



Global Community and Development: the East End of London in a Globalised World

*An edited transcript of the seminar held on 2nd May 2007 at the Attlee Youth and Community Centre in Tower Hamlets, London, UK.
Introduced and edited by Martin Punaks.*

Introduction

This report is an edited transcript of the speeches given at the Attlee Youth and Community Centre's (AYCC's) inaugural seminar entitled *Global Community and Development* on 2nd May 2007.

AYCC annual seminar

AYCC is an open access, inclusive community centre catering primarily for children and young people with and without recognised disabilities. As well as providing services, one of its aims is to improve policy and public attitudes which affect children and young people. One of the ways it does this is by holding an annual seminar to debate important issues affecting children and young people, in the broadest sense.

Global community and development

The theme for AYCC's inaugural seminar in 2007 – *Global Community and Development: the East End of London in a Globalised World* – was influenced by the high numbers of Centre users from diaspora communities, particularly from 'developing world' countries such as Bangladesh and Somalia. Despite sophisticated networks of voluntary sector organisations working together in Tower Hamlets to address the issues which affect these children and young people, there is little contact with similar such networks which exist in the origin countries of these diaspora communities, such as Bangladesh and Somalia. This absence of dialogue or networking between UK-based voluntary

organisations and international development NGOs fails to reflect the intricate linkages which exist between the very communities which the NGOs and voluntary organisations serve in their own constituencies, be it Bangladesh, Somalia or Tower Hamlets. This absence of dialogue means there is a loss of potential learning that could occur between agencies in different parts of the world, all operating with a similar aim to reduce poverty, disadvantage and marginalisation.

To debate this issue, AYCC invited speakers with experience of working with, or researching, the third sector and/or development issues, both internationally and in the UK. The speakers, together with short summaries of their speeches, are as follows:

Monica Ali chaired the seminar. She is the author of two books, *Brick Lane*, which was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize, and *Alentejo Blue* which is published in paperback in 2007. She is also the Patron of AYCC.

In Monica's introductory speech she places the debate within the context of the East End of London, both historically and geographically.

Dr David Lewis was the key-note speaker. He is a Reader in Social Policy at the London School of Economics. His main focus is on Bangladesh development, politics and society, related to which he has a number of publications. David has combined academic work with consultancy for a wide range of organisations, including Save the Children Fund, Oxfam GB, Concern Worldwide, Christian Aid, CARE, Sida, DFID, UNDP and the Body Shop plc.

In David's speech he discusses what he sees as two unhelpful dualisms between, firstly, UK voluntary organisations and international development NGOs and, secondly, between so called Northern NGOs and Southern NGOs. He suggests that these dualisms are now beginning to break down as they become overtaken by events and ideas. However, he argues that this process needs to go further to build new concepts that better reflect the realities of multicultural Britain in a globalising world.

Sandra Kabir was a speaker. She is the Executive Director of BRAC UK. Sandra has worked in development since 1976, predominantly in the area of sexual health and rights, and women's development. She was awarded the international STIMEZO Prize in 1988 for her contribution to making abortion safe worldwide. Sandra established the Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition in 1979 and played a major role in the creation of EL TALLER (a global NGO movement). Sandra was an elected Councillor of the London Borough of Brent till May 2006.

In Sandra's speech she gives a short history of BRAC – an NGO which originated in Bangladesh and is one of the biggest NGOs in the world – before

going on to explain why BRAC had decided to establish a new NGO, called BRAC UK, in London. She explains that the purpose of BRAC UK is to use BRAC's successful approach in Bangladesh to assist diaspora communities here in the UK, but also to bring a strong Southern voice to British debates about international development. Sandra goes on to give a number of examples of successful North / South projects which, she believes, are breaking down barriers between North and South, and instead focusing on people's needs, wherever that may be.

