

International Human Rights Funders Group

Meeting of January 16-17, 2001

Rockefeller Foundation & Ellis Island

New York City

JANUARY 16

Welcoming Remarks

Melanie Oliviero, MacArthur Foundation

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION SESSION: “Economic, Social, & Cultural Rights (ESCR) in the Era of Expanding Economic Globalization”

Facilitator: Lance Lindblom, The Nathan Cummings Foundation

Leah Margulies

Trans Atlantic Consumer Dialogue

“Economic Globalization and its Impact on Human Rights”

The panelist presented a macro-level overview of globalization’s impact on human rights.

Globalization is developing under the dominance of bilateral and multilateral institutions outside the United Nations (UN) that are creating one set of global rules irrespective of national borders, national laws and international human rights law. This lack of transparency and participation of civil society in rule-making threatens the work of human rights groups and those funding them, particularly since human rights is not being incorporated into the new global economic framework. Moreover, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other institutions are not democratically governed, and have grown more powerful unlike the UN. They should be subject to international instruments relating to human rights.

The Trade Rights in International Property (TRIPS) agreement, for example, allows private actors to be granted patent rights on a global level. However, this same agreement endangers the ESC rights of other actors. For example, patent rights on seeds could prevent farmers from using seeds obtained from their own crops. They also threaten bio-diversity and indigenous people’s access to their own resources. Similarly, increasing reliance on market forces could affect health care and rights enshrined in the ESCR Covenant.*

While these developments have significant impacts on human rights, they involve virtually no public participation or input from the people affected. Institutions developing through globalization carry out negotiations in secret and do not allow for participation of civil society. The absence of global rules allows corporations to operate under their own voluntary rules, leading to troubling precedents.

Ann Blyberg

International Human Rights Internship Program

“An Applied Perspective on Realizing ESC Rights in a Globalized World”

* Panelist referenced the Lancet study on GATS’ impact on health.

Rights enumerated in the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights include the right to food, right to work, right to education, right to adequate housing, right to health, among others. The panelist pointed out that human rights groups around the world have been successfully using an ESCR framework to make headway on issues such as poverty, displacement and job loss. She referred to the recently released ESCR training manual – Circle of Rights – that contains numerous ESCR case studies. She noted that local ESCR cases are essential to engender new cases and help to further legitimize ESCR at the international level.

The rights framework provides activists in every country with a powerful common language based on international standards and consensus on global problems. Activists have found this rights framework helpful because it treats the individual as the center of concern, not as a mere commodity.

Thanks to the end of the cold war and the maturation of the human rights movement itself, a critical mass has formed around ESCR, particularly within the past five years. After decades of working on civil and political rights (CPR), activists better understand how to apply human rights to economic and social issues as well. But one legacy of the Cold War is that the West still treats ESCR as ‘propaganda’ and the rest of the world sees the West’s use of ‘human rights’ as a tool against them.

Our understanding of ESCR is vaguer than CPR and difficult from a US perspective. Arguments have also been made that these rights are not justiciable and therefore courts cannot be concerned with them. However, if there is political will, these rights *are* justiciable [“capable of being decided by legal principles or by a court of justice”]. The speaker drew the analogy to Amnesty International (AI). When AI charged ‘torture,’ few people knew what ‘torture’ was. Organizations have been taking cases to court. The Supreme Court in India for example has recently upheld a poverty case. And court decisions in one country can be helpful in others.

It will take the development of numerous cases in ESCR to get a more detailed sense of what ESCR means. Cases allow us to match local concerns with international rights. No one knew what torture was until there were thousands of court cases available to flesh out its definition. Similarly, in the US it took many cases for us to comprehend civil rights.

At this point, various organizations are doing important work on ESCR. Right now, for example, housing advocates in Geneva are working on cases in different countries. Organizations in Argentina (Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales) and South Africa are also looking at the right to food.

