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## Anís Zunúzí School in Haiti emphasizes moral training and cooperation skills

### Unique curriculum pays dividends by stimulating development at the grassroots

LILAVOIS, Haiti — Although his formal schooling ended after grade six, Desanges Exama knows perhaps as much about development work — and why it has so often failed here — as any of the Western-educated specialists who flock to this island nation on the wings of multimillion-dollar aid programs.

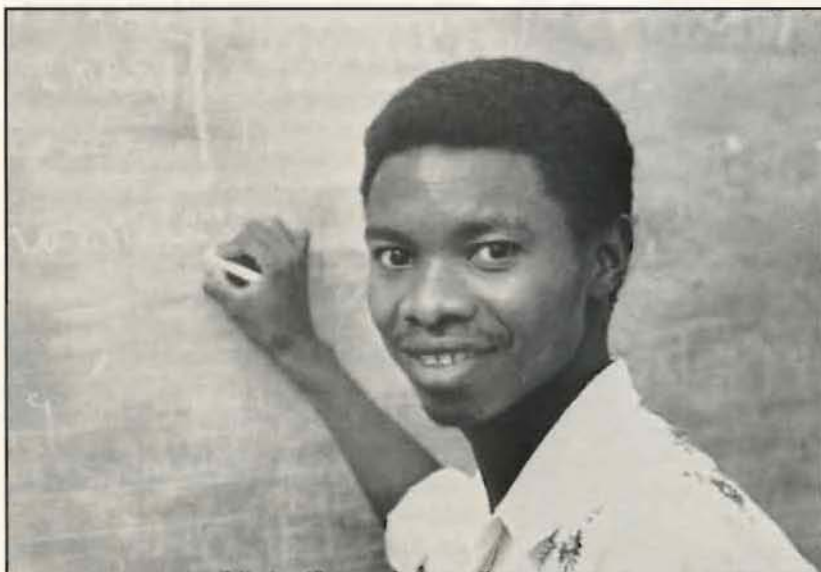
Mr. Exama, now project worker for the Anís Zunúzí Bahá'í school here, has worked in various programs to help develop his native land since the early 1960s, when he volunteered to help organize poor farmers into mini-cooperatives known here as "groupements."

That effort ultimately failed. "The people didn't trust one another," said Mr. Exama, who is 53. "So it didn't work."

Today Mr. Exama believes the best path to development is through education — especially when it teaches moral values and cooperation skills. If people learn to work together, he believes, everything else becomes possible.

He shares this philosophy with others who administer and work at the Anís Zunúzí school, a tidy compound of attractive white buildings located about 15 kilometers north of Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital.

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Dieudonné François, a student at the Anís Zunúzí Bahá'í School in Haiti, spends his afternoons in the 11th grade, and his mornings in a teacher training program, working with 4th graders.

## ONE COUNTRY

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# Promoting Popular Participation

Despite billions of dollars in assistance, hundreds of thousands of man-hours, and an ocean of good intentions, many countries are in worse condition than they were 30 or 40 years ago, before the advent of large-scale, Western-style development programs.

Specialists in social and economic development, accordingly, have turned in new directions. Among the most promising new approach is the idea of "grassroots" participation — or, to use a term which has gained currency at the United Nations — "popular"

participation. Several stories in this edition of

ONE COUNTRY touch on this topic, including our report on development in Haiti, the excerpts from a New York conference on development and the environment, and an article about the Advocates for African Food Security.

The impetus for involving the grassroots comes from the sense that traditional development projects often fail because the "people" themselves have not been consulted or involved. Without such involvement, efforts become detached from local reality. People become mere objects of development, with no control over their fate. Accordingly, they perceive no self-interest in sustaining the effort.

The emerging theory of grassroots participation holds that if the masses themselves are encouraged to participate, their development needs will be more closely met. Accordingly, the effort is more likely to win local support, and overall success will be far more likely.

The impetus for the new thinking has been linked with the growing respect for universal human rights, and the recognition that all people, whatever their level of education, social development or economic status, deserve equal status and treatment under the law.

In the Bahá'í view, however, genuine popular participation will come when the world's peoples — both developing and developed — incorporate into their think-

ing several understandings that go beyond the current framework of human rights.

The first key understanding toward encouraging genuine popular participation involves the recognition of the oneness of humanity. This recognition requires a change in attitudes on the part of all people — both those who are helped, and those who would help.

The second such understanding is the recognition that human beings are spiritual creatures in their essence. As spiritual creatures, all men and women are created with an inherent nobility, and possess a reservoir of spiritual, intellectual and physical capacities. True development occurs when these latent capacities are tapped.

In 1975, the Bahá'í International Community issued a statement to the U.N. Commission for Social Development on this issue. In part, it read:

"...the popular participation so essential to economic and social development requires a basic change of values and attitudes on the part of each individual and his social group, [a change] rooted in a deeply-held conviction of the organic oneness of humanity. Successful development must center on the realization that each person is inseparable from the total body of mankind..."

**"Successful development must center on the realization that each person is inseparable from the total body of mankind."**

As development specialists probe more deeply into the meaning of popular participation, and as they search for ways to implement its ideal, they might find the experience of the worldwide Bahá'í community helpful.

Although Bahá'í institutions have a primary basis in religion, they are also charged with helping to improve the social and economic well-being of humanity. Further, all Bahá'í institutions, whether at the local, national, or international level, operate with a

(Continued next page)

## Perspective: Popular Participation

*(Continued from previous page)*

built-in mechanism for popular participation in seeking to attain this goal.

At the lowest level, for example, the local Bahá'í administrative council — called a Local Spiritual Assembly — is elected annually by all adult Bahá'ís in that community. Beyond the participation inherent in the election process, however, is the requirement for this council to meet with the community at large at least once a month.

This meeting takes place in a gathering called "the Feast," and it combines aspects of religious worship, a social meeting, and community administration.