Dr David Mosse was a speaker. David is a Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the School of Oriental and African Studies. His research interests include the anthropology of development and South Asian society, related to which he has a number of publications. He combines academic anthropology with development practice, working as a social development adviser for DFID, as Regional Representative for Oxfam in south India, and as a rural development consultant.

In David's speech he suggests that the notion of international development was born out of both a dismantled colonial administration following World War Two, and concepts of European poverty. International development was, in a sense, a globalisation of poverty in which the poor were defined as lacking what the rich had. David suggests that poverty is usually seen as an external pathological condition in international development thinking, whereas he believes this overlooks the way in which poverty is actually produced by connections and linkages within normal economic and social relations. In this view, poverty is not exception but is the product of normal relations within the world capitalist system, so to understand it we need to better understand global economic and social relations. He calls for a revival of the sense of global responsibility upon which international development was founded, which is inclusive of the concerns and issues which we experience in our society and those concerns in the developing world.

A note regarding editing

The speeches given at the seminar have been edited to improve their comprehension in a text format, or in other words, to make them easier to read as a report. The editor therefore apologises in advance if this means that any of the speaker's ideas have been unintentionally misconstrued as a result of this. For a full audio copy of the seminar, including the discussion which followed the speeches, please send a blank writable CD and stamped addressed envelope to AYCC.

Martin Punaks
Co-Chair of AYCC, 2006-2007

A report summarising the seminar

An introduction by Monica Ali

Welcome to the Attlee Youth and Community Centre's inaugural annual seminar. AYCC is a fantastic facility. The Centre was established by the Attlee Foundation, which in turn was set up to commemorate the life and work of Clement Attlee who had very strong connections to the East End. The Foundation works to initiate and develop projects for young people, and it aims to show that facilities for young people can be of a high quality, and be accessible and sustainable.

The Centre's mission is to enable children and young people to develop their full potential. So how does this relate to what we are doing here today? Well it is also the aim of the charity to promote and stimulate debate around issues which are of concern to young people in the broadest sense. So this is the reason for this seminar, which is on a topic that is not often talked about, making it all the more reason why we have chosen to discuss it.

Since the 19th century the East End of London has been viewed as one of the poorest and most disadvantaged areas of Britain. When the famous explorer, Henry Morton Stanley, famously coined the phrase 'darkest Africa' to refer to the 'horrors' he had witnessed in Africa, parallels were immediately drawn with the East End of London. William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, used Stanley's rhetoric to describe the 'horrors' of East London as 'darkest England', and talked of the need to bring 'civilisation' to the 'enslaved nomads' in the 'human cesspool' of East London. In the present day a case was made for the 2012 Olympics to come to East London because of its urgent need to be 'regenerated'. The language may have softened significantly, but the same ideas still exist in relation to East London's poverty.

Yet this is not to say that East London today isn't poor. Indicators consistently show that Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Newham still have some of the highest levels of poverty and disadvantage in the UK. However, globalisation makes the situation more complicated. For example, whilst Bangladeshis living in Tower Hamlets suffer severe levels of overcrowding, unemployment, isolation, mental health problems, in short poverty, back in Sylhet, in Bangladesh, some of these same people are perceived by their peers as wealthy, or the 'ones who made it'. In Sylhet, *Londoni* houses are the biggest in the village; *Londoni* villages stand out from those where no-one was lucky enough to work or live in the UK. Living in London is a status symbol of wealth and prosperity.

Poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion is relative and varies according to its context, both historically and geographically. In other words, the poverty that was experienced in Victorian England is not the same as the poverty experienced in London today. Nor is child poverty in the UK – which according to

a recent UN report is the worst in the 'developed world' – the same as poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa. Yet poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion still exist both here and in the 'developing world', just as wealth also exists both here and in the 'developing world'.

The purpose of the debate today is for those of us working with these issues in the UK to think beyond our normal horizons towards more of an international perspective, and for those of us working in an international context to think more about what is happening on our own doorsteps. Hopefully, new ways of thinking can be developed out of this.

