

Conference proceedings

Key information 'conductors': Civil Society Organizations

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Abstract

Degrowth at this moment is viable only for rich countries (or rich contexts), which have already grown a lot and reached extreme level of consumption that greatly exceeds the basic needs. But in the poorest countries the degrowth proposal is unsustainable simply because they did not grow, and most people are deprived of goods and services. This article attempts to give some evidences about the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) as key actors to disclose information and increase awareness in 2 directions: Degrowth to situations in which consumption is exaggerated; Sustainable development to situations where growth did not arrive. Actually some CSOs currently perform advocacy activities, and all of them follow the 7th Millennium Development Goal: Environmental sustainability. Hence, we argue that CSOs are important institutions to guide sustainable development and to advocate degrowth because they own important “weapons” to play this important political and social role: straight relationship with the poor population and the potential for convincing local and international politicians for making appropriate policy decisions.

Keywords

CSOs, development gap, grassroots, advocacy

1 Introduction

The idea for this paper was born to reflect about how CSOs which work in developing countries can be an effective tool to degrowth. We perceived the increasing tendency in the last decades of CSOs, especially INGOs, either in number, weight and capacity. This trend is important because it reveals a social phenomenon and shows that the so-called third sector is becoming fundamental to the functioning of societies. It also shows that the capitalistic model of development owns many gaps that need to be fixed, such as the huge inequalities among peoples, social classes, etc, and also carry out paradoxical objectives like profit, extracting energy resources and finding new technologies that in most cases are environmentally damaging, representing a risk for us in a long run.

It is really interesting to note that INGOs are present in both rich and poor contexts, trying to fix such inequalities. This aspect is really important, because they own the potential power to struggle against the segregating system and to raise awareness about the issues related to the western development model that is being implemented in developing countries as the best model to follow. We think that CSOs, as an essential grassroots mobilizers, have the proper sensitiveness to identify new possibilities to guide development, and do not have exclusively to follow the western model. The contact with different realities is extremely enriching and instigates new ways to solve problems or to think about new solutions.

In order to develop these arguments, we will show the main differences between rich and poor contexts, showing the main reasons for poverty, and how institutions are dealing with it. Then we will present the current scenario of CSOs, their increasing number and their current role, their limitations and the potential they own to advocate degrowth and perform an appropriate development (or sustainable development). We will also discuss how the development model is becoming limited due to environmental concerns, its failures regarding poorest contexts, and the new forms of thinking about it that are rising recently.

Then we will immerse ourselves in the grassroots to observe how CSOs are working through one case of study. Our case study is based in Mozambique, a developing country that carries an unpleasant situation in comparison to the other countries in the world: it is a country with 22.4 million inhabitants, 54% of population below the poverty line (World Bank/2009) and is 172^o in the rank of UNDP's (United Nations Development Program) Human Development Index (182 countries were considered in the ranking). Life expectancy is 48 years, and is ranked as the 166^o of the 182 countries considered. (UNDP, 2009 Human Development Report¹).

Throughout the observations of Mariana Meirelles, a project-leader in Tete province in Mozambique, we will understand how the experience from the field is able to highlight the main issues that really matter in the relationship among an INGO and the local context. This case study also will show how Tete city is becoming developed and how it could impact in the local community, and how Italian INGOs are thinking development issues, and what are the main contributions they have to improve our reflections.

Hence we will address our conclusions arguing that CSOs are key actors in the recent international scenario, they are really likely to mobilize grassroots, but they cannot work lonely, because their outcomes do not depend only on their actions. Where they cannot work directly, they should promote indirectly measures such as influencing decisions, or advocacy.

¹ http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs MOZ.html

2 Discussion

2.1 Developed and Developing countries:

Development is the key word for Mozambique and many other countries suffering from poverty and social inequality today. In September 2000 the United Nations (UN) promoted a Millennium Summit that drought actions and targets to be achieved by 2015. These are the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Campaign, which aim to "free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected"². In order to achieve these goals by 2015, all nations and organisms of the international Cooperation are working hard.

