

# **Caledonia Centre for Social Development**

## ***Summary of the Centre's 2003 Activities***

January 2004

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### **Introduction**

The Caledonia Centre for Social Development is a small virtual NGO based in Scotland. Membership is drawn from those actively working in the field of social development and the activities of the Centre are focussed on a limited number of programmes and projects agreed by the Board of directors. The Centre has no paid staff and its activities are all carried out voluntarily or as part of the self-employed business of its members. During 2003 members financial tithes to the Centre amounted to £1,657 UK while labour tithes amounted to 33 days.

### **Co-Govern Project: An Africa – Europe Exchange on Common Property Rights**

During 2003 Caledonia participated in *Co-Govern*, a 3-year European Union-funded concerted action project in partnership with the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and five other organisations (3 African and 2 European). The project has three main objectives:

- ◆ to examine the changing status and availability of common property resources (CPR) in three regions of Africa – East, West and Southern.
- ◆ to engage with decision-makers to discuss policy options for the use and management of common property resources in the light of current processes of legislative and policy change.
- ◆ to communicate ideas on common property resources management through networking, exchange, dialogue and analysis.

The principal activity during the year was participation in a workshop in Cape Town, South Africa in October with colleagues from partner organisations. A full report of

the meeting is available at <http://www.caledonia.org.uk/commonweal>. A paper was prepared for this meeting and an enhanced and expanded version of this is currently in press (see next section).

## **Common Property Rights – Commonweal of Scotland Project**

In early 2002 the Centre launched its *Commonweal of Scotland* project. This initiative seeks to document and publish a series of working papers on aspects of common property rights and their management in Scotland. In recent years the topic has received little attention from researchers, civil society and policy makers. During the year the Centre undertook 3 pieces of work:

- publication on the *Commonweal* website of Tom Johnston's 1920s history of the plundering of the Common Land and Funds of Scotland's small towns and burghs during the 'Corrupt Years' (1495 to 1832);
- preparation by Andy Wightman of an initial paper giving an overview of *Common Land in Scotland* for the Capetown Co-Govern workshop (October 2003) and the subsequent expansion of the paper by Robin Callander and Graham Boyd for publication in the IIED's *Securing the Commons* series; and
- commissioning of David Reid to prepare a case study on the Dornoch Firth Mussel Fisheries an ancient common resource pool management venture. (*ongoing*)

The first two papers have been posted on the Centre's common property resources web site (see [www.caledonia.org.uk/commonweal](http://www.caledonia.org.uk/commonweal)). The Centre is currently discussing the next stage of its work on common property rights which will include a preliminary assessment of surviving commons in Scotland under a project entitled *Mapping the Commons*.

## **Web Publishing**

The Centre runs 2 of the largest UK-based land reform web sites. One of the sites is devoted to: *land reform and land tenure issues* – [www.caledonia.org.uk/land](http://www.caledonia.org.uk/land) - while the other site – [www.caledonia.org.uk/socialland](http://www.caledonia.org.uk/socialland) - features articles, ideas and case studies relating to the growth and development of social land ownership – *non-profit distributing property associations*. The two web sites were launched in June 1999 and continue to receive a modest but steady stream of visits.

Both sites are focused on gathering and publishing grey and popular literature on land reform and social ownership. During the course of the year some 15 new articles were published on the land reform site – 11 of which were Scotland related while 4 were international. 4 new articles were published on the socialland site.

The Centre on its sister website – [www.caledonia.org.uk](http://www.caledonia.org.uk) - carries features articles and material on: *the co-operative and social economy; poverty reduction; popular participation; new localism; and countervailing power*. This year 23 new articles were published – 10 articles on cooperative and credit union issues; 4 on hegemony/countervailing power; 4 on new localism (local ownership and management of public services) with the balance 5 articles on assorted aspects of

poverty reduction. In addition a whole new links page on national cooperative research institutions was prepared and published on the Centre's main website.

Both the main Caledonia website and the land reform site operate *updating newsfeed sections*. The service provides a global selection of breaking and on-going news coverage about *poverty reduction, international development and land reform activities, issues and events*.