During the portion of Feast devoted to community administration, each person is encouraged to present individual views, concerns and ideas about local projects, the

harmonious functioning of the community, and, virtually anything else on his or her mind.

The process is consultative in nature, and from it springs some of the most sincerely conceived grassroots development projects in the world.

In the Bahá'í view, true development requires more than technology or money. It requires a new approach at organizing human affairs, an approach that relies on this type of "popular participation," so that all points of view are included and all humans are treated with equal respect.

The accomplishments of "developed" peoples and nations do not rest on technical knowledge, natural resources, or even the accumulation of capital. Development springs from the degree of respect paid to the individual, and the resulting social evolution. ☉

## Convention on Rights of the Child adopted

Includes Mass Media Article from Bahá'í International Community

UNITED NATIONS — More than 20 international non-governmental organizations — including the Bahá'í International Community — contributed to the 10-year process leading to the Convention of the Rights of the Child, adopted 20 November 1989 by the UN General Assembly, the most comprehensive human rights treaty ever.

The Convention modifies and consolidates existing international standards and com-

tection against exploitation.

The Bahá'í International Community was among those NGOs who formed an Ad Hoc Group on the Convention in 1983, offering special knowledge and expertise to the 43-nation Working Group that drafted the convention itself.

The Community offered several statements and position papers to the Working Group. A proposed article on children and the mass media was presented, for example, as was one on children's education.

The article on the mass media, as submitted by the Bahá'í Community, was adopted with minor changes.

"The mass media have an enormous influence on children," said Machid Fatio, a Bahá'í representative to the United Nations. "Technological developments have facilitated mass communication in virtually every part of the world. There are enormous potential benefits to be derived from child-oriented mass media activities.

"For that reason, we urged the United Nations to consider an article that will help to tap the vast potential of the mass media to benefit the world's children. And, indeed, with the passage of the Convention, it will be possible to help develop the mass media in a positive direction." ☉

**"Technological developments have facilitated mass communication in virtually every part of the world. There are enormous potential benefits to be derived from child-oriented mass media activities."**

mitments to the protection of children. It also introduces a number of new rights for children, including the rights to an individual name, nationality and identity; the rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; and rights of development and to pro-

# Promoting African Women Farmers in New York

The Advocates for African Food Security use an insider's approach to influence the U.N.

**"The Advocates are a coalition of both insiders and outsiders. So they overcome the disadvantages that many NGOs have, because the Advocates know how the UN really works."**

UNITED NATIONS — Whether in the cavernous meeting rooms beneath the main floor, the offices of the steel and glass Secretariat building, or the General Assembly hall itself, winning an adequate hearing for important ideas here is a common preoccupation among both governmental and non-governmental organizations alike.

The Advocates for African Food Security take a different approach to this task — and offer an innovative example for other groups and other issues.

Dedicated to building international awareness of the role of women farmers in African food production, the Advocates are a coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UN agencies and governmental organizations. They are perhaps unique at the UN for this distinctive combination of members, a mix that gives the Advocates a surprising degree of influence — despite a budget that is near to zero and a structure that is purposely left undefined.

"The Advocates are an unusual model," said Barbara Adams, a consultant with the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN NGLS). "They are a coalition of both insiders and outsiders. So they overcome the disadvantages that many NGOs have, because the Advocates know how the UN really works. Many NGOs are very concerned about an issue, but they don't necessarily know how to address the system."

The Advocates were formed in 1986 following a symposium sponsored by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), which focused on African women farmers. A number of those involved, principally women representatives of various NGOs and several UN agencies in New York, decided to stay in-

volved in the issue, believing that inadequate support was being given to women farmers in Africa — despite the fact that women produce from 50 to 80 percent of that continent's food supply.

Today, members of the Advocates include representatives from the United Nations agencies like the UN Development Programme (UNDP), UNIFEM, and the UN NGLS. The Organization for African Unity, a governmental organization, is also involved, through its New York representative.

And the membership list of NGOs ranges from religious groups like the World Council of Churches and Church Women United, to development-oriented groups like Save the Children Foundation, Coordination in Development (CODEL) and the African-American Institute. The Bahá'í International Community has been a member from the start, and this year serves as convenor.

As their main activity, the Advocates have organized a forum at the UN each year on the role of women farmers in Africa. But the group has also produced a play that dramatizes the daily life of women farmers, along with several booklets and brochures. (See *One Day In Her Life*, right.)

By bringing women farmers and professionals to these forums and featuring their points of view there and in publications, the Advocates have come to be highly appreciated for their down-to-earth treatment of the problems facing African development.

"The UN is a bureaucracy, and like most bureaucracies, things become routine after awhile," said Elizabeth Okwenje, the director for Africa at OXFAM America and a member of The Advocates. "By bringing to the UN the reality of people's experience in developing countries, these issues become more important to those in New York."

"In many ways," Ms. Okwenje added, "I think it has more impact to see an African woman farmer speaking about her day than to have a foreign minister standing up in the General Assembly and trying to articulate the reality of the problems in his country."

In addition to the diversity of its membership, several other factors have helped to make the Advocates far more effective than their size or budget would imply.

"An important aspect of the Advocates model is that it is an umbrella organization without an institutionalized bureaucracy," said Ruth Engo, one of the Advocates' founders, who spoke at the annual symposium on 12 October in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium. "We have no president, no director. We meet together to promote women farmers, not an institution. This has been our strength."

Ms. Engo, who works with the Advocates as a consultant to UNIFEM, later elaborated: "Because we are dealing with an issue, and not with institutions, there is less danger of getting lost in the bureaucracy, or in your own propaganda."

"Instead, we have a common objective, which is helping women farmers bring food security to Africa. This has been the focal point, not UNDP, not UNIFEM, not any organization. Plus, because we are not an institution, we have nothing that people can fight with. We are taking nobody's place. We are just reinforcing everybody's willingness to solve the problem of hunger in Africa."

