or begin to recognize, themselves as oppressed must be among the developers of this pedagogy. No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in their struggle for their redemption.<sup>203</sup>

Encouraging further involvement in program structure of persons from the countries being portrayed is critical if the program is to be a vehicle for changing north/south dynamics. The danger in such persons from the decision-making in the programming is the presentation of misinformation that perpetuates the attitudes and beliefs of the status quo. Structural difficulties, such as half-hour program formats, may also contribute to the failure to examine the underlying reasons for the social, political or economic problems as raised by the series. The hurdle which 'development television' producers must overcome is finding a way to allow ownership to ultimately rest with those about whom the program was made. This is the antithesis of mainstream television production.

Tony Bates and Margaret Gallagher in their paper, *Improving the Effectiveness of Open University Television Case-Studies and Documentaries*, suggest that abstract thoughts such as ideology and class are not easily discernible from television programming even when there is a strong clear storyline or even when topics in a

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<sup>203</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1989), p. 39.

series simultaneously illustrate them.<sup>204</sup> They argue that analysis is critical to understanding concepts. They also suggest that "when the context is foreign to the viewer valuable TV time must be given over to explaining it, or extensive reading has to be supplied."<sup>205</sup>

The production team must not assume that its viewers recognize the linkage among political, economic and social conditions of the north and south, both past and present, or have become aware of them through brief mention in voice-overs or superficial examination during the opening or wrap. Frank and open discussion about responsibility and complicity of those in the economic north concerning the problems and solutions facing the economic south must be included to drive home the intended messages.

Suggestions for a Programming Model include:

- Develop a production team that includes organizations with an interest in international development, indigenous peoples and educators
- Develop ways to ensure that content represents the perspectives of the economic south; use a guest whose homeland is the country being portrayed; use southern productions or technically and financially support such endeavours; utilize panels which include representatives from the country being portrayed
- Highlight Canadian responsibility and involvement (individual, governmental and organizational); use wrap to establish specific north/south linkage; link up north/south communities with similar problems; use wrap to make specific suggestions for individual action
- The production team should screen all programs before they air

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<sup>204</sup> Bates and Gallagher, pp. 14-15.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

- Pre-test programming on target audiences to discern reaction and learning response
- Create support materials and ways to involve viewers in the international development community
- Test variations in program length and series combination to see if they affect learning response:
  - e.g., - lengthen to one hour specials four times a year
  - join with other programs in specials
  - invite panels for specials
  - invite phone-in for specials
  - present season as series of countries experiencing same problems, illustrating same concepts
  - sometimes sustain topic over several programs
- Work with educators to design learning curve to get viewer from Point A to Point B in understanding economic north/south relationships and consequent necessary actions
- Plan ways to integrate new viewers into the series and sustain interest for all viewers

#### Section Four: Conclusions

'Development Television' producers can play it safe and continue to produce programming like *North-South* that competes with other international development documentary series but which provides little possibility for informing beyond introducing the viewer to the issues facing the economic south, or it can foster critical dialogue about north/south inequity and solutions and the necessary social, political and economic conditions for sustainable international development through providing content which directly challenges existing north/south patterns of interaction. If producers wish to foster critical dialogue, then opportunities must be provided to induce the viewer into the educational process through analysis, active discussion and

involvement. Most importantly, the producers must look for ways to divest northern ownership of the storytelling — the south needs to be explicitly involved in the production and reflection of program content.

As new relationships develop between north and south and producer and target communities, producers must risk pursuing ideological concerns and not worry about initial quantifiable results (e.g., the size of audience watching). 'Development television producers, both northern and southern, must keep testing and pushing viewers in the exploration to see what would motivate them to take up concrete action concerning issues of sustainable and equitable development.

## APPENDIX I

*North-South Evaluation***Section O: RESPONDENT INFORMATION**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ PROVINCE: \_\_\_\_\_ POSTAL CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION AFFILIATION: \_\_\_\_\_

POSITION: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 1: AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION***Please circle the appropriate choice(s).*

- 1.1 (a) I am an independent viewer, not affiliated with a group utilizing NORTH SOUTH.  
 (b) I am a member of a group utilizing NORTH SOUTH for educational purposes.  
 (c) Other. Please explain:

1.2 How often do you watch NORTH SOUTH?

NEVER ONCE INFREQUENTLY SOMETIMES FREQUENTLY ALWAYS

1.3 If you have never seen NORTH SOUTH, can you say why?

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1.4 If you have watched NORTH SOUTH "infrequently" or "once", please explain why you have not seen it more:

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1.5 If you have watched NORTH SOUTH "sometimes" or "frequently" or "always", please explain why you are interested in NORTH SOUTH:

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**Section 2: SCHEDULING**

2.1 When does NORTH SOUTH appear on your TV?

day \_\_\_\_\_ time \_\_\_\_\_ day \_\_\_\_\_ time \_\_\_\_\_

day \_\_\_\_\_ time \_\_\_\_\_ day \_\_\_\_\_ time \_\_\_\_\_

2.2 Is NORTH SOUTH on at a convenient time for you to watch?

YES NOT REALLY NO

2.3 If you answered "not really" or "no", when would you prefer to watch it?

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2.4 Are you aware of the shows immediately preceding or following NORTH SOUTH?

