

## GLOBAL EQUITY INITIATIVE 2004-2005

The Global Equity Initiative seeks to advance understanding and to promote more equitable global development. We believe that global inequities, among people and nations, are among the greatest challenges of our times. Many disparities -- in health, education, economic opportunity, and democratic freedoms -- are not only morally offensive but exacerbate or precipitate negative social consequences, such as distrust, malfunctioning institutions, and even violence. To address these challenges, our Initiative brings together scholars, policy-makers and practitioners from around the world to conduct research, to convene and share ideas, to educate and communicate, and to develop the next generation of leaders.

GEI registered an extremely productive academic year 2004-2005 (see [www.fas.harvard.edu/-acgei.index.htm](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/-acgei.index.htm)). GEI accomplishments are provided in an attached activity and publication listing. Our work is organized around four themes: human security, human capability and development, human resources for health, and global philanthropy.

### **Human Security**

The base for our thematic work on Human Security was established when GEI provided the research base for the UN-endorsed Commission on Human Security, co-chaired by Amartya Sen and Sadako Ogata. After the release in 2003 of the Commission Report, *Human Security Now*, our program has focused its human security work on the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the humanitarian and political crisis in the Horn of Africa.

Led by Alex de Waal, the GEI pushed the boundaries of traditional concepts of human security and HIV/AIDS in several directions. Explorations were conducted on the relations of HIV/AIDS with health, human capability, primary education, food security, and social systems. These explorations included two major presentations at the seminar series of the Harvard University Program on AIDS (HUPA). Lincoln Chen gave a keynote speech on HIV/AIDS and human security following up the Commission's work at the Global AIDS Conference in Bangkok. Through partnership with the Social Science Research Council and the Dutch Government, a major initiative on AIDS and security is being launched over the coming year. Plans are also underway to bring scholars and practitioners and Southern and Northern leaders around building the knowledge base and developing policy consensus over how best to address the global crisis of caring and nurturing millions of AIDS orphans.

Alex de Waal has also written, advised, and disseminated his research on political and social developments in the Horn of Africa. The most notable of his several recent books are: *Islam and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa* (Indiana University Press, 2004), *Famine that Kills: Darfur Sudan* (Oxford University Press, 2005), and *Darfur: A Short History of a Long War* (Zed Press, 2005). This scholarship has been supplemented by analysis, synthesis and policy developments that are contributing to the work of non-

governmental organizations and governments in the region. He has served as advisor to the African Union and United Nations on the peace process in Darfur, providing regular briefings to the mediators and preparing documents. Central objectives of these activities are the protection of human rights with humanitarianism and social justice.

### **Human Capability and Development**

The human capability approach conceptualizes human freedom to make decisions and choices to live the kind of life one wishes as the central objective of all development endeavors. Sabina Alkire leads the human capability work in GEI. An associate of Amartya Sen who founded the concept of human security and also a member of the GEI, Sabina had an extraordinarily successful year, marked by the launching the human development and capability network, a professional association that encourages and promotes scholarship on human capability theory.

Despite Herculean challenges, the network was formally launched with an initial membership of several hundred scholars, many young and many from Southern countries. In recognition of her founding role, Sabina was elected general-secretary of the association. Successful first year activities included a highly successful annual conference in Pavia, Italy; review and promotion of research by diverse constituencies; development of a website; conduct of a training course on human capability theory; and extensive outreach activities. Significant research was also undertaken on human capability theory, measurement, and practice.

The human capability theme encompasses the GEI health and education work in South Asia. As in previous years, GEI organized with Unicef/India the annual Kolkata Group consultation on primary education in India. This year, the forum included a major public forum, and it was followed by a short-term training course on human capabilities in India. Consultations were also conducted on recent developments in health in India, especially the newly announced Health Missions. Under planning are two studies – a comparative of social development in India and China and an examination of the persistence of chronic under-nourishment despite food surpluses in India.

### **Human Resources for Health**

For the past two years, the GEI has offered leadership to a consortium of global health leaders who formed the Joint Learning Initiative on human resources for health. Through decentralized working groups, the JLI pursued the knowledge base on what we know about health workers. Most of the past year was devoted to culling the lessons of the JLI working groups to produce and release the JLI report, *Human Resources for Health: Overcoming the Crisis* (Harvard University Press, 2004). The report which is the first ever global perspective and analysis of the health workforce has been received extremely well, especially its recommendations for urgently tackling the human resources crisis in Africa, for building sustainable health systems, and for strengthening research and the knowledge base.

Policy dialogue, dissemination, and transition to new arrangements to advance human resources for health were high priorities over the past year. The JLI working groups concluded with a final co-chair meeting in Cape Town in September 2004. After the JLI report release in Mexico in November, several months were devoted to dissemination. Among the follow-up activities that will be continued by JLI is research and development support of the World Health Report and World Health Day 2006 which will be devoted to human resources.

### **Global Philanthropy**

The global philanthropy program focuses on the challenge of private philanthropy and non-governmental organizations to advance global equity. The underlying premise of the program is that private philanthropy and civil society have unique roles in innovations on equitable approaches to development. The philanthropy program has over recent years focused on diaspora philanthropy with a conference and book on India and China: *Diaspora Philanthropy and Equitable Development in China and India* edited by Peter Geithner, Paula Johnson, and Lincoln Chen (Harvard University Press, 2004). Barbara Merz has led an extension of this work into Mexico through workshops, commissioned papers, and a forthcoming book: *New Patterns for Mexico: Observations on Remittances, Philanthropic Giving, and Equitable Development* (Harvard University Press, 2005). The diaspora work is now being extended to several Caribbean nations, all leading to a major conference on this theme during the upcoming year.

A major route of American giving overseas is through non-governmental organizations. For this reason, GEI has organized and facilitated annual retreats of the leaders of America's largest relief and development NGOs. The purpose of these retreats is to generate relationship and trust among these leaders and their organizations as well as to discuss common problems and share joint solutions. A consistent question posed is whether and what can be done by these leaders that together equals more than their own individual efforts? After last year's retreat at Essex, Massachusetts, the 2005 retreat was conducted at the Greentree Estate near New York City. Themes included a retrospective on the tsunami, preparing for future disasters, food trade and aid, the prospect of joint public appeals in future crisis, and relations between the NGOs and the United Nations.