At the UN level, cases encourage further legitimization of ESCR. The ILO has already developed conventions that are enhancing understanding of rights standards. The UN Committee on ESCR has also produced commentary on state reports that fleshes out the content of these rights.

Patricia Armstrong

Consultant on Human Rights and Development

“International Financial Institutions and Human Rights Advocacy”

The panelist addressed the role of international financial institutions (IFIs) and ESCR. It was her contention that while IFIs such as the World Bank and the IMF pay lip service to human rights, their practices are still largely inconsistent with their policies.

IFIs greatly influence development policy. Both the World Bank and the IMF have the resources to do the kind of development research that no one else can. The World Bank is also the coordinator of aid in many countries and often the chair of development committees. The IMF controls approval of all development financing. In many cases investor confidence, not the availability of funds, actually decides the fate of a development project. Several private investors withdrew from the Chad-Cameroon pipeline project, for instance, solely because they were unsure about the reliability of the Chad government.

While the IFI's decisive influence over development policy remains, (IMF is the gatekeeper for all development and financial assistance because countries need IMF's seal of approval to obtain investments) their actual role in and approaches to development are changing. The World Bank spends less money on development projects than before and is focusing more on participatory development projects, which take more time. This slows the speed that it spends money. Overall, public sector funding has decreased and instead there has been enormous growth in private sector funding. Other trends in development strategies include more market-based approaches towards provisions of basic services, a narrower role of government, and a prioritization of trade over other principles. The World Bank, for instance, facilitates the integration of WTO trade requirements into development plans.

IFI activities (yet to be realized) are opportunities to raise ESCR, and the World Bank has stated that human rights are directly within their mandate. But the World Bank has no operational rules that reference human rights. Moreover, it still sees ESCR as quite political, while its charter precludes political work and interference in governments' internal political workings.

Nonetheless, the World Bank has begun to express more interest in human rights but progress has been minor and inconsequential. The 1997 Comprehensive Development Framework actually mentions "human and property rights" and proposes a holistic approach to planning and development. A 1999 joint IMF-World Bank publication called the "Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper" tries to introduce an anti-poverty planning element into country-led participatory development. This is the first time the World Bank has used the term "poverty alleviation."

Q&A Highlights

- In Vienna, over 160 countries supported a declaration that all human rights are interdependent and justiciable. However, countries often "forget" about their ratification when they make deals with the IMF. But trade is not supposed to trump human rights. The UN Charter is supposed to prevail over other treaties.
- It was pointed out that no one had made much mention of cultural rights although social and cultural rights intersect. The topic is often avoided due to the complication introduced by religious beliefs and different conceptions of gender roles.
- Kensington Welfare Rights Association (a neighborhood group in the US), which brought a suit to the Organization of American States, was cited as a great example of a group using international ESCR standards to bring the economic rights debate home to the US. A question was asked about why such efforts are not getting more funding?
- There was also much discussion about the political aspects of ESCR and limited funding. The demand for support for economic rights exceeds supply. ESCR challenges economic interests in power. Large foundations with board members who are CEOs of corporations will likely be reluctant to fund ESCR work. This could be an opportunity for small family foundations that do not have such corporate figures on their boards. Donors need to make the leap of imagination.

- Additional obstacles to ESCR funding are the current political climate push for “free markets” and lack of media interest is a key factor in limiting public recognition of ESCR. The media did not pick up the story about the Human Rights Watch (HRW) Report on ESCR violations in the US where they found US laws violate international laws. Also, the association of ESCR with advocacy, and the tendency to equate the latter with lobbying has limited support for this area.

- A member expressed the view that perhaps it was a funder’s role to push ESCR issues by helping new actors to convene and build organic relationships. Indeed, work to identify networks of groups working on ESC rights is currently underway. If ESCR issues confront power, institutional responses should have to do with countervailing power and helping people to defend their concerns in a powerful way. A reply was that you could support activities that lead to political outcomes by enabling people to hash out strategies.