Key-note speech by Dr David Lewis

Thank you for inviting me to give this talk. The theme of the seminar is to think beyond our normal horizons towards an international perspective; beyond an increasingly unhelpful dualism between the idea of working 'at home' in community development, and the idea of working 'out there' in community development in the developing world.

Before I start, I should say a little bit about my own background. I work at the London School of Economics and I'm primarily interested in research on international development issues, and on the work of voluntary organisations and NGOs. I have particularly focused in my work on Bangladesh over the years. I first went there in 1985 to do research for my PhD, and I've continued to go back over the years. As well as doing research I've also worked on a more practical level in Bangladesh for UK NGOs such as Oxfam and Save the Children, as well as Bangladeshi NGOs such as BRAC and Proshika.

There is no better place to consider the challenge of trying to re-think our stereotypes of North and South than here in the East End of London, because of its history of changing migrant populations, and current global status as home to a large Bangladeshi population. I'm not really qualified to talk about the East End itself, but I will talk about the changing categories of development organisations, the need to think beyond crude notions of North and South, the need to think in more global terms, and the need to exchange ideas.

The first point I want to make on this is about something that always strikes me as rather strange, from the point of view of the UK voluntary sector, which is that there are two parallel worlds within the UK voluntary sector. First, there are organisations which work within the UK, which are primarily focused on issues of community development in the UK, then there are the organisations which are focused outwards, towards the so called 'third world'. These two communities of organisations are unhelpfully separate. People working in the voluntary sector tend to work in one world or the other, and this has only recently started to change. Each world is characterised by its own language and terminology. For

some reason we call organisations which work in development, 'NGOs', whilst we call the ones working in the UK, 'voluntary organisations'. Why do we do this? They are the same kinds of organisations doing the same kinds of work.

I have been doing some research over the last year or so talking to activists in the UK voluntary sector and have found that few of them cross over between these two worlds; they either stay in the UK domestic sector or in the international sector. They tend not to move between the two. However, I think it would be useful if they did cross over to construct more connections, share ideas, and compare experiences.

Making the distinction between these two worlds is a denial of important continuities in time and space where past and present are linked within colonial history, and in the geographies of migration, economic struggle and cultural change. It is also a distinction that rests unhelpfully in ideas about poverty, which is ultimately much more about extent than type. For example, there are areas of the Appalachian mountains in the United States where health and education indicators are worse than in many developing countries. So the challenges of working with people in developed or developing countries may differ in extent, but not in the realities of interacting with people's lives and their problems.

The next idea I want to talk about is another dualism in the world of NGOs where it has become customary to talk about Northern NGOs based in the North, and Southern NGOs working in the South, based in countries like Bangladesh. This is a distinction which emerged about fifteen to twenty years ago and is again a rather paternalistic and unhelpful distinction. When Northern NGOs moved away from actually implementing their own projects, which many of them did a decade or two ago, they chose a new role of building the capacity of the NGOs in the South, and I have argued that this is a very paternalistic idea because, in the end, we are finding that many NGOs in the South have already moved beyond this identity, if indeed they originally even had it. So an organisation like BRAC has long outgrown the identity of Southern NGO and has actually internationalised in ways that make it just as much an international NGO as Oxfam is. This is therefore another dualism which we need to outgrow.

I think it's fair to say that neither of these distinctions between UK voluntary organisations and NGOs, or between Northern NGOs and Southern NGOs, have stood the test of time very well. They are being gradually overtaken by events and ideas. When Oxfam established its first UK programme ten years ago, it recognised that poverty is to do with global interdependence and inequality, and not just about 'working out there'. Yet its UK programme got into quite a lot of trouble; there was quite a lot of press criticism from the Daily Mail, for example, saying that Oxfam should "get back to the third world". So challenging this dualism has been an interesting process. Furthermore, ideas from the world of international development such as participatory planning have begun to find their

way back into the UK in areas such as community health work. We are therefore seeing more effort to exchange such ideas beyond these dualisms.