The Bahá'í International Community has

participated extensively in the Advocates because it focuses on several issues of great concern to the worldwide Bahá'í community: equal rights for women, food security and the development of all peoples. Said Mary Power, a Bahá'í International Community representative to the United Nations, "In our work with the Advocates, these concerns come together."

Ms. Engo and others also said the Advocates is effective because it focuses on a single issue — women farmers in Africa — and does not become diverted to other aspects of the hunger problem, to women's issues, or to Third World development. Nevertheless, said Engo and others, the Advocates could provide a model for other groups who desire to promote a particular issue at the international level.

"I think the model is applicable to other situations," Ms. Engo said. "People can come together on peace, because of the new concept of peace and development. Or it could work even on a strong political issue, like the issue of commodities in Africa. With commodities, for example, you need strong expert advice. But the people themselves are the ones who produce the commodities. And their perspective is needed." ☸



Logo of The Advocates  
for African Food Security

*Excerpt from a one-person play about a day in the life of an African woman. Written by Sharon A. Billings, Ruth Bamela Engo and James M. Noss. First performed by actress Christine Campbell 14 May 1987 at "Programs for African Food Security: Lessening the Burden of Women" at the United Nations.*

## One Day in Her Life

"Ah, is it really time for me to rise? I feel as if I've only just lay down my head. But I need to get up; I have so much to do before the sun rises. I hope that I have some water left over from last night so that I can wash — Ah yes, there is some here. But there is no time to enjoy it and besides, it is so cold. Careful now, I need to leave enough for my husband and my children to

wash. If my children go to school without washing, then people will say that I fail to take care of my family. Now, quickly, I must light the fire for it brings heat, light is a sign that there is life in this house.

"While my husband's water is warming on the fire I will sweep the kitchen and outside area and tend to the chickens and goats. Here are several eggs. I can sell them in the market today. (Pause.) Wake up children, wake up, for the sun is beginning to rise. Bring the baby here; he is hungry and his crying will disturb your father. Here, help me to gather the gourds and buckets. Place those dirty dishes in this basket; we will wash them at the river.

"Fanta, my daughter, I have warmed some food for you and your brother. Don't forget to eat and wash before you go to school. And please pay close attention in your classes, for it is very important that you learn. Come, little ones, let's go to the river. (Pause.) If my daughter was not at school she could help me with my burdens but I am willing to sacrifice for her education. I stood up to my husband and his family when they said that it was not necessary for her to go to school. I think it is, I want her to learn, I want her life to be better than mine...." ☸

Anís Zunúzí teacher Evelyne Petit, 26, stands with her class of first graders, who come mostly from the semi-rural area that surrounds the school grounds. Anís Zunúzí is named after a young Persian who was martyred in 1850 with The Báb, one of the two founders of the Bahá'í Faith.



## Anís Zunúzí School puts stress on moral training and cooperation

*(Continued from page 1)*

Although established nine years ago primarily as a private school, Anís Zunúzí has gradually evolved into a multi-faceted development institute and helped to launch grassroots-oriented Bahá'í development projects throughout Haiti. These projects include satellite pre-school centers, community organization work, and local reforestation efforts. A common thread runs throughout: the idea that learning to cooperate and to make decisions as a group is more important to long-term development than is material assistance.

### **A Harsh Land**

Although the country has received more than US\$650 million in international development assistance since 1980, Haiti remains the poorest nation in the Western hemisphere. Per capita income in 1987 was \$360 per annum, the lowest in the Americas and the 29th lowest in the world. More than 75 percent of Haitians cannot read or write, also the worst rate in the Americas, and the average life expectancy

is about 55 years.

The country's harsh past accounts in part for this grim condition, say development specialists and others here. The island was colonized by the French, who brought Africans for use as slaves. In 1804, the Africans revolted and established Haiti as the first independent territory in Latin America. Despite this heritage of independence, the legacy of slavery, with its degradation of human life and strict hierarchy of authority, has left an indelible mark.

"During colonial times, terrible, terrible things were done to the Haitian slaves," said Ribentrop Louis, a 23-year-old Haitian, who serves on the development committee of the Haitian Bahá'í community. "People were beaten, had their arms cut off, they were even buried alive, all to make them obedient. That mentality of 'the bosses' still remains in many people. Throughout much of society, you still have the concepts of chiefs or leaders, and many people find it difficult to act on their own."

The Bahá'í approach to development in

Haiti is distinctive, said Mr. Louis, because it seeks to overcome this legacy by training people to cooperate, rather than simply funneling aid in from outside. This training is accomplished partly through Anís Zunúzi's innovative program of primary, secondary and vocational education, and partly through adult classes and institutes — often held at Anís Zunúzi — sponsored by the national Bahá'í assembly.

### Teaching Moral Values

Although corporal punishment is officially banned, the majority of Haitian schools continue to beat and whip students to enforce discipline — a legacy of the harsh past. At Anís Zunúzi, beating has always been forbidden. Although to outsiders this may not seem significant, it sets Anís Zunúzi apart from other schools here and instills in the students a unique sense of responsibility for their own actions.

"In most schools it is hard to have a relationship between the student and the teacher," said Dieudonné François, an 11th grader who came to Anís Zunúzi three years ago. "Here, you are really friends with all the teachers and they will teach you until you've

really got it."