YES NO

2.5 Do you watch the show that precedes NORTH SOUTH, or the show that follows it?

(a) The preceding show

(b) The following show

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**Section 3: CONTENT**

3.1 Do you feel that the programs contain the most current and authentic information on the subject presented?

YES NO

3.2 If you answered "no" to the previous question, please explain:

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3.3 Does NORTH SOUTH explain the economic, social and political links between the developing and the industrialized nations?

ALWAYS FREQUENTLY SOMETIMES INFREQUENTLY NEVER

3.4 Are you satisfied with the selection or mix of program topics?

YES NO

3.5 If the selection does not interest you, please explain:

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**Section 3: CONTENT continued...**

3.6 Are there any subjects you would like NORTH SOUTH to address or explore?

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3.7 Has NORTH SOUTH ever spurred you on to personal local action related to issues about the developing world? Please explain your answer:

YES NO

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3.8 Should NORTH SOUTH sustain a topic over several programs?

YES NO SOMETIMES

3.9 If you answered "YES" or "SOMETIMES", please explain:

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3.10 Could you give an example of the kind of issue or topic you would like to see dealt with in a mini-series?

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3.11 Do you feel that NORTH SOUTH fairly presents both sides of an issue and is journalistically sound?

YES NO

3.12 If you answered "no" to the previous question, please explain. Whose point of view is being presented?

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**Section 3: CONTENT continued...**

3.13 Please evaluate NORTH SOUTH in terms of effectiveness of presentation of the following Third World issues:

(a)	basic needs of the world's poor	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
(b)	the richness of their culture	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
(c)	the role of Canada's people and government	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR

3.14 Do you want to make any comments on these issues?

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3.15 Which areas do you feel NORTH SOUTH is strongest in?

- (a) research                      (b) discussion, review                      (c) action

3.16 Which areas do you feel NORTH SOUTH is weakest in?

- (a) research                      (b) discussion, review                      (c) action

3.17 Which of the following applies to NORTH SOUTH?

- |     |                  |     |    |
|-----|------------------|-----|----|
| (a) | educational      | YES | NO |
| (b) | travel show      | YES | NO |
| (c) | a call to action | YES | NO |

3.18 Do you feel that the content provides sufficient introduction of the subject matter to the viewer so as to:

- (a) change your attitudes about a subject  
 (b) motivate you to seek further information on a subject  
 (c) influence your political, economic or social actions

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**Section 4: HOST**

4.1 Does the host lend credibility to the issues raised?

YES      NO

4.2 Please elaborate on your answer to the previous question:

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**Section 4: HOST continued...**

4.3 Does the host introduce clearly the key concepts to be presented in the program?

YES NO

4.4 Does the host summarize effectively during his or her wrap up?

YES NO

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**Section 5: NORTH SOUTH PROGRAM FORMAT**

5.1 Can you recall anything memorable about one of the programs?

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5.2 Do you like the present program format, consisting of host introduction, film report(s), host review, and look ahead?

YES No

5.3 If you answered "NO" to the previous question, please explain. What would you like?

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5.4 Do you feel that the current format provides sufficient introduction of the subject matter to the viewer so as to:

- (a) keep your interest throughout the show
- (b) change your attitude about a subject
- (c) motivate you to seek further information on a subject
- (d) influence your political, economic, or social actions

5.5 Do you like to see knowledgeable persons or panels invited into the studio to speak with the host on selected topics?

YES NO OCCASIONALLY

5.6 Please explain your previous answer:

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**Section 5: NORTH SOUTH PROGRAM FORMAT continued...**

5.7 Should the discussions or interviews suggested in the previous questions:

- (a) replace the current film report(s)?
- (b) appear frequently in the program schedule?
- (c) or should the present format remain unchanged?

5.8 If you are in favour of a host/guest segment in the program, which would you prefer?

- (a) live presentations, interviews, discussions
- (b) taped, and possibly edited, discussions
- (c) does not matter

5.9 Please provide the names of individuals, or panels whom you think would be interesting guests:

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5.10 Do you have any suggestions to improve or change the program format?

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5.11 Would you like to see NORTH SOUTH extended to a one hour program?

YES NO

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**Section 6: PRODUCTION VALUES**

6.1 How would you rate NORTH SOUTH in relation to other programs on international affairs on other networks or stations?

EXCELLENT GOOD FAIR POOR

6.2 Please elaborate on the previous answer:

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6.3 How would you rate the following NORTH SOUTH production techniques for quality?