Of course if we come to an area like the East End, these parallel worlds are under challenge because they don't fit with the realities of life here where communities are equally connected to North and South. So for example, the emergence of non resident Bangladeshi NGOs has really broken this stereotype. Non resident Bangladeshi NGOs better reflect the concerns of globalised communities. Another influential example is that of the Grameen Bank. Whilst the Grameen Bank was born in the South, its anti-poverty microfinance approaches are now used in parts of the UK, and everyone has heard of Dr Yunus since he became a Nobel prize winner. Further examples include collaborative projects such as [myAsiaSpace](#) which seek to harness new communications technologies to promote international links and greater understanding between young people in London and Bangladesh. And finally, BRAC is no longer an SNGO working in Asia and Africa, but is also active in the UK.

So to conclude, the process of breaking down these dichotomies has started, but needs to go further. The challenge will be to build on these changes, build new communications, and develop worlds beyond these very sterile labels and categories in ways that better reflect the realities of multicultural Britain in a globalising world. This re-thinking is already underway in a community such as the East End with its links outwards from the UK to Bangladesh, to local community initiatives, and in the opposite direction too, from organisations like BRAC who bring new ideas and share experiences that link North and South in new ways.

Speech by Sandra Kabir

A lot of people will know about BRAC in Bangladesh. It is probably the largest NGO in the world in terms of the numbers of people it employs (over 100,000 people in Bangladesh), and is probably the second largest NGO (after World Vision) in terms of its expenditure (\$300,000 a year). BRAC was established in Bangladesh in 1972 in response to people returning from India, after the Bangladesh War of Liberation, to find their houses raised to the ground, their fields lying fallow, and their cattle taken away and slaughtered; they came back to nothing. Fazle Hasan Abed, the founder of BRAC, responded to their need for life's basics by creating the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee. However, it should be noted that the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee is now known only as BRAC because its work has spread much further than Bangladesh.

BRAC's work revolves around four development issues. The first of these is economic development, mostly in the form of microfinance and enterprise. The

second is education, particularly primary education of children unable to access the government education system, and the establishment of a private university. The third is health issues, in the form of organising women to become health volunteers, to share health education in their own communities, and the establishment of an institute of public health. And finally, human rights, which spans all of these issues.

BRAC's work in Bangladesh expanded in 2001 to include Afghanistan. After the tsunami in 2004 it went to Sri Lanka. Then in 2006 BRAC went to Tanzania and Uganda, and more recently to Southern Sudan. Work in Uganda involves microfinance and an education programme. Work in Tanzania involves microfinance and a health volunteer programme. Work in Southern Sudan will involve setting up a microfinance programme and primary schools.

BRAC UK began when Mr Abed envisaged locating a person in the UK or Europe to fundraise for BRAC. However, over the last four years I have been in discussions with Mr Abed about this and have insisted that a BRAC UK should not exist to only raise money. Eventually Mr Abed agreed with my proposals and decided to allow BRAC UK to be an independent NGO registered in the UK with its own constitution, and own board of trustees, with no BRAC representatives on it. BRAC and BRAC UK have a common mission, vision and objectives, and BRAC UK has been funded by BRAC for its first year of operation. Both organisations believe in the value of economic development, and both support BRAC's teaching projects, primary schools, and women's health programmes.

BRAC UK exists for three reasons. The first reason is to adapt BRAC's approach used in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Africa and Afghanistan to diaspora groups here in the UK. BRAC UK believes that diaspora groups in the UK can't access the services they require because of social-economic reasons. BRAC UK is currently carrying out a needs assessment of Bangladeshi women and children in Tower Hamlets (funded by City Group). This work formally began in February 2007 and the results so far show little that hasn't also come up in other research. However, it does highlight that children and women want to develop better skills in managing the money they have, they want to learn how best to save money, and also learn how to raise money for enterprise purposes. It is envisaged that BRAC UK will become involved in economic development in East London, although precisely what this will be will depend on the results of the needs assessment. We think that our work may start with financial education for disadvantaged people in East London, but I believe it is appropriate to not only focus on the Bangladeshi community but all disadvantaged people in East London. However, no decisions have yet been made.