- Members also discussed similarities and differences between humanitarian work and human rights work.

- One participant said that in countries like China where the government has endorsed ESCR, funding ESCR was a good way of enabling people to discuss issues that had not been address previously.

- Some members noted that more research into ESCR (including case studies) is needed on the ground. Another member suggested that theoretical and academic work needs to be done in conjunction with people on the ground to explore sustainable and shared growth.

- In one participant’s opinion, the burgeoning interest of NGOs in ESCR was quite promising for long-term systemic change. Several pointed to the globalization of civil society movements such as the WTO meeting in Seattle, Health Action International, the consumer movement and the Jubilee 2000 coalition around debt relief. At the same time, it would be important to bring such transnationals as the WTO under the human rights regime. Unfortunately, there has been no real movement to open up the WTO in a formal way.

- With regard to World Bank projects there is a need for analysis from an ESC rights perspective.

- Local NGOs are key in efforts to advance ESC rights.

NETWORKING SESSION: “Collaborative Models for Effective International Funding”

Facilitator: Anthony Richter, Open Society Institute

Panelists presented three models of funder collaboration to demonstrate different ways donors are working together to increase their effectiveness in meeting needs such as those discussed in the previous session. Attached at the end of this section is a table that was distributed to participants which summarizes the key similarities and differences between the models.

Brian Joseph

National Endowment for Democracy

Burma Donors Forum

In this model, donors come together around a common area of interest, but grantmakers make their own funding decisions.

The Burma Donors Forum was established in 1994 as an effort to coordinate assistance to Burmese exiles who desperately needed support but had difficulty accessing grants in Burma’s hostile and war-torn conditions. It meets twice a year and is open to all funders. Its mandate is to: 1) coordinate funding; 2) expand and mobilize resources; 3) provide strategic guidance; and 4) pool financial resources and expertise. The Forum addresses two tracks of issues: humanitarian and political. Its core group is six people, and members include government aid agencies, affinity groups, church groups, and large foundations.

An advantage of this model is that each donor is able to identify the areas in which they can be most effective. Some donors are willing to work with more difficult issues which others cannot get around their board of directors. It also helps donors to coordinate support for groups and enables small donors to identify useful projects. Usually there are two or three groups who attract the most support. At the meetings members openly discuss projects so that a few groups are not swamped with funding when they do not have the capacity to use it all, and to identify the gaps in funding so resources could be directed there. Foundations learn more about what others are doing so they can more effectively target funds.

Other aspects of this model have been less successful. Originally there was an idea to have a secretariat for pooled resources. But the secretariat was never properly funded and each donor wanted to preserve its independence in determining the allocation of its funds thus the idea of pooling funds was abandoned. The Forum also has not attracted new members and there has been contentious debate about the definition of a “donor” and who should be invited to the Forum. Another issue has been concern about the major funders dominating the meeting agendas. Word about the locations of the meetings got around quickly and the Forum would get swamped with funding requests at the meeting. This put donors in an uncomfortable position because they certainly did not want to give these groups false hopes.

Kennette Benedict

John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

Foundation Partnership for Strengthening African Universities

In this model, donors comparable in size joined forces around one issue but did not pool resources.

The Foundation Partnership is a joint undertaking by four foundations: Carnegie, Rockefeller, Ford, and MacArthur. This group wanted to accelerate higher education reforms that were already underway in Africa and decided that joining forces would have a bigger effect than each working in isolation on the same issue. It was formed in 2000 with information-sharing and coordination as its primary objectives.

The Partnership's major innovation is joint funding of case studies in university reform that will help to revitalize higher education in areas where universities suffered considerable neglect and deterioration under military dictatorships. In effect, the grants also further cooperation between universities because they all learn from each other's case studies and experiences.