### **Who Owns Scotland Project**

During the year, the Centre continued its involvement as a partner in a major project to document the ownership of land in Scotland. The [www.whoownsscotland.org.uk/](http://www.whoownsscotland.org.uk/) website is being developed by one of the Caledonia Directors, Andy Wightman, and continues to attract widespread interest from across the world. During the year, the site was upgraded to a database-driven website enabling easier and faster updating of the data. As of 31 December 2003, the website was continuing to attract an average of over 2,000 visitors per week. A total of over 2.4 million hectares of land (36 percent of all privately owned land) is now documented.

### **Land Rights Programme**

Preliminary preparations were made to launch a Land Rights Programme in 2003. The focus of this campaign is to promote the new land rights being conferred on rural communities by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003. In addition, the Programme will assist communities in building local landownership maps, monitor the uptake of the legislation, and assess the need for changes in the law to improve its effectiveness.

As part of this work the Centre undertook a small piece of desk research on community ownership of land - *purchase, lease and management by agreement*. This revealed that during the last 12-years the most significant way in which rural community bodies have sought to access land has been through leasing and management agreements. Community land acquisitions have in fact played a less significant role although they have received most of the media and political limelight. Part of the explanation lies in an over emphasis on community land acquisitions in the northwest Highlands and Western Isles where for a variety of reasons land acquisition has been the dominant approach used to gaining increased control over land and property assets. The research also revealed that out of a total of 96 community land trusts which exist in Scotland some 64 classify themselves as being community woodlands.

However, no further progress has been made on this project due to time pressure and lack of resources. With the coming into force of the Act in Spring 2004, however, the proposals are being further developed.

### **Responses to Government Consultations**

During the year the Centre responded to 4 Government consultations and 1 request for asset ownership research ideas. These were as follows:

*Role and Contribution of Small NGOs to International Development – submission to the House of Commons International Development Select Committee*

The Centre emphasised its comparative advantage as a lean, virtual NGO working in the field of knowledge sifting and management. Examples of its work in land reform, social land, common property and the popularisation of poverty policy activities were highlighted. The submission was co-ordinated through Nidos and BOND.

*Promoting Scotland Worldwide: an Inquiry into the external relations policy, strategy and activities of the Scottish Executive*

The Centre responded to a request from Nidos for some strategic ideas. A paper was prepared outlining a series of concrete proposals focused on *debt, poverty, growth and decent work in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*. It concluded by recommending that the Scottish Executive send 5 senior civil servants into DFID's International division for onward placement to UK Missions to the United Nations in New York and Geneva as a means of strengthening the UK's overall poverty reduction efforts.

*Scottish Executive's Consultation on Draft Regulations for the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, Part 2: Community Right to Buy*

The Centre responded to this consultation by indicating that it was of the view that there was no good reason to limit any land, community or civil society organisation in Scotland from making use of the right to register an interest in land and when the land came on the market to purchase it. In addition the Centre used the submission as an opportunity to highlight and promote other land reform and common property issues that require to be added to the public policy and legislative agenda.

*DTI's Consultation on Community Interest Companies and International Comparisons.*

The Centre responded to the UK Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) consultation by indicating that there was a universally agreed common set of definitions on the social economy. The International Labour Organisation *Resolution and Recommendation on Cooperatives (2002)* is the internationally adopted definition of member governments, the international cooperative movement, the trade union movement, employers associations and specialised United Nations Agencies. In addition the response called for a more structured presentation by the DTI of country comparisons through improved geographical clustering – Europe state, Commonwealth states, United States and Japan, etc thus making it easier to draw out similarities and differences. It also proposed that the DTI work more closely with the UK Department for International Development (DFID) thereby strengthening the learning processes between the UK's international poverty reduction efforts and those in the UK focused on social inclusion and social entrepreneurship.

*Researchable Issues for the Department for International Development*

The Centre was asked to provide some limited input to DFID's basket of ideas on pro-poor Sub-Saharan Africa research topics. We identified the issue of shifting patterns of land and property ownership from public and communal to private entities and individuals and the impact which these trends are having on poor and marginalised groups. Of particular concern is the fact that in much of Sub-Saharan Africa poverty is predominantly a rural phenomenon however very few national Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) papers identify land issues as a concern while fewer still indicate

appropriate intervention measures other than generalised land reform approaches based upon private ownership, market approaches and land registration.

