

JESUIT CENTRE FOR THEOLOGICAL  
REFLECTION

FINAL REPORT OF THE EVALUATION OF THE DEBT PROJECT  
(OCTOBER 1998-DECEMBER 2001)

Prepared By  
Fredrick Mutesa  
University of Zambia  
Development Studies Department  
P.O. BOX 32379  
Lusaka  
Tel: 290931 (office)  
096452819 (mobile)  
Email: [fmutesa@yahoo.com](mailto:fmutesa@yahoo.com)

Submitted on 4 March 2003.

## Table of Contents

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	1
ABBREVIATIONS	8
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	9
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	10
2.0 BACKGROUND TO THE DEBT PROJECT.....	10
2.1 Purpose of the Debt Project.....	11
2.2 Implementation of the debt Project .....	12
2.3 Management and Coordination of the debt project .....	15
2.4 Purpose of the Evaluation.....	16
3.0 SOURCES OF INFORMATION .....	16
4.0 FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	16
4.1 Assessment of Purpose, Origin and Design of the Debt Project.....	16
4.2 Assessment of the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Debt Project .....	18
4.3 Assessment of the Achievements and Constraints of the Debt Project .....	18
4.4 Assessment of the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Debt Project.....	27
4.5 Assessment of the Contribution of the Debt Project to the Development Process in Zambia	31
5.0 LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE DEBT PROJECT.....	32

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This report is a synthesis of findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learnt from the evaluation of the CCJP/JCTR debt project. The main purpose of the evaluation was to examine the implementation and performance of the debt project..

The evaluation covers the period from October 1998 to December 2001. The main purpose of the debt project is to secure an ethical outcome to Zambia's external debt. The debt project has defined an "ethical outcome" to mean a settlement primarily through cancellation, that provides the chance for sustainable human development in the future.

The evaluation, however, noted that the project, while remaining committed to the goal of total debt cancellation, was flexible enough to support initiatives aimed at debt reduction. It is in this regard that the project campaigned for Zambia's accession to HIPC status.

The project was designed to fall under the auspices of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and operationalised through the office of the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection. In addition, there was a proposal to set up an advisory committee to provide oversight of the project.

The evaluation found that there was some ambiguity over the relationship between the Debt Project and Jubilee-Zambia. At first, these two appeared to be distinct entities. It was, however, clarified that the Debt Project and Jubilee-Zambia were one and the same thing.

The main goal of the evaluation was to examine the extent to which the debt project had gone to achieve its set objectives.

### **Assessment of Purpose, Origin and Design of the Debt Project**

#### *Purpose*

The project is to be commended for its sense of realism. Debt cancellation is a protracted process requiring a paradigm shift in international economic relations. In the short-to-medium term, therefore, advocacy for debt reduction is a reflection of a good tactical approach to a complex problem.

#### *Origin*

The project was born as a product of historical circumstances surrounding the socio-economic development process in Zambia. The unsustainability of Zambia's path of development was already obvious by the end of the 1980's. That external debt servicing was consuming more resources than was being expended on human

development made it a logical target of the debt reduction/cancellation campaign carried out by the project.

### *Design*

The evaluation noted that the project correctly identified external debt payments as a serious constraint to sustainable human development in Zambia. Subsequent analyses conducted by the project ably demonstrated the existence of a clear link between the country's debt and its lack of economic development. In other words, the project did a good job in identification of the problem.

### **Assessment of the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Debt Project**

The evaluation learnt that the debt project was very highly regarded by its funders. The project was commended for starting small, developing, expanding and diversifying sources of funding. It was described as "extremely effective."

Project effectiveness, however, must be measured in light of achievement of objectives and costs expended to attain those objectives. According to the international financial institutions' perspective, Jubilee has played a more public relations role in both developed and developing countries. This has succeeded in making the public in the lending countries more sympathetic to the debt problems in the developing countries.

### **Assessment of the Achievements and Constraints of the Debt Project**

#### *Achievements*

Achievements of the debt project can not be simplistically looked at in terms of whether or not total debt cancellation has been achieved. This is because debt is a huge problem which involves dealing with powerful international institutions. Therefore the impact can only be gradual and must be seen in the long-term.

First, the debt project has succeeded in generating a lot of interest on Zambia's debt situation, both locally and internationally.

Second, awareness raising by the debt project would not have been possible without investment of time and resources in good networking with other organizations, inside and outside the country.