The Partnership meets 4-6 times per year in order to share information about prospective grant recipients and developments in the field. Some meetings are with the researchers, some are not. There is no pooling of resources. In this way, each foundation retains its distinctiveness and decides on the legacy that it wants to leave. Foundations make their own grants to both individual universities as well as joint-projects, but there is no pooling of resources.

Initially, there were questions about the rules of the Partnership: who would be "in" and who "out." The group decided that a "partnership" is considered to be any undertaking in which two or more partners are involved and no other partner objects. So each partner has a kind of veto power.

The Partnership also made a conscious decision not to have a secretariat because it is not a big enough group to warrant an administrative structure.

The Partnership's case study approach was quite innovative. Members were afraid that it might take on a life of its own but in fact, in an odd way this approach has allowed them to be observers while universities take ownership of their own research. In effect, coordination among funders helps the grantees coordinate and share their research.

Penny Fujiko Willgerodt
The Philanthropic Collaborative
Rapid Response Fund

The Rapid Response Fund, through a secretariat, distributes a pool of funds to grantees needing small amounts of money quickly for projects in a specific field.

The Rapid Response Fund (RRF) is a public charity of donor-advised funds started with \$40,000 in 1999. It was created by a biotechnology affinity group to grant small amounts of money to NGOs for emergencies or specific ad hoc opportunities, such as travel to foreign conferences, which could impact biotechnology policy. This idea came from the group's consultation with various NGOs about the best ways to assist activists working on these issues.

The Fund provides up to \$5,000 within 5 days to individuals and groups doing grassroots activity. The annual giving is at \$90,000. To facilitate a quick turn around, there is usually no face-to-face discussion with the grantee. Sometimes an attempt is made to meet a grantee located in the US, but essentially the underlying philosophy of the group is that the potential value of the projects merits a risk on a grantee. A panel of three individuals, two from NGOs and one funder, discusses the grant via e-mail and approves it with a 2/3 vote. Upon approval, a wire transfer is sent to the grantee, with a stipulation that they later submit a short report describing the outcome of their project or activity.

The small size of the RRF helps NGOs to coordinate among themselves. If several NGOs have submitted similar proposals, they might decide that one should take the lead on that project. Limited monies also

mean that the existence of the Fund is only publicized through word of mouth. However, this method has raised some questions within the Fund. Does relying on an existing network of grantees exclude others from access to this funding? Is it possible to get a proposal from a new grantee from outside the network within 5 days?

The panelist then invited Chris Allan of the Global Greengrants Fund to speak about another model's experience:

Chris Allan **Global Greengrants Fund**

Global Greengrants Fund is a project of the Tides Foundation, a public charity. Its goal is to provide small grants (less than \$5,000) to developing country actors. It is guided by an activist Board of Advisors. Its focus is environmental and concentrates on India, China and Brazil. It began as a collaboration of three foundations, which came together to solve common problems. Eight years later, nearly two dozen foundations participate. Larger foundations like it because they do not have to tie up their money. Family foundations like it because it gives them a means to do funding overseas where they may lack the legal and financial technical knowledge to do so directly.

Q&A Highlights

- Considerable discussion arose about the purpose of having a session on collaborative models. The objective was not clear to many participants. Some time was spent in clarifying the purpose of the topic. Participants were referred to the July 2000 meeting of the IHRFG in which it was decided that meetings should include a session addressing networking issues of concern to members. The specific topic of collaborative models was the first choice of members surveyed in fall.
- One participant suggested that there are different reasons for looking at or for collaborative models.
- Another participant raised the concern that different funders may be asking the same grantees for different measures and indicators of success. A collaboration can allow funders to use grantees' feedback to measure success by a common set of benchmarks.
- Another participant suggested that forming collaborative groups probably was not the most effective way of broadening funding to the international human rights field. Perhaps a more important approach is to create grantmaking institutions to do the 'retail business' of small grants that many larger donors find administratively inefficient to do. Current funders can support these efforts, but it is the grantees themselves who 'make the sale' and can help shape other donors' interests.
- Another participant said that collaboration would help current funders to better spend the money that they have and to cover the field more comprehensively. Information sharing will help to identify which grantees are looking for funding and which would be most effective.
- Also, collaboration helps funders who may not have the resources to do a fuller assessment that would be persuasive to their board working jointly provides a measure of security and avoids risk of duplication. But pooling money can reduce experimentation and risk-taking too. Resource constraints may also explain why some funders are not more involved.