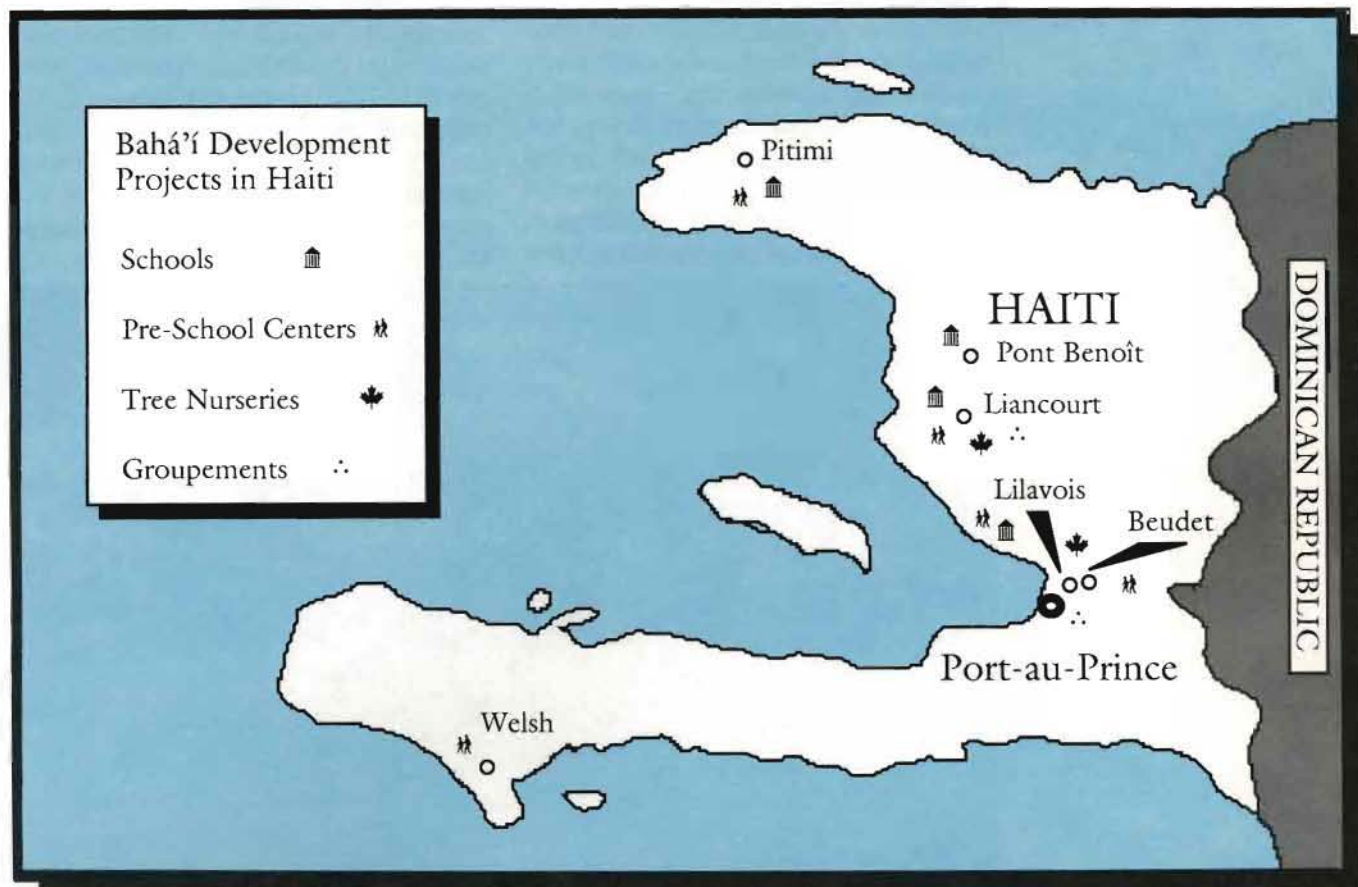
Anís Zunúzi is also distinctive for its use of the native Creole language in beginning reading classes. "If you start in Creole, that means they can learn to think on their own," said Hans-Jürgen Thimm, the school's former principal. "But if you start them in French, they just learn to parrot. So this is actually a profound reform."

But the school's real distinction lies in its effort to inject moral — Bahá'ís would say "spiritual" — values into the curriculum.

Creole primary books, written at the school and used in primary grades, use short parables to illustrate various new words and sounds. In the first-grade reader, the story of a boy who helps his father and learns the values of work is used to illustrate the "o" sound. Another vignette tells of a woman who painstakingly re-stitches a wedding dress, even though she is tired and would prefer to leave the job half done.

"Even if kids don't put the morals into practice all the time, they have something at the bottom of their heart that tells them they shouldn't be doing things like lying or stealing," said Gabrielle Rose Marcel, an

Map of Haiti, below, shows the location of Bahá'í development projects. Shown are schools, pre-school centers, tree nurseries and groupements. Nearly all are in some way the result of Anís Zunúzi's influence, either through its outreach program, or because of training programs in cooperation and group decision-making skills that have been held at the school, which in turn have improved the organizational ability of the Haitian Bahá'í community.



"...each child must acquire a vision of his own future, and sense it to such a degree that it becomes contagious and spreads to others. This is what we are trying to accomplish."

11th grader who has attended Anís Zunúzi since 1981. "It's at the school that they learn that."

#### **An Engine for Development**

The adult training institutes at Anís Zunúzi likewise stress moral values and, especially, a method of non-adversarial group decision-making, which Bahá'ís call "consultation." As individuals from around the country have become familiar with the principles of consultation and other techniques for community cooperation, they have in turn organized or shouldered the administration of development projects in their own regions.

The outreach program, established in 1983, received about \$60,000 from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) at its start. Gradually, however, the Haitian Bahá'í community has taken responsibility for funding. Some money also comes from other Bahá'í communities around the world.