Despite the irrefutable progress of development projects, there are still many obstacles to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and we still observe tremendous differences between poor and rich contexts (we prefer to talk about contexts instead of countries because even in Mozambique we find wealthy contexts in which people live with "western" standards). Mozambique is paradigmatic because most of its population live in rural areas and carry a subsistence life style, depending completely on the harvest outcomes (so depending a lot on the climate), a way of living that obstacle the development of all human capacities. Poor people occupy and spend most of their efforts in solving immediate problems, like finding food, water, etc. in order to satisfy their basic needs. Due to the lack of opportunities, they are constrained to think in short-term goals, limiting their possibilities to improve their future life. For that reason it is so difficult for poor people to study many years or think in a long-term. This can be considered poverty. For that reason poor countries receive many international resources to put in action a development plan. (Diamond, 2005)

Thus, in absolute poverty contexts there are lack of resources, people do not have much knowledge about hygiene and often get sick. Many diseases that are already vanished in rich contexts, still affect poor people's lives and cause deaths. Some people even become handicapped or lose days and weeks of work. For those reasons the development is necessary, a development of mainly related with knowledge, in particular about the own body.

In developed countries, differently, any suspected disease is recognized as a deadly threat: a spot on the skin or a weakness caused by the sun are immediately reported to the experts. People at home are equipped with three or four types of bactericides and fungicides to struggle against all kinds of parasites. A cockroach is a scandal and reason to debate among neighbors; if a cookie falls to the ground ultra sterile, no longer serves or to be given even to the dog. In such places, people have access to a lot of information, but they misuse it.

These are just some examples of extreme cases that reflect on the one hand a total lack, on the other hand the exaggeration. Both are harmful to humans. Persons who suffer from lack, develop physical illnesses caused by bacteria, lack of food, or lack of knowledge. In excess, people suffer from mental illness, and are constantly seeking some product much more resistant or repellent, stronger, brighter, in order to supply their lack of consumption, even without realizing its existence. The capitalistic system brought development, but brought also the demand for consumption that creates continuously new "necessities". Human beings moved from one extreme to another extreme, not realizing what would be the ideal balance. The "development" indexes in developed countries are now far beyond the basic needs. Rich societies left the stage to satisfy the needs to search needs.

What is right and wrong? How people could understand what they should do? What does it mean respect for others and for the environment? Such questions are basic for all societies, but their answers vary deeply depending on the context in which they operate. We learn our values in the cultural universe in which we are exposed: at home, with friends, colleagues, by the media, books and Internet. As we grow, we learn to ask questions and find correct answers with the help of science and modern trends. Thus, step by step we create a critical consciousness, and when we read the news, we can discern its reliability and

² <http://www.undp.org/mdg/basics.shtml>

wonder when it is not credible. But paradoxically, even with critical consciousness, we are still convinced by the big promoters of consumption that we need to buy more and more.

But not everyone has easy access to information. This is the case of poor contexts, in which people are much more worried in finding ways to survive than with school or education. To talk about development in poor countries we need to understand who they are and how they live. Is the mass in poor contexts ready to absorb and get into the same rhythm and style of "development" of rich countries? We might wonder if development depends exclusively on the western model based on the economic neo-liberalism, sustained by a consumerist society. We are afraid that this path to development is really hazardous for marginal societies because it can cause more poverty among those who are already poor, and more inequalities. It's also risky the environmental sustainability, as economical development means industrialization, which means using and transforming natural resources in a big scale. Another concern regards the fact that even in rich contexts, more consumption does not necessarily means more happiness, or more satisfaction in living, as recent researches are demonstrating. This fact regards especially the unexpected and unpleasant outcomes of development in rich societies, such as pollution, environmental destruction, new diseases related to stress and pollution, depression, etc.

Considering those populations that have less access to information and a weak educational system, it would be interesting to promote development for them disseminating new concepts based on sustainable development, which cares for nature, and developing the capacities of individuals through education, the transmission of knowledge. It would function as a way to understand how they live, and how they deal with their environment, and improve their knowledge in order to lead them to quench their needs in a sustainable way. In other words, they would have better living conditions by ensuring the survival of the environment. This form of awareness could come together with projects of empowerment of the economy of the lower social classes (major population in Mozambique and in many other African countries).