(a) visuals	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
(b) sound	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
(c) editing	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR

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**Section 7: PUBLICITY**

7.1 How did you originally hear about NORTH SOUTH? Please explain:

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7.2 Are you aware of the topic, of subject matter, in the upcoming programs?

YES NO

7.3 If you answered "YES" to the previous question, where do you get this information?

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7.4 Is there enough advance information on upcoming NORTH SOUTH shows?

YES NO

7.5 Do you receive VISION TV's Great Viewer's Guide?

YES NO

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**Section 8: AUDIENCE USE OF NORTH SOUTH**

8.1 Do you tell others about NORTH SOUTH and encourage them to watch?

YES NO

8.2 If you answered "YES" to the previous question, whom do you tell?

- (a) other individuals
- (b) groups you belong to
- (c) constituency whom you direct

8.3 Please estimate the number of people you know who watch NORTH SOUTH:

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8.4 Have you ever recorded the program?

YES NO

8.5 If you answered "yes" to the previous question, why do you record it?

- (a) because you are unable to watch it when broadcast
- (b) to watch the program again
- (c) to show to others

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**Section 8: AUDIENCE USE OF NORTH SOUTH continued...**

8.6 Please explain who you show the recorded program to:

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8.7 Would supplementary written materials be of value to you?

YES NO

8.8 Please describe what would be useful:

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8.9 Please list other individuals or organizations to whom you think NORTH SOUTH would be of interest. Please include contact person and address, if know.

NAME:  
ADDRESS:  
CITY:  
PROVINCE:  
POSTAL CODE:  
TELEPHONE:  
ORGANIZATION (if applicable):

NAME:  
ADDRESS:  
CITY:  
PROVINCE:  
POSTAL CODE:  
TELEPHONE:  
ORGANIZATION (if applicable):

NAME:  
ADDRESS:  
CITY:  
PROVINCE:  
POSTAL CODE:  
TELEPHONE:  
ORGANIZATION (if applicable):

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**Section 9: CONFIDENTIAL EVALUATION SECTION**

*You may wish to separate this section from the rest of the evaluation. It can be returned under separate cover, and you are not asked to identify yourself.*

9.1 Do you feel that having NORTH SOUTH shown on VISION TV restricts the potential audience for NORTH SOUTH?

YES NO

9.2 If you answered "YES" to the previous question, please explain why:

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9.3 If shown on CBC, CTV, or GLOBAL, do you believe that NORTH SOUTH would have:

(a)	more credibility	YES	NO
(b)	a larger audience	YES	NO

9.4 Do you feel that the publicly funded International Development and Research Centre (IDRC) monies are well spent in producing NORTH SOUTH? The total budget per show averages \$ \_\_\_\_\_

YES NO

9.5 Would you care to make any comments about IDRC support for NORTH SOUTH?

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9.6 Do you have any suggestions for IDRC in educating the Canadian public about developing countries? Please elaborate:

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9.7 What do you think NORTH SOUTH is trying to achieve and is it the proper objective?

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## APPENDIX II

### *Burundi*

Transcript of *North-South* program. This is a partial transcript pertaining to those segments which B.C. NGO respondents found problematic in the context of the interviews.

Introduction by Flora MacDonald.

"...Tribal differences. They've been the ongoing cause of much dissent and death....Burundi is to look at a country which is trying to come to grip with tribal conflict....

If borders in Africa were drawn by tribe, there would be hundreds of tiny countries...and maybe there would be more peace. When colonial powers departed Africa they left nations divided by tremendous tribal rivalries. Burundi is an example...Hutu and Tutsi....Was it begun by Hutu?...Was it exacerbated by army...?

...some of the challenges Burundi faces as it tries to unite its divided people."

### **Body**

Voice-over (v/o) — Burundi is the combination of one of the luscious lands in Africa...its potential and its problems are a reflection of the broader face of the continent.

Professor Edmond Jouve: "...There is an ethnic problem. There is no denying it. Burundi could be a paradise on earth...."

v/o — Yet Burundi is ranked as one of the least advanced countries in the world. One of the ten poorest despite the fact it hasn't known the famine that has plagued the rest of Africa for the past decade...agriculturally, it is capable of self-sufficiency ...two harvests per year so there is plenty of food for the entire country....If there is a problem it has to do with water...more electricity than it consumes...coffee, some say it is amongst the finest in the world. This provides most of the money to pay off the country's debt including interest. The debt isn't large by world standards, but it is big for a country the size of Burundi which has to depend upon a single crop to bring in revenue.

...Since independence from Belgium...started to cultivate tea in an effort to augment its source of income, but crops like these are notoriously subject to international price

fluctuations so now like so many poor countries in need of hard currency...tourist industry in hope it will provide a reliable and steady source of foreign cash.