To date, four pre-school centers have been established, in addition to the center at Anís Zunúzi, and are now overseen by locally elected Bahá'í councils. (*See story on opposite page.*)

Three other primary schools, each offering kindergarten through the fourth grade to about 100 students, have been established in the cities of Liancourt, Pont Benoît and Pitimi. All are also overseen by the local Bahá'í council in each town. A small tree nursery has also been established in Liancourt, as part of a nationwide refore-

tation effort. (*See story on following page.*)

At Anís Zunúzi itself, there are several outreach development efforts. The school also operates a seedling nursery, and helps to distribute young trees to local farmers. Mr. Exama serves as the "animateur" for this program, working with farmers to educate them about tree types, care and benefits. Mr. Exama also works with a number of small *groupements*, in an attempt to assist them in forming small economic projects, such as selling beans or raising small animals. These groupements are smaller than the ones Mr. Exama worked with in the 1960s, and Bahá'í principles of consultation are stressed in special training programs.

#### **An Evolutionary Process**

Although founded in 1980 by a \$250,000 donation of outside money, and steered at first by an international council of advisors, the school has gradually evolved into an institution that draws its support and direction from the grassroots.

The school is now run by a committee of local council members and, this year, the school's American born principal stepped aside in favor of a Haitian-born educator, Mr. François Lhorrisson-Fils.

"In general in Haiti, we lack hope, we lack vision — this is our biggest barrier to development," Mr. Lhorrisson-Fils said. "To overcome this barrier, each child must acquire a vision of his own future, and sense it to such a degree that it becomes contagious and spreads to others. This is what we are trying to accomplish." ☉

Vocational education is also offered at the Anís Zunúzi school. Here, a typing class is shown.





Pre-school teacher Anna Louise Seraphin, left, works with 3- to 5-year-olds each weekday morning at the Beudet pre-school center, which is operated by the local Bahá'í council there. Rosanna Petit Frère, who has two children at the center, stands to the right of Mlle. Seraphin.

## Pre-School Centers Seek to be Self-Sustaining

BEUDET, Haiti — Rosanna Petit Frère uses a Creole colloquialism to describe how she realized the importance of sending her children to school. "Je'm te vin klere," she says, which means, literally, "my eyes became brightened."

Mme. Frère, like many rural Haitians, lives in a small cinder-block and tin-roof house, among a dense settlement of perhaps two dozen other such homes, drawing water from a common well and surrounded by the fields that she and her neighbors laboriously farm.

Unlike many other rural Haitians, however, Mme. Frère can send her young children to a neighborhood pre-school center, where they are exposed to ideas and early socialization that most Haitian children go without. For this, she is grateful.

"For a long, long time, I never used to really think about sending my children to school, but my eyes became brightened," she said. "Because now my kids are developing really well. They are curious and keen."

Although the Bahá'í-run pre-school center in this small village is physically modest — it is an open-air affair, with meter-height block walls, a thatched roof and dirt floor — it has had an important impact on life in this small, unnamed enclave, where the next meal is ever in doubt and outside jobs are virtually non-existent.

Originally established as an outreach

project of the Anís Zunúzí Bahá'í school in nearby Lilavois, administrative responsibility for the Beudet pre-school center has since been assumed by the Beudet Bahá'í Spiritual Assembly, a locally elected Bahá'í council.

As such, the center represents grassroots development at its most basic level: local people paying for and supporting a locally-run project, which serves the genuine needs of local residents. It is one of five such Bahá'í-run pre-schools around the country.

Although parents are asked to pay \$1 a month per child — at the present time there are 13 three- to five-year-olds enrolled — the Beudet Assembly covers the \$30 a month cost of hiring teacher Anna Louise Seraphin for half the day and oversees her work.

"This little center is the only one in the area," explained Mlle. Seraphin. "The parents like that. The kids are small and they can't go too far."

Mlle. Seraphin, who received her teacher training in a summer institute at the Anís Zunúzí school, said that she sees a marked change in the children who attend. "The children at first, they wouldn't answer back and they didn't know how to play and they didn't talk much. But now they are playing together and talking more and even the parents are saying that they are developing well." ☸

***"I'm really poor and I have five children, but even if I can't eat, I make an effort to put them in school." — Rosanna Petit Frère***

Desanges Exama, left, stands with farmer Renée Breau in front of several dozen fast-growing neem trees that she planted, with Exama's help, two years ago. The trees were started in the nursery at the Anís Zunúzí School. Exama is one of the school's outreach development workers.



## Private Organizations Play a Key Role in Haiti's Reforestation

LILAVOIS, Haiti — During the rainy season, it is said, rivers of brown mud streak out into the cerulean waters of the Caribbean from the shores of this island nation. The cause is massive deforestation, among the worst examples in the Western Hemisphere, which allows precious topsoil to be washed into the sea.

"Estimates are that between 50 million and 60 million trees are cut each year," said Arlin Hunsberger, project director for the Haiti Agroforestry Extension Project of the Pan American Development Foundation (PADF) — one of the principal agencies working for Haiti's reforestation. "But it is estimated that only about 6.7 million replacement trees were planted by farm-

ers here last year."

Haiti's scarcity of trees can be traced to the early 1800s, when the slaves revolted and entire regions of the country were burned. Many people sought refuge in the mountains and began hillside farming, which further reduced the forests. Unchecked commercial extraction of wood by lumber companies accounted for continued deforestation in the 19th century.

In recent years, Haiti's reliance on charcoal for cooking fuel and tree clearing by peasant farmers has continued to drain the nation's forest resources, leaving a once lush island only about five percent forested.

For decades, appeals by the Haitian government to protect the country's trees have

been generally ignored. Likewise, numerous international and bilateral aid organizations have attempted to plant trees in one or another part of Haiti. Yet these attempts have failed to reverse the situation.

Hunsberger, nevertheless, is optimistic about PADF's project, because of its distinctive approach. The aim, he said, is to work with private voluntary organizations, like the Haitian Bahá'í community and other religious groups, to change the way Haiti's peasants think about trees.

"What we're trying to do is to train the farmers to grow their own trees," Hunsberger said. "And we're also trying to build an awareness that it is okay to harvest trees, just as it is okay to harvest corn and beans."