Proceeding like this we are trying to think about development in a new way, which differs from the biased western perspective. Our first step is understanding how local population live, and departing from this knowledge we can think about how improve their lives through the introduction of new knowledge, new ideas. The result is an exchange of knowledge, and both sides come out enriched.

Notwithstanding, it is not so simple to really change poverty contexts to a wealthy society just improving the knowledge of civil society (it might be possible, but in a long run). CSOs can do just a piece of this work, bringing knowledge and working within the grassroots, but they cannot work alone. They need the support of political institutions, and also the private sector should aim this development.

It is important to notice that inequalities in the world, and poverty in determined contexts in the geopolitics today are much more consequence of a historical past of imperialism and colonization, than any other reason. Hence we cannot be ingenuous and think that the fault of poverty is related to local people features, such as backwardness or laziness. When western people go to rural areas in poor contexts, they have the impression to "go back in time" because people have maintained their subsistence life style, which persist since ancient times. It does not mean that they are backward, or lazy, but simply this is the way their ancients have lived and it is the way they better have adapted in their environment. Besides, we cannot neglect the fact that in most colonized countries - particularly countries which had colonization of exploitation instead of settlement - local people were dominated and reduced in slavery and completely segregated from the development brought by colonialists.

After the Second World War colonies were still present in many African countries. With the Human Rights Declaration in 1948 we entered in a Human Rights Era. New fundamental values were created in order to avoid another world war, and the threat of atomic bomb. Those values are related to the importance of worrying about the other, and subsequently with the open-minding revolution between 1970 and late 1980s, this value shift went on in many OECD countries regarding a "preference for democratic forms of governance, and an appreciation of cultural diversity. In other words, cosmopolitan values such as tolerance, respect for others, emphasis on human rights, and so on have become increasingly important".

(Kaldor, et al, 2003: 16-17). By this time, many colonized countries started their independence wars. According to Kaldor, et al. (2003), this trend toward cosmopolitan values favored the institutional expansion of civil society organizations.

Today the phenomenon of international cooperation for development became really professionalized and highlighted more than ever. On the one hand we observe this increasing social phenomenon related to humanitarian aid, and on the other hand we have seen in the latest 60 years the fastest changes in the landscape due to human settlement related to capitalistic progress: we have reached a peak of population, and also the biggest food and industrial production ever seen. We have learned how to extract, benefit and deliver many mineral resources, and petrol has become our black gold. We have also reached the moon and we are currently searching for water in other planets. By this time humans realized its potential to dominate nature and to develop increasingly advanced technologies. But the bad “news” are that parallel to all these achievements, poverty in the world also grew dramatically, and while the richest world became richest than ever, the poorer became poorest than ever. It is a shocking outcome, and demonstrates how ambitious, manipulative and folly we are.

Rich nations propagate a beautiful discourse, announcing that they want to eradicate poverty and equilibrate world economic balance. But something sounds strange on that speech because rich nations also compete to better economic positions, and a “wealthy” economy often means unequal relations, and exploitation. The current economic system went into a vicious circle from which it is difficult to leave without having to change radically some bad habits acquired, for instance the need to consume arbitrarily. Besides, another concern regards the fact that an equal world with western pattern would be unsustainable: if all the world's population pursue a western life style, the impact on the planet would increase by 12 times (Diamond, 2005).

That is why also rich countries should really rethink its development model, and stop being hypocrite and face the issues related to the current system and start doing something to change the development directions. Values are already changed, but the economic system depends totally on this model of development, and is still difficult to think about degrowth because profit is still the most important goal, hence growth is still perceived as necessary. However, as many scholars and environmentalists are demonstrating, we should be more cautious and think that many of the development outcomes have created new unexpected problems, some of which we have no idea how to solve, as poverty. For those reasons, it seems that the most suitable choice for everyone is change some of its fundamental values such as consumerism and profit, and start thinking on a new model of human development. We know that changing fundamental values is something really difficult, but we also know that those values one day were created, and people have accepted them as the most suitable for themselves. We also believe that things change and that we must perceive if we want our ideas understood by all. Therefore CSOs are key actors to conduct this kind of awareness, and messages.