- Collaboration can also help funders to identify their capabilities and prohibitions so that others can fill in the gaps. For instance, a Scandinavian group can fund US based support and pick up all lobbying activities that are illegal under out tax exemption provisions.
- Donor collaboratives have the advantage of fast turn-around for emergency support.
- Participants also debated the idea of bringing in grantees to speak to donor groups. One participant said that grantee presentations would expose donors to new ideas. Otherwise, funders come together around the same common ideas and do a disservice to the field by overlooking other aspects. Pooling of funds might stifle innovation.. Another participant expressed the concern that organizations invited to address the Group would enjoy unfair advantage over other groups.
- Better use of technology could advance the information-sharing aspect such as secure Web site with updated grant activity and requests no one has funded. There are sites such as egroups.com, which manage collective information –sharing, and there is decision-making software.
- The panelists noted that different modes of communication are used: e-groups, list-serves, e-mail, Web sites and conference calls.

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WORKING MEETING SESSION

Opening Remarks

Melanie Oliviero, MacArthur Foundation

The mapping and leveraging project emerged out of the recognition that current international human right donors receive more requests than they can handle. One outcome of the past two meetings, the IHRFG decided to identify new funders and leverage new money by: 1) identifying donors who are funding human rights, as commonly defined; and 2) identifying donors who fund projects that have not yet been linked to human rights work. As agreed at the Group's July 2000 meeting, a number of foundations pooled money to cover the mapping and leveraging project.

With regard to the coordinator position, through a competitive application process conducted by the Steering Committee, Mona Younis emerged as the most qualified candidate for the coordinator position. By formally integrating her IHRFG responsibilities into those of her position as program officer at the Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation, the Foundation is subsidizing her part-time position.

Consultants' Report on Mapping and Leveraging Projects

Shalini Nataraj, Reebok Human Rights Foundation

The Steering Committee interviewed a dozen candidates for the leveraging and mapping/coordinator consultancies and decided on Marcia Festen and Daranee Petsod to carry out the leveraging project. Both consultants are highly qualified with related past experience. Marsha Festen has examined the attitudes and practices of individual wealthy donors in the Chicago area. As current coordinator of Grantmakers Concerned with Refugee and Immigrant Rights, Daranee Petsod has been looking at strategies to expand interest in these areas particularly among Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

The consultants' approach is to combine elements of the mapping with the leveraging project. The goals of the project are to identify the trends and issues in international human rights funding as well as the funders. Who are they and in which forums do they come together? What could the IHRFG provide to them that would meet their needs and interests? Where are the obstacles and where are the opportunities? The consultants' final report to the steering committee should be ready in April. They will also synthesize the information into a set of targeted recommendations for IHRFG at the meeting in July. It will then be up to the Group to decide what to do with these recommendations.

At this point, the consultants have begun their literature review and database research. They have also spoken to the Steering Committee about current giving and suggestions for sources. Next, they will interview targeted individuals to get a sense of what has worked and what has not. They have encouraged the Group to suggest other people to speak with.

Eight foundation members are covering the costs of the leveraging and mapping projects: MacArthur, Ford, John Merck, Moriah, Samuel Rubin, Jackson and Stuart Mott. Joyce Mertz-Gilmore is covering the costs of the Group's coordinator, her assistant, the administration expenses for one year, as well as the costs entailed in the creation of a database of human rights funders for the IHRFG.