Dr. John Humphrey: "...poverty major barrier to human rights...lasting peace will only come when human rights respected in Burundi and that means when national unity is achieved."

Professor Dens Van Der Weld: "If you don't have enough to eat how can you talk of human rights? If you have no roof...of human rights? Economic, social, cultural rights are human rights. We are one planet...the environment as well as peace...is part of human rights."

Flora MacDonald: "...arrested by government. Is this the kind of action which fits in with government's efforts to improve things?"

### **Wrap with Flora MacDonald and Andre Payette**

Flora MacDonald: "What are the prospects for better relations between the two tribes?"

Andre Payette: "Prospects are quite good for the time being. The new government...is made up of a little more than one-half Hutus for the first time...charter of national unity...implemented in 1991. So let's hope because it deals mainly with human rights so...happy solution."

Flora MacDonald: "Burundi is a country with so much potential it could be self-sufficient...."

Andre Payette: "...it is almost self-sufficient as it is now...there's not a square inch of soil where something doesn't grow...You get two cash crops a year and this is why I'm much surprised that the IMF and the World Bank consider that country like one of the poorest countries in the world. It's not Ethiopia where people die...There are certain problems...it's not a very wealthy country although they are self-sufficient. They eat and when a country like this one eats...it's very surprising. I was flabbergasted when I came there...I'm not in the Africa I know...but, of course, they had problems between Tutsis and Hutus and well you know it's...a political power game....Fundamentally I don't think it's an ethnic problem... because they all belong to the black race anyhow. It's not a racist problem it's a power game ...and those who are in power want to stay in power and those who are not want to get into power...like we even see here in Canada...especially after...independence not even 30 years... in Canada still have national unity problem so they will probably resolve those sooner than we."

## APPENDIX III

### *Overcoming Illiteracy*

Transcript of *North-South* program.

This is a partial transcript pertaining to those segments B.C. NGO respondents found problematic in the context of the interviews.

#### **Introduction** with Flora MacDonald

"...and the education of women contributes more than that of men to limiting family size...."

For years UNICEF and UNESCO have been promoting basic education for women in the developing world. Now the World Bank and Regional Banks are finally realizing that illiteracy and poverty go hand in hand. You can't eliminate the one unless you tackle the other."

#### **Body**

Re Angola:

v/o — Even war doesn't stop the desire to learn....In Angola like so many countries recently liberated from colonial status, literacy is an essential element for a prosperous future.

Re Pakistan:

Alya Amersade Khan: "...clear not come for planning population...we have this in mind, that we are going to do but not now....My cause is the education of women of the village...."

v/o — Began's schools operate from small grants abroad....

Re Haiti:

Bishop Willy Romaros: "...most important increase political awareness....We must change the social realities around us...."

Re Kenya:

v/o — ...children by choice, not by chance....Kenya like many countries has a serious population planning...great emphasis placed on young. It is they who will determine what Kenya carves out in the future....

"...five children...you see just doing it now...fewer....Let's think about where we are going... the growing population....Friends let's plan our families....How many children do you want...?"

Re Pakistan:

Taswa: "With one hand you'll rock the cradle with the other change the world...."

## Wrap

Flora MacDonald: "...crude blackboard and no, virtually no, facilities....With this age of high technology we should do better than that...increased tuition fees but cut back support those coming from south...."

"...a new concept of education...1987 Commonwealth of Learning...has searching for ways of promoting human resources...distance learning...carry education countries in North to countries in South...."

"...to accommodate global needs of education and programming tailored to specific needs each region...emphasis training teachers...all designed to help these nations teach themselves."

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**ACRONYMS AND SHORTENED NAMES**

AFRICA 2000	Africa 2000 Program
AMNS	Amnesty International
B.C.	British Columbia
BCCIC	B.C. Council for International Cooperation
BCTF	B.C. Teachers' Federation
CCIC	Canadian Council for International Cooperation
CIAYA	Canadian Institute of the Arts for Young Audiénces
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CMPL	Common Place
CUSO	CUSO B.C.
CWY	Canada World Youth, B.C. Regional Office
GLVG	Global Village Nanaimo
IBT	International Broadcasting Trust
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
LINK	Link International Ministries
MCC BC	Mennonite Central Committee, B.C.
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OXFAM	OXFAM Canada
PIP	Public Information Program
PPP	Public Participation Project

SCF	Save the Children Fund of B.C.
SEVA	SEVA Service Society
TEN DAYS	Ten Days for World Development
TP	Tools for Peace
TUG	Trade Union Group
UN	United Nations Association, Vancouver Branch, Africa 2000
UNAV	United Church of Canada, Audio-Visual Department, B.C.
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Educational Fund, B.C.
VIDEA	Victoria International Development Education Association
X	Canadian Red Cross, B.C.-Yukon Division
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association