2.2 Development model in crisis

However this model entered in crisis, but it is still being implemented in developing countries as the best - or only known - model of development. Some authors are questioning whether this model of development is leading us to an unsustainable situation. Let's us see how Jared Diamond discuss these arguments, in his book “Collapse” (2005).

Diamond try to explain how societies in the past have failed and how others have succeeded, and analyses our current situation to warn us that this model of development is a threat to world's sustainability. The author argues that societies failed because they did not well managed natural resources destroying them indiscriminately, until they reached a situation of collapse. For our current world system, Diamond sustain that we have many environmental problems. He describes 12 current problems related to western industrial societies that need a solution:

- 1) We are destroying natural habitats replacing them with others we constructed.

- 2) Mismanagement of fishery resources.
- 3) Loss of biodiversity
- 4) Loss of useful land by many reasons: loss of fertility, alkalinity, acidification, salinisation, high erosion.
- 5) The main energy sources for industrial society are exhaustible: petrol, natural gas and charcoal.
- 6) Freshwater scarcity: most of the planet's freshwater is used for irrigation, household and industrial usage.
- 7) Earth's limited photosynthetic capacity.
- 8) High use of chemical toxic substances.
- 9) Introduction of non-native species that destroy the environment (i.e. rabbits in Australia).
- 10) Human waste production: CFC, CO₂, CH₄, etc.
- 11) World's population growth.

What really matters is not the number of individuals, but their impact on the environment. "The impact per capita varies significantly from First to Third world. On average, each U.S. citizen consumes resources and produces 32 times more waste than an African" (Diamond, 2005: 502, my translation).

The author warns that we are proceeding in an accelerate and unsustainable rhythm, and the "solution" for those issues will arrive in any case, probably for the next generations, we just do not know if it will be a pleasant solution, chosen by us, or an unpleasant solution, such as war, genocide, starvation, epidemic issues. For that reason he argues that we need to rethink the development model carried out by western's societies, and change the actions related to it.

There are many signs of the "unsustainability" of the current system, such as the poverty in many areas of the world that impel many people to immigrate or to wish a western standard. Actually immigration is already a problem for the developed countries, and it is increasing each year. Besides that, most people from Third World are encourage by international organizations to pursue a western lifestyle because it is advertised as the "best" model. Nonetheless they do not realize that this way of living contribute to environmental damage, and in a medium or long-term will be unsustainable.

Despite the fact that most environmental problems own many aspects that we are not yet aware of their real impacts, there are already many negative outcomes of the industrialized societies, as those listed by Diamond (2005). However, today many people refuse to accept the need to change, mostly by misinformation or unawareness. Many people think that we can not focus on the environment in detriment of the economy, arguing that environmental worries are a luxury. "Actually it is exactly the opposite. A damaged environment costs huge sums of money" (Diamond, 2005: 509). It is less expensive to take care of the environment, as well as taking care of our health is better than healing a disease.

Besides, there are people who believe that technology will solve all of our problems. However, the accelerated technological progress of the 20th century gave birth to new and complex problems never imagined before. New technology often create unpredictable issues, even if they are able to fix those problems for which they were planned. For example, the car improved our capacity to move, but also brought traffic, pollution and accidents.

Another resistance in facing the problems brought by development regards the irrefutable improvements in life conditions in the last decades. However, those improvements such as higher life expectancy, health quality, higher per capita GDP, etc., regard only those wealthy citizens from rich contexts, while poor population are still struggling for basic needs.

Notwithstanding, according to Diamond (2005) none of our problems is impossible to solve. We are the cause of environmental damages, hence the choice to change is up to us. The solutions already exist, and fortunately there is an increasing popularity within Environmentalist thought. The crucial point is to raise awareness about the consequences of the current values such as consumption, modernity and development. Our actions must be rethought, individually and collectively. Evidently it is not easy to convince people that they should consume and pollute less, however, sooner or later people will recognize this need, otherwise consequences will not be pleasant.

