

DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, MOTHERS, GRANDMOTHERS HELPING DAUGHTERS, SISTERS, MOTHERS, GRANDMOTHERS



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National Chairperson of Community Life

Members of The Catholic Women's League of Canada have supported developing countries through the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP) since 1969. Through the 1% Program, members donate one percent of their personal entertainment and luxury items purchased, and individual councils contribute one percent of all funds raised to projects chosen specifically by the national executive.

Members have asked me questions about CCODP recently such as, "What does CCODP do exactly with the money that they receive? Does any of the money go to helping people working with HIV/AIDS victims?" As a neophyte community life standing committee chairperson, I began an investigation and the following is what I discovered.

"During the past 39 years, Development and Peace has provided \$460 million to finance 14,300 projects in 70 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America; \$92 million of this amount has been allocated in emergency aid."

"In fiscal year 2004-2005, Development and Peace financed 381 programs and projects. Of these, 72 involved emergency aid for natural disasters (e.g. floods and earthquakes) or man-made problems (e.g. wars and civil disturbances)."

YES, CCODP plays a very active and important role in the fight against HIV/AIDS. It emphasizes at the beginning of An Active Role for Development and Peace in the Fight Against HIV/AIDS: Policy Statement, "Jesus travelled throughout Galilee...and he healed people who had every kind of sickness and disease." (Matthew 4:23)

"In the two decades since HIV was first diagnosed, AIDS has taken 20 million lives. Currently, 40 million people are infected with HIV/AIDS and 95 percent of those live in the developing world. Fifteen million children have been orphaned by HIV/AIDS and that number is expected to more than triple by 2010." There is no question that the HIV/AIDS crisis is one of the humanitarian challenges of our time! HIV/AIDS is not only a health problem, it is linked to poverty and has drastic effects on families.

By contributing to CCODP, members are helping in the fight against HIV/AIDS in a significant way. CCODP can make a difference in the lives of thousands of people and hundreds of communities. CCODP "...supports partners in the Global South in the pursuit of alternatives to unjust social, political and economic structures." The ultimate objective and goals

of CCODP in its Policy Statement are that it "seeks to celebrate life, the most precious gift and manifestation of the love of the Creator, with the people and the communities most affected by HIV/AIDS," and it "seeks to help enable these people and these communities to gain more power and control over their lives and their environments so that they can enjoy better health and look after their own needs."

In the Strategies and Approaches described in the Policy Statement it is stated, "In its involvement in the struggle against HIV/AIDS, Development and Peace favors an **awareness-building approach** in which the organisation accompanies the groups it supports as they evolve their strategies, while engaging them in open and frank dialogue, and does not abandon them if they make choices that are not necessarily the ones we would have made. It is also from and with these groups that Development and Peace learns the best ways to fight HIV/AIDS...And because its mission explicitly supports the **efforts of women** to achieve social justice and economic justice, Development and Peace ascribes special importance to their point of view and their analysis."



Clearly, CCODP is deeply committed to working with communities in an attempt to overcome the crippling effects of HIV/AIDS. It has funded local groups and grassroots organizations that are trying to improve living conditions. "The bulk of [CCODP] funds support projects run by local groups: village organizations, women's groups, co-operatives, unions, federations of fishers and artisans, popular education and human-rights networks, and non-governmental development organizations...Their objective...is profound change, not a mere proliferation of projects whose long-term effects may often be superficial."

To reiterate, it appears to me that we are extremely fortunate to be able to support an organization built on faith and humanism that "...has an exceptional capacity for personal and social mobilisation, as its awareness-building campaigns over the years have shown."

Please continue to support CCODP. Members need to be thankful for the blessings that God has given to them. Members have so much; so many have little. We have been given the opportunity to share our blessings through the 1% Program.

Because of HIV/AIDS, there are daughters, sisters, mothers and grandmothers who need help. As daughters,

sisters, mothers and grandmothers, we can provide that help through CCODP in the communities that the League supports.

"Whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you do to me." (Matthew 25:40) †

Material in quotes taken from:

- www.devop.org
- www.care.org
- An Active Role for Development and Peace in the fight Against HIV/AIDS: Policy Statement, June 2003

MEMBERSHIP IN THE LEAGUE

Danielle McNeil-Hessian
National President-elect and Chairperson of Organization



Membership in the League is a gift you give yourself. Along with this membership comes the opportunity to work within your parish, community and province "For God and Canada." Membership affords you the opportunity to attend diocesan, provincial and national conventions. Conventions at all levels are a source of renewal and energy for the members who are fortunate enough to be in attendance. The Eucharistic celebrations and spiritual programs are spirit filled and provide food for the soul. The debate on the floor as resolutions are brought forward under standing committees provides food for the brain. And, of course, the cuisine at the special events provides food for the body. The theme development provides focus for the year ahead.

In August 2006, I had the privilege of co-chairing the 86th annual national convention, along with two of my five sisters. The enthusiasm of the women from across the country and, in particular, the members from Nova Scotia, was invigorating. The smiles on members' faces, friendly words of encouragement and the feeling of joy present throughout the convention explain why members attend conventions year after year.

It is indeed through participation at conventions that members experience the League's strength and energy. Attendance provides members with opportunities to learn more about the League and to network with League sisters from across the country. At conventions, strangers are friends you have not met and you are guaranteed to leave with an entirely new group of supporters.

All members are encouraged to take advantage of all that

the League has to offer in order to experience the true value of membership.

As an elementary school teacher, I encouraged my students to write acrostic poems about something that means a lot to them. League membership is important to me and I have received much more than I have given. My poem speaks of the value of membership to me. Appreciate and celebrate your membership and share your love of the League with others. Bring someone to your next meeting. Isn't that what friends are for?

- M** - Mary, Mother of Jesus and our model
- E** - Executives that lead with enthusiasm
- M** - Mentors, sisters who shares their stories
- B** - Belonging to a sisterhood
- E** - Eager new members willing to lend a hand
- R** - Resolutions, the heart of the League
- S** - Spiritual growth and sharing with others
- H** - Harmony as members work together
- I** - Inclusive, covering all the provinces
- P** - Participation in all that the League offers †