

The EquiPage

Do you realize how lucky you are?

If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back and a roof above your head, you are richer than 75% of the world's population. If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, or a few coins in a dish somewhere, you are among the richest 8% on the planet! If you have never known war or famine, you're luckier than over 500 million people in the world. And if you can read this text, you lucky enough not to be among the 2 billion people who cannot read... Do we really know how lucky we are?

Reflets SSQ is proud to have the EquiPage column on board! Derived from the words "equitable" and "page", the aim of the EquiPage column is to introduce readers to the various aspects of the mutualist and cooperative world. Also a play on words with the French word "équipage", meaning "crew", we like to think of the EquiPage column as a ship bringing us safely to land through the stormy seas of inequity on our planet.

Poverty and its consequences

Poverty means a lot more than just trying to make ends meet at the end of the month – it means that a person is unable to meet his or her own basic needs. The consequences for those suffering from poverty can be catastrophic as it often brings other problems. Each day, over 30,000 children die from diseases that could be treated.

In 2003, 1.2 billion people had no access to drinking water, 2.9 billion had no access to suitable sanitary facilities and 4 billion had no access to a sewerage system.

More than 130 million children age 6 to 11 do not go to school – 20% of children in this age group on the planet.

In 2003, the number of illiterate adults on the planet was estimated to be some 900 million. Women represent two-thirds of this figure.

Eighty percent of the world's population lives on 17% of the resources available.

In 1960, the richest 20% of the world's population had incomes 30 times higher than the poorest 20%... In 2000, this ratio was more like 80%.

So much inequality!

The role of co-ops in international development

A number of organizations play an active role in international development, such as: the United Nations, OXFAM, the World Bank, and other non-government organizations (NGOs), etc.

So why has SOCODEVI gone down the cooperative road to development in the countries where it is active? We all know Confucius' proverb that reminds us it is better to teach a man to fish than to give a man a fish... The cooperative movement is based on the same principle!

In developing countries, the cooperative method works around a participation-based action model that favours development from the base level, encouraging decision-making and action-taking on a local scale. By pooling their resources, local communities can accomplish things they would not have been able to do alone.