Thereupon, CSOs already constitutes a source of awareness raising, and its work should be improved, or gain more respect and resources, in order to promote a new concept of modern society, a new lifestyle not only for rich contexts, but also to poorest ones. Their advocacy ability has an important impact. Actually, as a consequence of CSOs campaigns, there is an important on-going change of values among part of the population, mostly wealthy and high educated people. For that reason we argue that all CSOs should also rethink the development model based on western values and acquire more space on political decisions in order to be more influent on new policies.

3 Results

3.1 Current scenario of CSOs

To move on our discussion we will give some evidences about the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) as key actors to disclose information and increase awareness in 2 directions: Degrowth to situations in which consumption is exaggerated; and Sustainable development to situations where growth did not arrive.

In the last decades we have seen a concrete increase of CSOs either in number and size. Actually they are present in all countries, with actions in many fields, constituting a recent social phenomena. Kaldor, et. al. show this current tendence:

“There is a vast array of NGOs, voluntary associations, non-profit groups, charities, and interest associations, in addition to more informal or less permanent ways of organising (...). INGOs account for a large part of the formal part of that infrastructure. (...) The growth of INGOs and their organizational presence is, of course, not equally spread across the world. Not surprisingly, Europe and North America show the greatest number of INGOs and higher membership densities than other regions of the world. (...) The infrastructure of global civil society has not only become bigger and broader, it has also achieved greater density and connectiveness” (Kaldor, et al, 2003: 10,12,14)

In many developing countries, Non Governmental Organizations are also gaining in importance because they are now being involved in the development process as primary actors. According to Bellucci (2002), there is a sort of institutionalization taking place within NGOs. In the case of Mozambique, where the Govern proclaim freedom of association, local NGOs are recently becoming empowered instruments for the promotion for popular participation. This trend is possible because there are many countries and funding institutions providing resources to them. According to Kaldor, et. al. (2003),

“Institutions like the World Bank, the United Nations, or the European Union together with bilateral donors and many developing countries are searching for a balance between state-led and market-led approaches to development, and are allocating more responsibility to INGOs” (Kaldor, et al, 2003: 8)

Such international institutions (WB and UN) are now working towards strengthening civil society, hence deepening relationships among CSOs in many levels. In the UNDP document regarding its engagement with civil society we found many evidences of those links:

“UNDP civil society partnerships are quantifiably deep, complex and evolving. (...) The UN Country Teams, provide the UN and civil society actors with a forum for dialogue and exchange at the country level (...) to understand and analyze the role and contributions of civil society in the changing development process of a country. The overall goal is to facilitate a synergistic relationship.” (UNDP Country Level engagement with civil society, 2009: 4)

It is evident that United Nations are recognizing the potent value of CSOs by involving them within their programs and with the govern decisions: “Importantly, UNDP, working with the Government, involved CSOs in the discussion through conferences and workshops. It is key that CSOs be involved in processes of legal and regulatory reform, as they are the intended beneficiaries and must also ensure that new or revised laws do not atrophy.” (UNDP Country Level engagement with civil society, 2009: 8)

The World Bank also is strengthening relations with CSOs, as reported in its Civil Society Book. They conclude the 2009 document stating that WB and CSOs have developed more effective instruments and venues for policy exchanges:

“Bank–civil society relations have continued to improve and intensify over the last three years. These improvements occurred in terms of both more regular and systematic policy dialogue and consultations, and greater opportunities for operational collaboration” (World Bank Civil Society Book, 2009: 73)

Hence, we observe how CSOs became an important actors in the international context, and surely are able to disclose information regarding degrowth.

Besides the increase in connectives among CSOs and key international institutions, there are a lot of interesting initiatives regarding new possibilities to achieve sustainability or a more equal world, such as new technologies, advocacy influencing in the political scenario, social movements, movies, alliances, global forums, fare trade, etc. These initiatives are carried out by a variety range of CSOs, individuals, small and large groups and organizations.