Third, the debt project could also be said to have been a huge success in the area of ecumenism. Major groundwork was carried out by JCTR among the churches in Zambia to conscientize them regarding Zambia's debt burden.

Fourth, another major achievement of the debt project can be seen in the manner that it got government to listen to civil society. The debt project has attained a high degree of respectability in the eyes of government as evidenced in the kind of collaboration and co-operation that has ensued between the two.

Fifth, the debt project has also achieved a measure of success in the area of dialogue with the international financial institutions and donors. Platforms such as these have provided opportunities to get honesty feedback from the international financial institutions regarding their thinking on debt cancellation and the various debt reduction initiatives.

Sixth, although measures like the HIPC debt relief fall short of the overall objective of the debt project, they could nonetheless still be considered as stepping stones to total debt cancellation.

Last, but not the least, the debt project has demonstrated intelligent pro-activism in the manner it has redefined its mission in light of changed circumstances. In conclusion, it can be said that though the debt project has not achieved its overall objective of total debt cancellation, its activities so far have initiated a process that is strongly supportive of equitable and sustainable debt relief.

### *Constraints*

The evaluation learnt that the smooth operation of the debt project was hampered by multiple constraints.

The mobilisation of the religious constituency, particularly in the early years of the project, was affected by perceptions that the jubilee campaign was a Catholic programme. This affected the participation of certain religious groups, especially those falling outside the membership of the three main church mother bodies, CCZ, EFZ and ZEC.

Another constraint is presented by the fact that government is not always forthcoming in rendering support to the project. The project has had difficulties accessing good data from the government. There appears to be a tendency to be secretive and oversensitive with regard to disclosure of certain information.

It is not only the government and the international financial institutions who were reluctant in acknowledging that debt cancellation is a feasible and realistic target. A section of the citizenry were, and some still are, not convinced that debt cancellation is a worthwhile effort to pursue.

Despite the wide media publicity that the debt project has received, there are still some obstacles in getting the message across to the population. The government press is always handy to cover activities and statements of the project which are seen to be complimentary to the efforts of government but reluctant to report whatever they perceive as a challenge to government.

The huge success of the project has also placed some serious constraints on the project staff and secretariat. The secretariat is run by a skeleton staff that has to attend to many other demands.

The strain on the small staff establishment is also indicative of a wider problem involving the operation of the whole debt network in the country. The debt project is supposed to be a coordinating unit with awareness raising activities anchored in

the participating partner organizations. It appears, however, that the bulky of the work has been left in the hands of the secretariat while the network partners have not done much to mainstream debt cancellation in their own programmes.

The evaluation also learnt that there was a widespread feeling that the project needs to do more to get to areas outside Lusaka. Currently, the project has established jubilee provincial teams based in Ndola, Kasama, Monze, Livingstone and Mongu. The feeling among those interviewed is that there is need to go beyond the provincial capitals, to the districts and the remotest parts of the provinces.

Finally, the evaluation established that most provincial teams faced budget constraints in the implementation of their programmes.

### **Assessment of the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Debt Project**

#### *Conception*

The achievements of the debt project highlighted above, attests to the fact that its conception was both timely and relevant. Apart from the increased awareness of Zambia's debt problem, both locally and internationally, the other evidence of the gravity of this problem is to be seen in Zambia's qualification to debt relief under HIPC.

To further strengthen the project, it would be necessary to give equal concern to government's expenditure priority setting and accountability in the use of borrowed funds and public resources in general.

#### *Organisation*

It is probably in the organizational aspect that the project has its greatest strengths.

The evaluation learnt that the project has benefited greatly from the good leadership of the JCTR Director who serves as the debt project national director. Closely connected to the issue of good leadership is the team spirit exhibited by the project staff.

It is also obvious that the investment in building strong networks, both locally and internationally has yielded rich dividends. Ecumenism has been a huge factor in placing the debt problem on the national agenda. For instance, when the international financial institutions wanted to deny Zambia access to the HIPC decision point, it was the Northern partners that rang the bell. It's the same northern partners who played a crucial role in pushing their governments to give Zambia favourable consideration.

Another important organizational aspect of the project has been the effective and efficient use of the media. The project has cultivated a good relationship with the media, both nationally and internationally.

The numerous strengths of the debt project notwithstanding, however, there are areas of weaknesses which need urgent attention.

The evaluation learnt that sometimes expectations are not met, because some of the partners are also overstretched. It is also evident that some of the pressures exerted on the small secretariat have to do with the inability of the local debt network partners to integrate debt issues in their programmes. Another area of concern has been the role of the advisory committee. The evaluation learnt that this committee was moribund. Lastly, the role of CCJP is not very clear in this partnership.