BUSINESS MEETING

Mona Younis, Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation

IHRFG Structure and Function

The IHRFG is gradually evolving into a more formalized group. The discussion at the July 2000 meeting yielded a commitment to using the semi-annual meetings to address members' diverse interests and needs. Future meetings would therefore include three substantive components: 1) a human rights education session that brings experts from the field to address specific topics; 2) a networking session that makes use of members' expertise; and 3) special projects such as the mapping and leveraging projects.

To determine the required structure, we need to ask where we see ourselves in 3-5 years. We will need to discuss this to determine what our next steps should be in terms of our structure and function. How can we begin to shape our direction to that end?

The Group's current structure is a loose membership, a part-time Coordinator and a very active Steering Committee. However, to retain this level of energy, new volunteers are actively encouraged to join the Steering Committee.

Discussion highlights:

- A participant recommended exploring setting up a mechanism that would permit grantmakers to fund small human rights groups abroad. Because of limited staffing, some donors do not have the capacity to address the issues that they might want to. Donors who do not want to deal with international grants, or who do not have the staff or know-how, could really make a difference by pooling their money. Another participant noted that even a large foundation such as Ford Foundation has an interest in funding smaller donors who can fund grantees in places that Ford cannot go. (Ford is limited to funding in areas where it has a regional office.) It was suggested that a written proposal be prepared for a serious discussion of the issue by the Group. The idea of exploring this was supported by participants including asking as part of the mapping whether funders would support international human rights if such a mechanism existed.
- The Group wants the consultants to be sure to address international human rights as applied domestically, and not just outside the U.S.
- Obstacles cited to funding abroad:
 - legal constraint of 501(c)(3) or equivalency status
 - additional effort involved in administering expenditure responsibility grants
 - quality of proposals and reporting due to lack of fluency in English
 - inability to do site visits all around the world.
- A participant noted that the NY Community Trust performs an equivalency evaluation service. Perhaps other cities have a similar service? The Steering Committee undertook to research this question.
- Several participants suggested forming sub-groups. In the course of the discussion three foundation representatives expressed readiness to initiate the formation of sub-groups, each of whom will prepare a written document for circulation via the IHRFG e-mail list to identify interested members. The following three groups were formed:

1. Direct funding for small human rights NGOs in the South:
To lead: Mary Ann Stein, Moriah Fund

2. ESCR:
To lead: Warren Allmand, Rights and Democracy
3. Cultural rights:
To lead: Leni Silverstein, MacArthur Foundation

We encourage members to join these sub-groups or form additional ones.

- Participants discussed how sub-groups should report back. The consensus was that it would be most realistic for each sub-group to take responsibility for forming itself and that once a minimum of three interested funders came together, the coordinator would get involved.
- Interest was expressed in hearing from groups such as USAID and UNDP to learn more about their funding in human rights-related areas. How do they formally coordinate? Are they funding the same groups but for different reasons? These are big funders and it would be a mistake to ignore them in the mapping project.
- Eventually knowledge of European human rights funders, such as the Scandinavian aid agencies, UK's DFID and others would be helpful. European funders such as the Freidrich Ebert Foundation also convene groups. Another step for mapping might be to capture international and government funding, after we survey private foundations.
- Review the trends on indicators with the intent to harmonize them among funders was discussed as a possible future activity. This would be developed with the participation of human rights groups.
- A concern was expressed that if ESCR is made a priority, the Group must be careful to stay in sync with the grantees, rather than directing their work. Otherwise, shifting a focus to the economic arena could become quite political.
- It was noted that unions are another source for potential funding. They also want to approach ESCR as human rights. They have a big need for support, although they might be new grantees for foundations that are not familiar with them. The upcoming World Conference on Racism in Durban, South Africa might be an opportunity.
- It was suggested that links be made to professional groups, such as the American Anthropological Association, which have human rights committees.
- Another participant suggested that the Group might influence and leverage other funding when a donor's board might be reluctant to add or to change the directions of its priorities.
- A good topic for a future human rights education session would be a briefing on the new US administration. Who are human rights sympathizers, point people, etc.? The EGA holds political briefings following each election. They devote a day and a half to internationally related issues and a day and a half on peace and security. USIP has good contacts to carry out briefings in Washington, DC.