Many of those initiatives are carried out in local contexts, among the grassroots. For that reason CSOs are really attached to civil society in poorest countries, and own the capabilities to spread information, and raise awareness about new conceptions of development, much more related to a sustainable model than to a western capitalistic trend.

However, CSOs face many concerns that obstacle the achievements of their actions. There are many people that are incredulous and do not believe in many of those issues listed by Diamond (2005). This represents the first resistance to overcome. Besides, most CSOs are not for profit organizations, hence own scarce independence regarding economic resources, and sometimes are constrained to accept donors conditions and terms.

Another concern regarding CSOs is that many of them have limited reach among population, due to the limitation of economic resources. NGOs work well in a micro sphere, but they do not have the power of multinational company. Even the biggest CSOs, that already work as multinationals, are limited by financial resources and rely on the voluntary work.

For that reason CSOs working in the same field should unite their forces to improve their chances in making partnerships and raising funds. So they need to strength their connections among themselves and among international and national governments to accomplish their goals. This is important in order to guarantee that development projects imply real effects in local communities, instead of superficial outcomes that often take place.

3.2 An empirical case: Mozambique and International cooperation

Degrowth at this moment is viable only for rich countries (or rich contexts), which have already grew a lot and reached extreme level of consumption that greatly exceeds the basic needs. But in the poorest countries the degrowth proposal is unsustainable simply because they did not grow, and most people are

deprived of goods and services.

In Mozambique, a country where many NGOs work among the local population to promote development, there is a project called "Child Aid – Tete" from the NGO ADPP - Mozambique, that aims to improve the quality of life for 3000 families living in rural area. From the field we have the testimonial of the project leader, (by the way she is also an author of this paper) that explains some of the idiosyncrasies of this kind of work regarding the changing of consciousness.

In general people do only what they want or what they are habituated to do, therefore it is not easy to create critical opinion, or change habits, without showing the real importance of a change. Impositions do not work, but a change in the focus of education could be a remarkable answer. In our globalized world, the trend is over-consumption, and sooner or later this influence will arrive among rural and poor population, and step by step it is coming. The rural villages are beginning to learn those trends of fashion, consumption, etc. but we need to be aware about the fact that this population did not follow this process, they receive the outcomes of a process initiated in another kind of society, such as western societies. However, when they get in contact with market novelties such as cars, TV, clothes, etc, it is natural that they want to have those things, just as all Human beings always want more, it is our basic feature. Then we need to better prepare people to be part of this future.

The development is arriving in a community in which people often deal with magical events, they believe in witches and spirits, something that in westerns societies is becoming old-fashioned and no longer credible (we are not generalizing). Hence in those rural contexts we start observing many contradictory situations, such as a traditional healer with a cell phone, and many other high technology items. It seems that local people is being invaded and confused by the culture of the West because they receive this inputs but they have never heard anything about science fiction, nor dreamed with spacecraft, and do not know what it means internet.

In Mozambique, for example, there is no environmental awareness. Nor is there greed for consumerism of industrial products, since the TV has not yet reached the whole population. The forests, for example, are being felled for charcoal production, since houses have no electricity or gas, people cook with coal. They have so little and in anyway destroy that to try to make more money. In modern societies, ecological awareness came much later than consumption, just when people began to realize that the earth has its limits. But most people usually act in a selfish way, that is why they are much more concerned with their families, their wealth, in sum, with their own life. Even if many people agree with the work of Greenpeace, many of them do not move to reduce consumption at home.

We believe that changing the consciousness would possibly revert the current tendency of social and ecological damage, in order to form a society more respectful of the environment and to improve social achievements. In rural poor contexts in Mozambique the project is trying to show to local population that the human body has strengths and limits, showing people the need for hygiene, in order to develop their quality in life. Besides, the project also aim to show the advantages of rural life, the importance of the connection with the natural environment and the respect to it. Acting in this way, the project try to conduct a sustainable development, departing from the care with the body to achieve the relations between body and environment, showing that things are interconnected.