## **Other Caledonia related activities and assignments**

### ***Legal and Network Governance Structures for pilot Rural Electricity & Telecoms ventures in Tanzania***

In February the Centre was invited by the Tanzanian office of the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) to provide technical advice on devising an appropriate legal incorporation model for two commercially orientated pilot rural electricity and telecommunications ventures. The primary objectives of these ventures is to promote the utilisation of electricity and telecommunications capacity as a means of supporting and enabling actions to alleviate poverty and create the conditions for local economic development. The Centre worked in collaboration with the Dar-es Salaam based corporate law firm of MRN&M Advocates on a number of tasks:

- preparation of an assessment of the available legal incorporation options and the likely tax-burdens and breaks;
- a detailed comparison of the strengths and limitations of registration as a consumer cooperative society and as a company limited by guarantee;
- the preparation of a model set of memorandum and articles of association for the registration of a non-profit community interest companies; and
- the incorporation and registration of the two companies with the Registrar of Companies.

Subsequent to this work a paper was prepared on Community Enterprise Companies which can be found at <http://www.caledonia.org.uk/companies.htm>

### ***Tanzanian Technical Assistance Partnership support on Poverty Policy Popularisation***

Another director of the Centre is providing technical assistance to an innovative Tanzanian social justice NGO – Hakikazi Catalyst. They work to popularise and disseminate Tanzania’s national poverty reduction strategy. This is cutting edge policy popularisation work with national coverage. (see [www.hakikazi.org](http://www.hakikazi.org)).

Aspects of this work were shared with the Co-Govern participants who attended the Scottish Touring workshop in September 2002. There are many aspects and elements of this work that have relevance to institutions and organisations seeking to popularise and disseminate information on the new land laws which have been enacted across much of Southern and Eastern Africa in the last 10 years. Following the September workshop IIED invited the Centre’s lead facilitator to write a summarised version of this work for publication in the Institute’s *Haramata* magazine (issue 43) <http://www.iied.org/drylands/pubs/haramata.html>

The Centre also formed part of a team presentation on “Popularising policy - a participatory approach in Tanzania” at the International Rural Network (IRN) Conference in Inverness on 22-27 June 2003. The theme of the international conference was “*Taking Charge: Rural Community Empowerment in Rural*

*Development, Rural Health and Rural Education*". A PowerPoint version of the presentation is online at <http://www.srds.ndirect.co.uk/pop-pol/> . Details of the conference are at <http://www.takingcharge.co.uk/>. (Note: Due to family commitments Emmanuel Kallonga the Director of Hakikazi Catalyst was unable to attend the presentation).

During 2003 the Hakikazi Catalyst team has worked on the following illustrated, plain language documents:

- A guide to the Millennium Development Goals for global distribution through UNDP sub regional office in Ethiopia. The working title is "*No more broken promises?*"
- A revised version of the Economic and Social Research Foundation's (ESRF) Tanzania Participatory Poverty Assessment (TzPPA). Working title is "*Tackling Vulnerability – approaches to well being*".
- A short, combined guide to the National Forest Programme and the National Beekeeping Programmes from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. The working title is "*Trees and Bees.*"

In Tanzania, the Centre has also worked with the Urban Authorities Partnership Project (UAPP) within the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government (PORALG). An illustrated, plain language version of "*Auditing Poverty in Tanzania – a joint approach at local government level*" has been produced. Work on a plain language version of the associated "*Training Compendium*" is ongoing.

### ***Community Development and Communications within the Cairngorm Area of the Scottish Highlands***

Scottish Participatory Initiatives (SPI) and Caledonia won a contract from the Cairngorms Partnership to mount a scoping exercise concerning community development and communications in the Cairngorm area. The work was comprised of two components:

- (a) An analysis of current practice; and
- (b) Make recommendations for the future

A total of 13 rural communities were involved in the work which was carried over an 8-month period. For further details see <http://www.cairngormscommunity.org.uk>