### *Outreach Effect*

The evaluation learnt that the outreach effect of the debt project has been an empowering process. As people have come to understand the connection between debt and poverty, they have begun to question government performance and demand accountability from those charged with the stewardship of public resources. However, there's concern that not much is known about the activities of the debt project outside Lusaka and the provincial capitals.

### *Content*

The content of the debt project is to be seen in the consistency of its objectives and the programmes that it has used to implement them. These programmes have been complimentary and this is what has contributed to their efficiency and effectiveness. Organisational collaboration/cooperation has served to give the project a louder voice and access to international for a where exchange of information and experiences has resulted in greater visibility and effectiveness. Good data and analyses yielded by the research programme of the project has fed well into collaboration and advocacy as well as in carrying out public education.

To maintain its momentum, the project should consider strengthening the orientation of its activities at the popular level, especially among the poor in the rural areas.

### **Assessment of the Contribution of the Debt Project to the Development Process in Zambia**

As a result of the activities of the debt project, many people have come to appreciate the linkages between the issues of debt, poverty, governance, participation and development. This, it can only be hoped, would contribute to increased transparency, accountability, good governance and a people-centred development process that respects the rights of those groups that have stood on the margins of decision-making.

### **Lessons for the future of the Debt Project**

Specific lessons drawn from the evaluation are presented below:

*Global governance-* debt is an issue that is intrinsically linked to the issue of global governance. It involves powerful international forces and deeply entrenched perspectives on economic development and relations.

*Coalition building-* a project aimed at reforming the global governance system has higher chances of success if it is built upon effective networking between northern and southern civil society partners.

*Constructive engagement of national governments-* government is likely to warm up to a civil society organization that is non-antagonistic in its approach and is able demonstrate in a credible manner that its mission is not only for the greater good of society but is actually in government's own interest.

*Multiple outreach methods-* a project should endeavour to be creative and very active in using all legally possible means to convey its message to its intended audience.

*Civil society capacity building-* the future of the debt project is closely linked to its ability to build the capacities of its network partners so that they can integrate debt issues in their own programmes.

*Good and well informed leadership-* this has been a critical ingredient in the success of the debt project.

*Quality research and good data-* The debt project's success owes much to its high quality research and accurate data.

*Role clarification among the partners-* As a joint initiative of CCJP and JCTR, it is crucial for the future of the project that the roles and responsibilities of each partner are well clarified. This also pertains to the role of the advisory committee.

*Debt mechanism-* in its current phase, the debt project should work towards the establishment of a debt mechanism that will not only monitor the use of resources released through debt relief but also advocate for the involvement of parliament in the acquisition of new loans.

*Funding of provincial Jubilee teams-* this matter deserves urgent consideration.



## ABBREVIATIONS

FODEP	Foundation For Democratic Processes
PAM	Programme Against Malnutrition
WFC	Women For Change
AFRONET	InterAfrica Network For Human Rights and Development
CSUZ	Civil Servants Union of Zambia
CG	Consultative Group
DDCC	District Development Coordinating Committee
PDCC	Provincial Development Coordinating Committee
VOA	Voice of America
CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
JCTR	Jesuit Centre For Theological Reflection
USCC	United States Catholic Conference
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
ESAF	Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
UN	United Nations
JDRAD	Jesuits For Development and Debt Relief
CSPR	Civil Society for Poverty Reduction
EFZ	Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia
CCZ	Christian Council of Zambia
ZEC	Zambia Episcopal Conference
NGOCC	Non-Governmental Organisations Coordinating Committee
G8	Group of 8
ZNBC	Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
UK	United Kingdom
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CNN	Cable News Network
ZCDD	Zambia Coalition on Debt and Development
AFRODAD	African Forum and Network on Debt and Development
IMBISA	Southern African Bishops Conference
AMECEA	Eastern African Bishops Conference