Nevertheless there is a resistance factor regarding change. Many international NGOs working in Africa try to convince local people that living based on spiritual belief is backward and an obstacle to development, hence not beneficial. Those NGOs stick science down their throats, saying: "change or die!", without preparing people to receive innovations. This approach works as an invitation to enter in the changing world towards consumerism without limits, disregarding the local livelihoods and probably creating even greater social problems, or as explained above, unexpected and unpleasant outcomes.

To create a new consciousness we prefer to show the value of the local culture emphasizing that

modernization can cause damage. Where the project is based, Chiuta village, everybody already know clothing brands, TV, shoes, perfumes, but few understand what is the environment and throw garbage anywhere. This attitude reflect how the modernity is approaching on traditional societies, and what is the main concept inside this frame: the commercial interest always ahead, no matter what impacts it will bring about.

The example of project carried out by the NGO ADPP shows how new ideas the has been put in practice, and slowly is leading the community to some behavior changes and the awareness that they can improve their lives without wasting natural resources. The project also works in partnership with other NGOs, local government and traditional authorities. These are important steps to achieve concrete goals. Bellow we find some examples of those actions.

The project got introduced to the local leaders and them to the communities, in order to acquire their confidence and partnership. It also is creating a Forum within some CSOs working with Children Rights. Likewise, there is a partnership with an international NGO to develop an educational project to improve tha management and quality of schools.

Besides, the ADPP project have trained 50 health activists in health issues in partnership with District Health department, and Red Cross. The NGO also promoted a fraternization among the volunteers of ADPP and Red Cross Mozambique - "Cooperation for the same end". They did that because they all work for the development of Chiuta, and many times, goals are the same, specially regarding health issues. It had a great result, because sometimes the volunteers in the field had some misunderstandings between them, but with this event, they got along, and united their forces. Last, but not least, during the "Fighting HIV/AIDS day" the ADPP project organized an event for the community' members together with the Government, Health Department, Red Cross, and churches.

Hence the project is involving many institutions in its activities: schools, traditional leaders, health department, agriculture department, other NGOs, Social and Women department, government members are all part of the Child Aid family; they all work together, which is a good sign to see that Child Aid is struggling to promote an excellent impact in the people's life.

4 Conclusion: Awareness and Sustainable Development

Thus, as we have seen, CSOs have a great potential to change things, and in the latest years have had an important increase in its number and weight. For that reason we argue that CSOs are currently key actors and its potential should be improved in order to increase their advocacy power. What we propose also that the degrowth concern should be also relevant to equilibrate things.

For those reasons, we argue that CSOs should acquire more space in the political discussions to be more emphatic in implementing sustainable development. On the other hand, as a bridge between rich and poor countries, (international) CSOs should have more voice within donors to pressure on them regarding degrowth, in order to achieve an equilibrate world society. As Kaldor at al state,

"The reduction or abolition of poverty will definitely require establishing and acknowledging a robust framework of 'human rights-based development' that simultaneously affirms the associative obligations of various stakeholders in global civil society. It must also articulate the issue of governance and an ecologically sensitive concept of sustainable development as part of poverty reduction programmes" (Kaldor, et al, 2009: 23)

Therefore, to promote a sustainable and fair development, it would be ideal to reverse the priorities order of economic growth for those who are starting from scratch (as rural communities in Mozambique). We should analyse not only number of latrines, or televisions, houses covered with zinc sheets. We need to observe also the improvement in perceptions about the environmental and social aspects, and prepare

people for the inevitable arrival of the means of communication and consumption.

It is relevant to consider both rich and poor contexts. Wealthy people should adopt new measures regarding degrowth, while poor should acquire such knowledge to deal with modernity novelties and concerns. CSOs have a fundamental role in creating programs to improve awareness within communities - since they are already present - and with local governments. Many government departments rely on strength and performance of CSOs on the ground, hence CSOs can participate actively in policy making.

Another advantage of this union is to pressure on donors, to direct funds to activities of greatest need. Today, who decide the activities undertaken by CSOs are partners, but this situation should be reversed, and this is possible only through unification and coordination of CSOs and government, creating stronger and well-structured policies, which also creates more credibility in local initiatives towards external agencies.

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