Membership Policy

Different affinity groups have different membership policies. A few policies were reviewed, and members present who are also members of other affinity groups shared their experience. The key concern was membership of grantmakers who are also grantees. This category of grantmakers/seekers can privilege them among other grantseekers – or at least lead to that perception. One way of distinguishing them is those who maintain a “competitive grantmaking process” other than regranteeing or serving as a pass-

through agency. Participants recommended that the coordinator should compile and circulate to Steering Committee members a summary of other affinity groups' membership policies regarding this issue. The Steering Committee would then prepare recommendations to members at the upcoming meeting.

Dues/Contributions to Cover Future Projects and Meetings

The coordinator noted the need for resources to respond in a timely fashion to costs such as honoraria for speakers, speakers' travel expenses, rapporteurs, etc., and eventually for such projects as an IHRFG brochure. The implementation phase of the leveraging project will also require funds. It was suggested that a budget be drawn up to determine need on the basis of which a minimum dues per foundation can be set. A sliding scale was also suggested. It was agreed that the coordinator would prepare a summary of policies from other affinity groups, which the Steering Committee will review and present its recommendation at the next meeting.

Database

The coordinator and her assistant will begin work on a database of international human rights funders. She will circulate a form to members to identify the topics, subject headings, etc. that members would like included in a database. Ideally the database will be accessible through the Internet, but this will be more costly than software. The costs will be explored and reported to the members at the next meeting. Minimally, the database should allow funders to know what other foundations are funding in human rights. Policy regarding grantees' access to the database, making it non-proprietary, will be discussed at the upcoming meeting.

The advantage of using e-groups and list-serves was also discussed. The coordinator will be looking into this.

Next Two Meetings

The next two meetings have been scheduled for July 16-17, 2001 and January 21-22, 2002. In keeping with the majority preference expressed by members in the 1999 survey, at least one of the semi-annual meetings will be held in New York. The July 2001 meeting will be held in New York. The January 2002 meeting will be held elsewhere. Participants suggested that Silicon Valley would be an appropriate location given the Group's current commitment to leveraging money from the newly wealthy for the field, and the timing of the completion of the leveraging report.

Steering Committee

Interested members were urged to join the steering committee which is currently comprised of the following members: Steve Cheifetz (Stuart Mott Charitable Trust), Shalini Nataraj (Reebok Human Rights Foundation), Anna Nygaard Yelk (Henry M. Jackson Foundation), Melanie Oliviero (MacArthur Foundation), Steven Riskin (U.S. Institute of Peace), Mona Younis (Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation). Any of these people may be contacted for further information on the rewards and responsibility of such service.

The next tasks assumed by the Steering Committee are:

1. Research membership and dues policies of similar groups;
2. Poll other groups for their experiences constructing databases;
3. Compare listserves;
4. Research and propose terms for Steering Committee service;
5. Set up a research Assignment on a funding facility.

Human Rights Film

“Well-Founded Fear,” a film by Shari Robertson and Michael Camerini

During lunch, filmmakers Shari Robertson and Michael Camerini presented the new abridged version of their award-winning documentary film, “Well-Founded Fear.” The film documents actual asylum interviews between INS officials, asylum-seekers from several countries on grounds of physical threat and political repression. The role of the translators was showcased by having their interpretation contrasted with subtitles of speakers, often revealing that INS officials got reduced versions of statements made by asylum-seekers.

The filmmakers described the nine months of interviews they conducted before filming 50 cases. In discussion with Group members they shared the findings of their immersion into this topics, such as the fact that these INS interviewers are civil service employees whose qualifications may range from a high school diploma to Ph.D.