We would also like to work with the Somali community in the UK, within which many people are not officially documented. Somali community leaders have indicated that they would like BRAC UK to work with disaffected young people in their community. We also hope to work with other diaspora groups across UK.

BRAC UK's second area of focus is to bring a strong successful Southern voice to dialogue on international development in the UK. So when the Oxfams, Save the Children Funds, and VSOs are talking with DfID, BRAC UK will also be there to bring a Southern perspective to the discussions.

BRAC UK's third area of work is to raise money for projects in Southern Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda, but also for BRAC's probable forthcoming work in Malawi, Nigeria and Liberia.

BRAC UK only got registered as a charity in the UK at the end of July last year. All last year I worked from home to set up the organisation, working out how BRAC UK would fit into the UK NGO sector. Much of this work consisted of informal consultation, chats over a cup of tea etc. As well as myself, BRAC UK consists of three board members, and some project staff based at a project office in Bethnal Green. You could say that its purpose is to try out the idea of a successful NGO which originated in South going global by establishing a presence in the UK. (There is also a BRAC USA currently being set up, but this will be more of a fundraising machine for BRAC, unlike BRAC UK). I personally feel very strongly that, as a British NGO registered in the UK, BRAC UK has an obligation to give something back to its host country. Indeed, BRAC has a lot to share, such as its highly successful microfinance approach.

Working with this concept of South / North relationships, one of BRAC's initiatives is to work closely with VSO regarding the possibility of young British Bangladeshis going to Bangladesh to volunteer. This would involve three age groups of volunteers: 16-19 year old school leavers, 20-25 year old students or young employees, and 26-32 year old professionals looking for a career break. There has been much enthusiasm to the idea so far, but issues still need to be decided such as who will pay, and how will VSO will ensure the volunteer's security. We particularly want to encourage Bangladeshi girls to volunteer. There is a strong emphasis in this project on sharing ideas and learning.

Another example of a North / South project is a British Bangladeshi organisation called Drishti Path, which is made up of young professional in the UK and focuses on issues needing attention in Bangladesh, such as the human rights of garment workers. This is another example of British Bangladeshis organising themselves and doing something back in Bangladesh.

There is another experience I had about ten years ago I want to share with you. I've worked a lot in the area of sexual reproductive health and rights, and women's development. One of the issues that comes up, if you work in this area, is the issue of violence against women. So about ten years ago I had an idea and managed to get money from the UN to do a small experiment where we brought successful NGOs in Pakistan and Bangladesh working with domestic violence against women, over to Birmingham in the UK to meet domestic NGOs

working on domestic violence against women here. When the groups got together there was such a rich exchange of learning. Interestingly, groups from the UK learnt much from the Bangladeshi and Pakistani NGOs on the need to be culturally sensitive, and the need to understand dynamics between families (and amongst the Pakistani families, issues of family honour). Its very interesting how, since then, the NGOs have stayed in contact and continue to exchange learning and ideas between South and North.

Such projects are trying to break down barriers between developed and developing countries, between North and South. In an ideal world there shouldn't be a North and South. Wherever there is a need, we should be able to fulfill that need. If we have money to go to war in Iraq and do all sorts of other crazy things, then why don't we have money to bring people out of poverty? The whole world is crazy! Everyone here is working towards changing the world.