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report would not have been written without the support and cooperation of many individuals and institutions. I wish to place on record my profound gratitude to all those who kindly accorded me time to answer my questions on the Debt Project. I also benefited greatly from participating in two workshops organized by JCTR. The first was the Jubilee-Zambia Regional Conference on Debt held between 8 and 9 October, 2002. The second was the Jubilee-Zambia Annual Evaluation Conference, held on 21 November, 2002. I am grateful to the participants in these two meetings who generously put up with my side-programme and gave their view of the performance of the project. I also want to thank the staff at JCTR without whose support and understanding this report would not have taken its current shape. I wish to absolve from blame all those whose views may have been misrepresented in this report. I am responsible for the final product.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This report is a synthesis of findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learnt from the evaluation of the CCJP/JCTR debt project. The evaluation was commissioned on 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2002 and carried out by Fredrick Mutesa of the department of Development Studies at the University of Zambia. The main purpose of the evaluation was to examine the implementation and performance of the debt project. The CCJP/JCTR debt project was established in 1998 with the purpose of securing an ethical outcome to Zambia's external debt problem, viewed as a burden on the people by the project holders. The project was initially planned to begin in January 1999 and last for two years (24 months). The project, therefore, was due for a full evaluation after December, 2000. The project's life-span, however, was extended beyond 2000 and is now in its fifth year of implementation (2003).

The evaluation covers the period from October 1998 to December 2001. It is hoped that the lessons drawn from this evaluation will provide a platform upon which appropriate interventions and improvements can be made in the project's current phase, as well as consolidate the achievements that have already been made.

The remainder of the report is organized into 5 key sections as follows: Section 2.0 outlines the background of the debt project, section 3.0 presents the methodology used, section 4.0 presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation, and, section 5.0 presents the lessons learned.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND TO THE DEBT PROJECT**

The evaluation learnt that the debt project is a cooperative effort between CCJP and JCTR. From the start, the debt project aimed at building upon work that had already begun in Zambia in the period before 1998. The CCJP, with assistance from international donors such as CAFOD, USCC and KEPA, had with the JCTR done a programme of research, education and advocacy to build a public constituency in Zambia for debt relief and to cooperate with international groups such as EURODAD and Jubilee 2000.

Some months before the establishment of the debt project, the project holders had coordinated a major ecumenical effort, focusing on the Jubilee 2000 campaign. This effort resulted in the publication of a joint pastoral letter on the debt problem released on 7<sup>th</sup> August, 1998, followed by a petition campaign.

The project holders also envisaged relating to the activities of OXFAM in other parts of Africa and outside the continent. To this effect, one of the partners in the project, CCJP, was represented in early September at the "Southern and Eastern Africa Conference on HIPC and ESAF" held in Maputo. It is also to be noted that before the debt project was established, both the CCJP and JCTR were already involved in dealing with issues of economic justice. Since 1994, CCJP had been implementing the SAP Monitoring Project which collected data throughout the country on the impact on the poor and on communities of the government's

economic reform programme (SAP). On the other hand, JCTR brought to the debt project vast experience gained from five years of implementing the cost of living study which monitors the cost of food for a family of six within Lusaka. Mention must also be made that the two institutions are influenced by the gospel and the social teachings of the Church which provide the values that underpin all their programmes.

Before establishing the debt project, CCJP and JCTR also took cognizance of an earlier effort to set up the "Zambia Coalition on Debt and Development" (1994). It was observed, however, that this project had failed to become operational. It was further observed that the CCJP/JCTR project had been involved in the programme of public education, NGO animation and government lobbying that the ZCDD was originally intended to pursue. For this reason, it was noted that, should the ZCDD revive, the CCJP/JCTR debt project would work closely with it.

As part of the preparatory work for the establishment of the project, there was an interchange of contacts between the project holders and various high-level officials of the government, especially in the then Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (now Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning). From this interchange, it was established that there was a clear desire on the part of the government to find allies in the campaign to secure debt relief.

## **2.1 Purpose of the Debt Project**

The main purpose of the debt project is to secure an ethical outcome to Zambia's external debt. At project inception, Zambia's external debt stood at US\$ 7.1 billion. The project identified debt payments as a serious constraint to achieving sustainable human development in the country. A research conducted by the project revealed that on average, Zambia spent nearly 20% of its GDP on debt service payments between 1990 and 2000, while on the other hand, education and health sectors received 3% and 2%, respectively. It was in this light that the external debt was seen to impose a burden on the people of Zambia. The debt project has defined an "ethical outcome" to mean a settlement primarily through cancellation, that provides the chance for sustainable human development in the future.

The evaluation, however, noted that the project, while remaining committed to the goal of total debt cancellation, was flexible enough to support initiatives aimed at debt reduction. It is in this regard that the project campaigned for Zambia's accession to HIPC status. The evaluation commends the project holders for incorporating debt reduction into their overall goal of debt cancellation. To reach the goal of debt cancellation is likely to be a long drawn affair involving gradual shifts in the mindsets of the people and policy paradigms. It is therefore important to view the various debt reduction initiatives as steps towards total debt cancellation and pursue the two objectives simultaneously.