The key to preventing further deforestation, he said, is to extend that argument so that farmers understand, "just as you don't harvest someone else's corn, likewise, you shouldn't harvest someone else's trees."

Likewise, PADF encourages the planting of fast-growing trees that have useful, practical purposes, such as animal feed, soil enrichment, lumber or charcoal production.

The program fits well into the Bahá'í concept of promoting an integration between environment and development. The Anís Zunúzí school has participated in PADF's agroforestry program since 1985, when it established a small tree nursery. Currently,

that nursery produces about 120,000 seedlings a year, which are then distributed to local farmers. Another nursery has been established by the local Bahá'í council in Liancourt, to the north, producing about 80,000 trees each year.

"The Anís Zunúzí school is a prime example of how PADF works," Hunsberger said. "We work entirely through private voluntary organizations (PVOs), such as the Bahá'í school, the Baptist mission, and so on. About 70 organizations are involved in all."

By working with private groups, Hunsberger says, PADF is able to reach the level of Haitian society where tree planting and education about reforestation can make a difference. "PVOs tend to have their feet on the ground," Hunsberger said. "And they will probably be here much longer than we will."

One farmer who has benefited from the program is Victor Dumay, who planted cassia and neem trees four years ago in his neighborhood. Already, they stand more than 20 feet tall, providing shade and improving the soil's moisture.

"The trees increase the value of the land," said Mr. Dumay, who received the trees from Anís Zunúzí project outreach worker Desanges Exama. "From the time that you have good trees, you're sure to have some rain. Because the trees bring in the rain." ☉



Nurserymen Bernard Metélus, center, and assistant nurseryman Ronald Bayard, left, work in the Anís Zunúzí School tree nursery, helping to produce more than 120,000 seedlings each year. The young trees are then distributed to local farmers. Shown also is Matty Thimm, left, former principal of the school. The nursery works in collaboration with the Pan American Development Foundation's Agroforestry Extension Project.

*On September 11, the Club of Rome, the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service, and the Bahá'í International Community co-sponsored a forum entitled "Africa — Environment and Development: NGO Perspectives for the 1990's."*

*As the title implies, the day-long gathering focused on the relationship between Africa's development and its environment and the bearing of this interplay on the world's environmental quality. This will increasingly be a critical topic in view of the increasing competition for land, timber, wildlife and other resources as Africa attempts to become fully developed.*

*The forum was all the more distinctive for the diversity of its participants. Those attending represented a wide range of disciplines, agencies and organizations having an interest in the topic. Included were representatives from high profile Western aid agencies and environmental groups like US AID and the World Wide Fund for Nature; from grassroots-based non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like the Forum of African Voluntary Development Organizations and the African Development Foundation; and from think-tank type institutions like the North-South Institute and the Club of Rome.*

*The forum began by putting Africans at the podium and Westerners in the audience. Afternoon workshop sessions in small discussion groups then sought further to break down old assumptions and traditional relationships. The day ended with a talk by Mr. Bertrand Schneider, the Secretary-General of the Club of Rome.*

*The format also provided numerous opportunities for questions and answers, and the discussion ranged far beyond conventional thinking on how development and the environment intertwine. The role of debt and structural adjustment was highlighted. The trend towards popular participation in the development process and the need to re-think the general approach to development communications were also discussed extensively.*

*The event was held at the Bahá'í International Community offices in New York.*

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# ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT: A VIEW FROM AFRICA

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Excerpts from a conference held by The Club of Rome, the United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service and the Bahá'í International Community

*Professor Adebayo Adedeji, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, started the conference, speaking about the debt crisis and how Western attempts to enforce structural adjustment programs affect development and the environment in Africa.*

*"For years we talked about development and took for granted environment.... Increasingly, the link between environment and development is now well established. But there is one third aspect which is yet to be established. And that is the link between development, environment, and adjustment."*

*"We tend to think that if a country is in serious economic crisis we should keep 'on hold' everything there is while that country adjusts to resolve the problems of the crisis, and then once those problems are solved,*

the development process and, hopefully, the environmental issues will be tackled."

"Senegal is a Sahelian country threatened day and night by increasing desertification... [Yet], we now put all resources, all attention, on how we can balance the payments for Senegal."

"In making these decisions, we tend to forget that they have consequences, long-term consequences, on the development prospects of Senegal and on the environment of Senegal. Although we have kept 'on hold' these issues, nature does not keep 'on hold.' The forces of nature continue to be at work."

"By the time we wake up to the problems in the long-term development and to the environment of Senegal, thousands more miles of Senegal have become desertified. The environmental problems have become worse and, of course, development, instead of stagnating, has retrogressed. Therefore, we came to the conclusion that we need to add the third dimension to this frontier of development theory — and that is the adjustments dimension."

"In Africa, the problem of environmental degradation is not a futuristic problem. It is one of the fundamental causes of the crisis we face.... [E]very day hundreds of kilometers are becoming desert in Africa and, if we do not reverse this, the whole continent will become a huge desert. We cannot keep it on hold for a day, not to talk of a year, while we try to solve the debt problem, while we try to solve the budgetary problems, and while we try to solve the exchange problems."

*Mr. Mazid N'Diaye, president of the Forum of African Voluntary Development Organizations, spoke of the difficulty of balancing the environment against the needs of development, especially when the Western nations have already achieved industrialization and a high standard of living.*

"As Africans, what do we gain in this problem of environment? I was once in a meeting where people were talking about lending money to forest countries to save the 'capital' of the forests. I say 'No, we cannot have more debt.' I say if it is 'capital,' why

do we have to borrow the money?"

"If you ask a Senegalese person to protect his environment because of this or that, it is immaterial. If he can't survive, the environment is nothing for him. If he dies because he can't find food to eat, protecting the environment is not for him — it's for someone else."