I have one last issue to mention. I used to be a Labour councillor in Brent until I lost my seat in the last election. One of the issues that Brent Council are always talking about is the concept of 'multiculturalism'. Brent is very multicultural, as is Tower Hamlets. But I question this concept. If we keep talking about multiculturalism, are we helping bring about cohesion within the community, or are we highlighting differences and keeping people apart? There's not just one community living in poverty, there are many different communities with problems. Personally I don't believe in integration, I believe in cohesion. So how do we encourage cohesion, and how does the term 'multiculturalism' work against us?

Speech by Dr David Mosse

I wasn't sure what to say in the context of this discussion because I don't have experience of working in the voluntary sector in this country, or knowledge of this particular region. However, I have worked in international development for many years, partly with the official aid programme of DfID, and also for Oxfam in southern India. So I will be speaking from the perspective of international development. How do we change, or what are the implications of, the way that international development organisations think broadly about problems of poverty, by situating ourselves in a place like the East End and thinking about international connections?

As a professional field, international development is comparatively recent. It was only after the Second World War that it was separated from, on the one hand, colonial administration – the overseas development administration was the direct inheritor of the colonial office – and secondly, separated from how we had dealt with poverty in Britain. In other words, colonialism and poverty in Britain came together, in a sense, in the new notion of international development after World War Two. Some people in the academic community argue that international development, after the war, evolved into a kind of globalisation of the idea of

poverty, in the sense that the ideas of poverty within the European working classes were transferred to other places, in fact to entire countries which were perceived of as poor. The third world poor were defined in the same way as how the working class poor in Europe had been; as lacking what the rich had. Within market societies this was largely defined in terms of money and material possessions. Moreover, the developed world would provide the implicit standard, and the means for the removal of poverty, namely economic growth and the development of industrial capacity. So the idea of international development has very particular roots.

Today, international development is again focussed on the concept of poverty reduction, but less in terms of a grand transition of industrial society modelled on the West (although that is still implicitly there in ideas of economic growth as the main solution to world poverty), but more in terms of specific targets under what you'll be familiar with as the Millennium Development goals, ie, to reduce income poverty in half by such and such a time, to reduce illiteracy, to reduce female mortality, and so on and so forth. Thinking about third world development from an inter-connected perspective – UK to Africa, UK to Asia and so on – as we have here, does for me raise some question about how international development agencies, as opposed to voluntary organisations in the UK, commonly think about poverty. There are all kinds of problems with the way poverty is understood which could be corrected by making the kinds of connections across the divisions which David Lewis explained earlier.

The first way in which poverty is often understood in international development is as a condition, or as a sort of trap, ie, the 'poverty trap', into which people fall, or they exit. Problems of poverty are often to be found in the characteristics of the poor themselves, rather than in the wider social and economic systems within which people live, or are part of. Secondly, conditions of poverty in international development thinking are exteriorised, made external. Poverty is a product of abnormal or pathological processes. Even a concept such as 'social exclusion' – which derived from European thinking about who was excluded from services of one kind or another – put those who are poor apart from normal society, maybe located in the informal sector as opposed to the formal sector. So rather than thinking about poverty as a condition of a normal operation of society, it becomes something which exists on the side, and requires a separate mode of analysis and intervention. Related to this is a third point about the way that poverty is thought about in international development nowadays, and this is that it adopts an unquestioned neo-liberal commonsense, ie, the consensus view that the solution to world poverty lies in social and economic inclusion, that is to say, the main instrument against poverty is economic growth and the incorporation of people into global markets. It assumes that incorporation into global markets will reduce poverty. In this sense, international development is essentially about creating the institutional conditions to allow integration into international markets. These conditions are subject to expert technical intervention that are prescribed by specialist institutions like the World Bank, IMF and other bodies.

