

# Education for Social Change

## **Are NGOs still relevant to the development process?**

- The development NGO sector – particularly the large organisations – tend to operate from the top-down rather than from the bottom-up.
- The priority is policy change from above which often means falling in behind government agendas for change.
- This limits our capacity for action and social change – we don't want to antagonise the hand that feeds.
- We don't work in partnership with those we claim to represent – communities on the margins and coalface of poverty.
- We stay within our comfort zone when it comes to policy – overseas development aid.

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**The Aid Fetish** – overseas aid is prioritised above all other policy objectives but let's put aid in context:

- In 2012, \$991 billion was lost by developing countries in illegal capital outflows. This was 11 times greater than ODA.
- In 2012, remittances amounted to \$532 billion which is nearly six times larger than official ODA of \$89bn in the same year.
- The total global debt owed by debtor countries increased to \$13.8 trillion in 2014.
- IMF research estimates that developing countries lose \$200 billion in corporate tax avoidance every year.

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**The Sustainable Development Goals are unlikely to eradicate poverty because:**

- There are no actionable, timebound pledges for financing development;
- There is no international tax body to tackle tax dodging;
- There is no provision for debt restructuring or cancelation;
- Most fundamentally of all, there is no deviation from the neoliberal economic growth model that has created most of the problems that the goals are trying to address.
- SDGs based on the premise that growth is the only escape from poverty.

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IF IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS YOU HEAR THAT POVERTY & HUNGER  
**HAVE BEEN HALVED, LOOK CLOSER...**

TODAY  
**4.1**  **BILLION**  
PEOPLE ARE LIVING IN POVERTY  
ON LESS THAN **\$5/DAY**

That's more than

**60%**

THE **WORLD'S**  
**POPULATION**



Latest data shows that more than  
**2 BILLION**  
PEOPLE ARE GOING HUNGRY

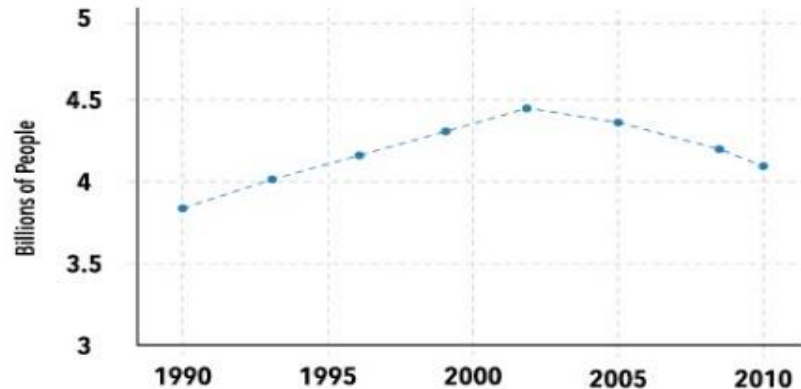
that's around of  
**35%**  
THE **WORLD'S**  
**POPULATION**



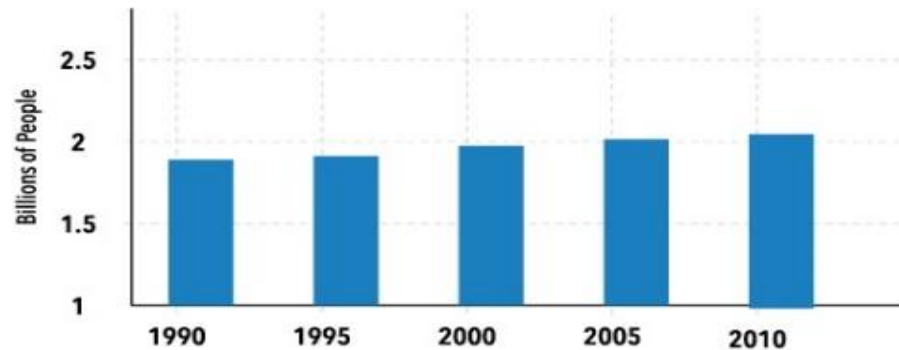
BETWEEN  
**1990 AND**  
**2010** THERE  
WAS AN  
INCREASE OF  
**371** MILLION  
PEOPLE LIVING  
ON LESS THAN  
**\$5/DAY**

Source:

<http://research.worldbank.org/PovertyNet/index.htm?0,3>, "The ethical poverty line: a moral quantification of absolute poverty" Edwards, P, Third World Quarterly 37(2):377-393 (2006)



THERE HAS BEEN A  
STEADY INCREASE  
IN THE NUMBER  
OF PEOPLE GOING  
HUNGRY SINCE  
**1990**



Source:

These figures are for available calories for the mid-point between the 'normal' and 'intense' activity range, as defined by the FAO (<http://www.fao.org/docrep/016/i3027e/i3027e00.htm>)

Powered by:



Designed by:



To fix a problem, you first have to know why it exists:  
**WWW.THERULES/BIGQUESTIONS**

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## **What should the development education / international development be doing in the current era of neoliberalism?**

- Work in partnership with the communities that we claim to represent at home and overseas;
- Explore and share alternatives to neoliberalism that are equitable and sustainable;
- Learn from the Global South – particularly the new templates for development emerging in Latin America;
- Incorporate action outcomes into the planning of our activities rather than tag them on at the end;
- Don't work in silos – partner up with related 'educations' that share our values and goals.

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**CIVICUS, the World Alliance for Citizen Participation made these recommendations in an open letter in 2014:**

1. Insist that the voices and actions of people are at the heart of your work. Our primary accountability can not be to donors.
2. Construct our organisations around women and men of diverse ideological identities to fight corporatism within our own ranks.
3. Lay the foundations to build people-to-people solidarity from below and a united front of active citizens.
4. Promote and protect media, civic and democratic spaces for citizens to self-organise, express themselves and take action.

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“The SDGs do not represent the flames of change. They are more of a smoke signal. A mere distraction. The hope now rests in their potential to spark indignation, to help build a movement of people who recognise the true depths of the challenges we face”.

Fionuala Cregan, Igniting the Communal Fire: What the SDGs could Learn from Indigenous Peoples, [commondreams.org](http://commondreams.org), 25 Sep 2015