"When people say that the major profit for the African countries is because of tourism, for example, I laugh. The plane ticket is not for us. The hotel money is not for us. The tourist's camera? We don't produce cameras. His film? We don't produce film. His car? We don't produce cars. His petrol? We don't produce petrol, except Nigeria. Even the food is sometimes imported for the tourists. So, what do we gain by tourism? Nothing."

"What is clear is that now the world is not able to continue to sustain this level of wealth which you, in the north, have for everybody. It is not possible. Are you ready to lower your level of wealth, your standard of living?"

"Something has to be done from your level. To be realistic, the ozone layer has been created by the CFCs which are created by making a room like this one, with air conditioning.... This is so because you won't agree, or your government won't agree, to stop this pollution immediately."

"I don't think, we, in Senegal, are able to solve the problem of desertification. If it were only tree planting, that would mean every Senegalese will have to plant at least one hundred thousand trees and then irrigate those trees. It is not possible."

"If we, from the north and from the south, want the environment to be strengthened, to be protected, we have to pay something. That thing is not only money.... It is a matter of reconsidering the way we are living. This way is not the right one. It is a bad one. It's dividing the world into 'the rich' and 'the poor.' It's creating a condition of life which is not sustainable for the world. The world cannot produce this level of life for everybody; the world cannot produce this level of life forever."



Prof. Adebayo Adedeji



Mr. Mazid N'Diaye

*Mr. Bertrand Schneider, Secretary-General of the Club of Rome, author of "The Barefoot Revolution," President of the International Association for the Quality of Life, and a Fellow of the World Academy of Art and Science, spoke about the need to take a global approach to the environment, while at the same time understanding that genuine action and change come only from the grassroots.*



Mr. Bertrand Schneider

"The adjustment of structures involves also a change of mentality and of behavior. This means that we won't solve the problem of the developing countries without... changing our style of life in the northern countries."

"The Sahel problem, which is both desertification and development, won't be solved if not in a global approach — because desertification is a global problem — but with a lot of micro projects. Sahel is a mosaic of small lands which are so different in geology, in climatology, that there is no one ideal solution for Sahel. These problems have to be discussed and tackled with the people who are living there."

"Let me illustrate these concerns with a project which started in Yandi in 1986. We had there a meeting of the Club of Rome, and we were asked by many African leaders to take an initiative in Sahel."



Dr. Eddah Gachukia

"The first step has been a meeting of 60 heads of villages or former chiefs of villages, African leaders of micro projects, who are very different from each other, and African experts from six different countries of Sahel.... This meeting will lead to the setting up of a number of pilot projects which will be started next year."

"We will start with 20 projects. Two years later we will jump to 50. Two years later we will go to 100. It is a very ambitious program. All these projects will be supported by local existing projects. We hope that, little by little, we will create these green spots and these windbreaks in different parts of the Sahel before going further to include the English-speaking countries. This is a long process."

"Environmental threats are not perceived

in the same way in the south and in the north. In the north we have built up our economic growth, ignoring completely the pollution and the environment, and we have sacrificed very often the environment to this economic increase. Now, in the south, people who are conscious of the importance of the environment are saying, 'You want us to pay for your mistakes. You have set up your industries and now we are just developing and you say don't use your local resources because it is a danger for the world. This is not fair.'"

"What we have suggested is to organize a meeting, a North-South conference on environment, to discuss these problems. This meeting should be a regular meeting, but not only of governments — including also industrialists, unions, NGOs — all of the people who are more or less partners in this problem. This should lead to the creation of a United Nations Security Council for Environment. Now, the major priority of the world is not the problems of war and peace. It is the problem of environment."

*Dr. Eddah Gachukia, Chairperson of the African Women's Communication and Development Network and former member of the Kenyan Parliament, spoke about the need to improve communications with those who are to be "developed," and to seek the input from the grassroots, if either issue is to be properly addressed.*

"We are concerned with the gap between knowledge and practice. Communication cannot have any meaning — information cannot have any meaning — until it achieves your objective, until men and women, children and youth, have internalized the environmental message, so that environmental conservation becomes a way of life, not something that we listen to and dismiss."

"It is in that context, then, in analyzing the social organization of the population at the grassroots level, that you begin to wonder what are the reliable channels of communication, communication that will enable, that will empower populations at the grassroots level to change their behavior, their way of life, to internalize the message, so conservation is good, and not something the government forces people to do."

"People at the grassroots level actually know what their problems are. You need to hear what their concept is of environmental protection. You need to hear what tree planting means to them. Is it something they do once a year? Is it something that they try to do throughout the year? What about water? In Kenya we are trying to demonstrate that you may not need irrigation. There are ways and means of getting

these trees planted, taking care of them. What kind of incentives can you offer at the community level.

"When something is happening in Africa today, all of you know all about it. The people next door don't know anything about it. People, even in Kenya itself, will not know anything about it. The problem of communication is a very crucial issue." ❁

## Review: An Artist's Search for Links between East and West

(Continued from back page)

which evolved from a sense of the complementary nature of "that which is loosely called East and West." Of Western heritage, but born and raised in the East, Mr. Leach asked himself: "Whence was the seed of Life? How was that core, that belief about the meaning of Life — Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, or Muslim — conceived through the millennia of human history?... How could I equate my own inheritance of Christianity with Buddhism?"

He found an answer to these questions in the Bahá'í Faith, which he first heard about during World War I. The Bahá'í Faith, he writes, "recognizes the essential unity of all inspired religions. The paths are many, but the mountain of God has now been revealed as the bedrock of world society."