Finally, ideas about poverty as exception or exclusion in international development involve a kind of 'othering' of poverty; poverty is in other places, it affects other people. Poor people and poor places are seen in some degree as culturally foreign. This links closely with some of the points which Monica Ali made earlier about how people thought about the East End of London in the past. This cultural 'foreignness' of poverty blurs poverty with other kinds of political anxieties, in international organisation's thinking, so in parts of the world today which are poorly integrated into global markets, or excluded from them, poverty is often conceived of as dangerous. Poverty is tied to parts of the world which are a threat to security, and is remedied through assertive promotion of neoliberal prescriptions. Indeed the political scientist, Mark Duffield, points out that "the security concerns of metropolitan states have merged with the social concerns of aid agencies". He goes on to talk about how aid and politics have become reunited. We are familiar with the way security and aid have become melded, especially in the US through George Bush's agenda for international development with organisations like USAID or the Millennium Challenge Fund in which non-integrating areas are also zones of insecurity. This is another way in which poverty is understood as a kind of 'othering'.

In my view these are essentially dividing views. They are views which look at poverty and require a division which separates out those who are poor from the rest of us. They overlook the way in which poverty and disadvantage are actually produced by connections, by linkages, and by the normal economic relations which we are all involved in everyday, directly or indirectly, in our transactions and consumption. Poverty in reality is not exception, but is the product of normal relations within the world capitalist system we are all part of. It is not an indication of social exclusion therefore, but actually a matter of adverse incorporation. It is the terms by which people are also already incorporated within the economic system which is important. This is clear to me, for example, when working with construction workers in India who are migrant labourers migrating from the tribal or *adivasi* hinterlands. Their means of survival involves extreme forms of exploitation which are not to do with exclusion from market relationships, urbanisation and industrialisation of the rapidly developing western region of India, but precisely by being incorporated under terms by which their incorporation is the basis of their poverty.

So if poverty is a consequence of inclusion in certain ways, and about certain economic, political and social systems, then studying and understanding poverty isn't to be equated with understanding the poor, which it currently is in international development thinking. To actually understand poverty properly, we have to understand wider systems, the non-poor, the elite, and indeed their systems of consumption are also implicated. More needs to be understood about global economic relations, as well as about how generating wealth as a means to reduce poverty can also create and perpetuate certain types of poverty through exploitation, dispossession, labour market distortions, cheap labour,

outsourcing risk, outsourcing environmental pollution to other parts of the world, through waste, harmful commodities such as weapons, alcohol and tobacco, environmental destruction, and climate change. These are all ways in which the economic system, and incorporation into it, actually produces conditions of poverty, as opposed to poverty being something happening separately.

Today the logic of concentration of wealth, of global production, of trading, is actually social rather than geographical. There are not so much poor places, as poor people, regardless of where they are. There are concentrations of wealth and poverty within the UK, within India, within London or Bangalore, or any other major city, rather than distinctions between a rich North and poor South.

Taking a broader view of poverty and development worldwide means adopting a framework which works against the sorts of divisions which David Lewis talked about earlier; between development studies and social policy studies, between NGOs and UK voluntary organisations. We need to look at the way people's life chances involve global connections. To put it another way, it means reconnecting the problems of global wealth and poverty to each other, and shifting away from ideas of poverty which exclude and separate poverty from the lives we all lead. This means focussing on different lifestyles and forms of consumption, which enables us to link driving forces of high consumption, among certain categories of people, with areas of extremely low consumption, people who have to make do with very little.

Finally, in terms of the kind of critical view that is currently emerging, there is the need to take development thinking about poverty away from its current technical managerial focus, where the solutions are subject to technical tinkering – getting incentives right, tinkering with institutions, the design of economies or democracies (which of course is the current preoccupation of international development carried out by major organisations such as the World Bank) – but instead to re-incorporate development into a broader vision of global responsibility. This is why it is important to be situated here in the East End, thinking about development across the whole world, rather than development as a matter of concern only for poor people living in poor countries far away.