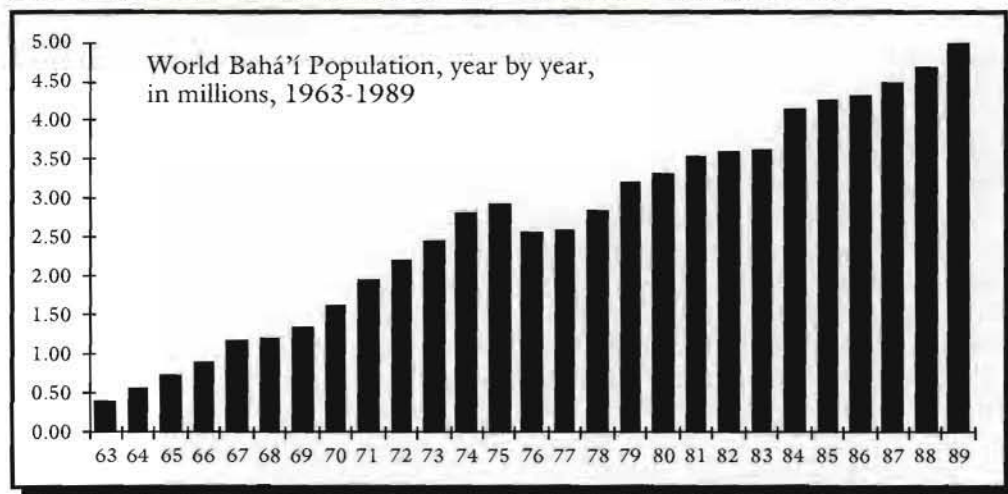
"Here then," he adds, "is the link between East and West, and here too, hope for the unity of mankind."

Mr. Leach was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1962 for his contribution to the development of British pottery. In 1966, for his cultural services to

Japan, he received the Order of the Sacred Treasure, Second Class, the highest honor the Japanese government bestows on a foreigner. He was honored by the World Crafts Council at a gathering in Dublin in 1970, and, in a private audience with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth at Buckingham Palace in 1973, he became the first craftsman ever to be made a Companion of Honor. In 1974 he received the Japan Foundation Cultural Award. A retrospective exhibition of his work was held at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, in 1977, and resulted in publication that year of *The Art of Bernard Leach* (London: Faber and Faber).

Eva Gillies, appraising the book in *Resurgence*, remarked: "It is heartening, towards the end of our confused and fragmented century, to be reminded that wholeness is, after all, possible, and to be offered so beautiful and genuine an example of its achievement."

This is the heritage Bernard Leach affords us. — by Roger White ❁



STATISTICAL SNAPSHOT: The worldwide Bahá'í community has grown rapidly in recent years. As shown left, membership in the Bahá'í Faith has grown from about 400,000 in 1963 to about 5 million in 1989, making the Bahá'í Faith the fastest growing of the world's independent religions. The decline in the figures between 1975 and 1976 reflects a change in demographic methodology rather than in membership.

# An Artist's Search for Links between East and West

*Drawings, Verse  
& Belief*

By Bernard Leach

Oneworld  
Publications

London

Toward the end of his life, master potter Bernard Leach lost his eyesight, and his ability to continue work as a craftsman and artist. Nevertheless, he accepted his blindness with philosophic resignation, remarking that with the loss of outer sight he had gained "far greater inner vision."

*Drawings, Verse and Belief* offers a glimpse of a such a man: an artist who was profoundly in contact with his own spiritual resources, who expended them in service of others, and who ultimately made peace with himself and his world — despite the pressures of fame and acclaim that his work generated.

Longstanding admirers of the work of Mr. Leach, as well as those discovering it for the first time, will be grateful to Oneworld Publications for producing this revised and enlarged edition of a book that first appeared in 1973 (Bath: Adams and Dart) and in a second slightly revised edition in 1977.

Within the 168 pages of the Oneworld edition are drawn together black-and-white reproductions of numerous drawings made by Mr. Leach in a period spanning more than six decades; occasional verse he wrote in the same period; and prose reflections in which he meditates on his role as artistic courier and mediator between east and west, and the contribution his spiritual beliefs made to his art and his life.

Born in 1887 in Hong Kong, the son of a colonial judge, Bernard Leach spent his early years there and in Singapore and Japan. He began drawing at age six and quickly grew to trust the intuition that impelled him irresistibly to a life devoted to art. At 16 he became a student at Slade, under Henry Tonks, where he perfected his drawing skills; later, under Sir Frank Brangwyn, he learned how to etch.

In 1909, Mr. Leach returned to Japan with the first etching press ever to reach that country. In Japan, he records, "it took years of surprise to find out how unlike Eastern man was to Western," a realization which set him on the course, over most of the rest of his life, of discovering "the unfamiliar common groundwork of humanity in search of truth and beauty." En-

thralled by the experience of seeing raku pots being made, he apprenticed himself to Japanese potters working in the Ogata Kenzan tradition and achieved distinction in the craft.

Returning to England in 1920, Leach established his famous pottery in Saint Ives, Cornwall, with the help of his friend, the great Japanese potter, Hamada Shoji. From that time, for over a period of almost sixty years, he exerted a tremendous influence on the growing studio pottery movement in England, becoming in time its most celebrated practitioner. He nevertheless remained humble despite the praise and honors heaped upon him, and tireless in his encouragement of other artists and craftsmen.

Although Leach was known primarily for his pottery, *Drawings, Verse & Belief* as the title implies, highlights his skill with the pen, both in drawing and writing.

## Review

### *Drawings Verse & Belief*



*Bernard Leach*

O N E W O R L D

The drawings in *Drawings, Verse & Belief* demonstrate the degree of influence the Orient has had upon the work of Mr. Leach and his superb assimilation and mastery of eastern disciplines; the execution appears deceptively simple and effortless, the approach almost playful.

Unabashedly personal and often religious in content — "confessional" verse in the purest sense — the poems are free of literary devices. They seem to be the overflow of a sensibility teeming with creativity, some taking the form of impassioned devotionals.

Mr. Leach also writes about his beliefs,