The Dutch anthropologist, Philip Quarles van Ufford reminds us that the idea of international development itself, along with the Declaration of Human Rights, emerged as a vision of hope, and as a vision of global responsibility, out of the crisis and destruction of the Second World War, and subsequently, the processes of decolonisation which took place. Somehow we need to revive that sense of global responsibility, which is inclusive of the concerns and issues which we experience in our society and those concerns in the developing world. As the anthropologist Paul Farmer says, we need to understand poverty and suffering in the world in ways that are geographically broad and historically deep enough to discover connections that allow it to be seen that “the modern day Haitians are the descendents of people kidnapped from Africa to provide our

forbears with sugar, coffee and cotton". Or as he also puts it, "the world that is satisfying to us, or one group of people, is the same world that can be utterly devastating or damaging to others". So the global connections seem to me to be absolutely essential, yet these connections are not the current focus of thought in international development. This is why an occasion like this is important in allowing us to think about these connections.

The discussion which followed these speeches is available in audio format only and can be obtained from AYCC.

Acknowledgements

The *Global Community and Development* seminar was organised by the following AYCC trustees and staff: Martin Punaks, Helena Holt, William Murray, Tania Shaikh and Stella Camara.

AYCC would like to thank Monica Ali for chairing the seminar and for her ongoing support as our Patron. We would also like to thank Dr David Lewis, Sandra Kabir and Dr David Mosse for giving us their time to speak at the seminar, as well as offering up their valuable thoughts and experiences. We would also like to thank Ash Akhtar and Cara Coslett of myAsiaSpace at Concern for their assistance in organising BBC coverage of the event.

Finally we would like to thank the delegates who attended and contributed to the seminar who were as follows:

Joanna Ali	Toynbee Hall
Ash Akhtar	Concern Worldwide
Dekan Apajee	BBC London
Farah Ashraf	Toynbee Hall
Cllr Rupert Bawden	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Margaret Burr	Humanities Education Centre
Stella Camara	Attlee Youth and Community Centre
Ashrafia Choudhury	Disabilities Resource Centre
Tom Clark	The Guardian
Christopher Coombe	Linklaters
Cara Coslett	Concern Worldwide
Peggy Desforges	One World Foundation
Rebecca Faal	South Bank
Luke Geoghegan	Toynbee Hall
Milla Gregor	Toynbee Hall
Zahra Hassan	
Helena Holt	Attlee Foundation
Sonia Howard	Toynbee Hall
Mark Hudson	
Bethany Jennings	NSPCC
Tarik Khan	City University School of Nursing and Midwifery
Sally Long	Toynbee Hall
Sophie Mackay	Humanities Education Centre
Carole MacQueen	BASSAC
Laura Maio	
Rosemary Mayes	Open University
Karen Merkel	BBC Worldwide Interactive Services
Ana Miah	Toynbee Hall
Kira Milmo	Bishopsgate Foundation and Institute
Hakim Mogali	BBC World Service Trust

Elli Moody	Toynbee Hall
William Murray	Attlee Youth and Community Centre
Michael Newman	Humanities Education Centre
Michael O'Meara	Humanities Education Centre
Syeda Pasha	Toynbee Hall
Gillean Paterson	Humanities Education Centre
Prof Johan Pottier	School of Oriental & African Studies
Martin Punaks	Attlee Youth and Community Centre
Alex Roberts	Toynbee Hall
Sally Roberts	East London Business Alliance
Shahzad Rokon	School of Oriental and African Studies
Alok Ruia	
Angela Saina	BBC London
Mohammed Selim	Toy House Libraries
Tania Shaikh	Attlee Youth and Community Centre
Fauzia Shariff	School of Oriental and African Studies
Emma Taylor	Community Links
Karen Zamboni	Voluntary Service Overseas

The Attlee Youth and Community Centre is a company limited by guarantee, number 4136981, and a project of the Attlee Foundation, registered charity number 1087259. For more information about AYCC see www.attleeycc.org.uk or contact 020 7375 3212 or info@attleeycc.org.uk.