Against the above backdrop, the debt project defines equitable and sustainable debt relief in Zambia as a goal that takes note of the following:

- ❑ Ethical dimensions: The project emphasizes that it will not treat the debt situation in Zambia simply as an economic problem but as a profound ethical issue.
- ❑ Socio-economic consequences: the project has a particular interest in the link between debt and development.
- ❑ Political processes: the project was concerned that the official negotiations around debt reduction for Zambia only involved government ministries, Parliament, the World Bank, IMF, bilateral donors, and various UN agencies. The project has argued for wider public participation in this process, indeed, in all of the economic policy formulation.

The *modus operandi* of the project is to secure cooperation among many sectors within and outside of Zambia.

## 2.2 Implementation of the debt Project

The evaluation learnt that the project was to be operationalized at several levels, ranging from Zambian government and international financial institutions to local NGOs and church groups and grass root organisations. Five programmes were specifically identified, namely:

### i. *Organisational collaboration/cooperation*

The project looked to working closely with a number of local, regional and international organisations. Within the country, the project sought to cooperate with the CCJP's SAP Monitoring Project, to raise public awareness about debt and to make the links between debt servicing and the decline of development at the local level. Cooperation with the SAP Monitoring Project was envisaged to include provision of materials, articles for newsletter, input into training sessions, and joint statements and lobbying efforts.

At regional level, the project expressed a desire to establish links with organisations involved in the debt issue, such as AMECEA (based in Nairobi) and IMBISA (based in Harare).

OXFAM organisations, both in Zambia and outside, were identified as an important partner in the project. It was felt that the project could benefit from the experiences in other countries where OXFAM has worked to promote local-based debt campaigns, such as Uganda and Mozambique. OXFAM was also seen as an organisation that could facilitate the establishment of additional global contacts through its offices in England and the United States. Church related groups were also seen as important in facilitating global networking. In this regard, the project aimed at linking JCTR into the international network of "Jesuits for Development and Debt Relief" (JDRAD), which brings together institutions around the world working for ethical settlement of debt questions.

The project also looked to close cooperation with the CIDSE network of funding agencies that were involved in the international debt campaign. In this respect, the project was to make effort to make a specific link with the USCC project, providing regular reports that up-date the Zambian debt situation, responding to any specific enquiries from USCC, participating in USCC

activities as invited (e.g., conferences, visitors to Zambia), and relating to the proposed Malawi debt project.

## *ii. Jubilee 2000 Coordinating Unit*

The project decided to establish a Jubilee 2000 Coordinating Unit under the auspices of JCTR in order to focus large popular attention on and participation in the worldwide "Jubilee 2000" campaign. The Coordinating Unit was mandated with the task of providing information and support for the Jubilee 2000 campaign in Zambia. A full-time coordinator was to be employed to:

- Prepare educational material
- Facilitate public discussion
- Utilise the media
- Gather petition signatures, and
- Network with Jubilee 2000 campaigns in other parts of Africa and in northern countries.

The Jubilee 2000-Zambia campaign was seen to have a strong basis in churches because of the ecumenical letter signed by all the major church bodies in the country which called for support of the debt cancellation efforts. The Jubilee 2000 campaign, however, aimed at building a strong coalition by reaching out to other non-church constituencies, such as trade unions, NGOs, student groups, etc. It was also envisaged that the Jubilee 2000 campaign would be strengthened by close collaboration with the research and educational efforts of the overall debt project.

## *iii. Research*

Good research was seen as central to the success of the debt campaign. In this regard, it was decided to pay attention to the following tasks:

- Prepare up-to-date records of the Zambian debt situation, the negotiations for cancellation (HIPC), the addition of new debt, the profile of old debt (how much, when, why, with what result, etc.).
- Determine the meaning in the Zambian context of "unpayable," "unsustainable," and other terms, through disaggregation of debt figures.
- Examine social impact of debt, to find out comparative figures for debt servicing and for social spending, with documentation of social consequences of heavy debt burden.
- Examine the annual budget, to determine the implications of decreased debt servicing on overall government expenditures.
- Find out what other African countries (and wider) are doing to secure debt cancellation and how this might assist Zambia's efforts.

The project called for policy-oriented research that would have some effect on the formulation and implementation of debt relief programmes. In addition, it was proposed that the research component should cooperate with other organisations, such as the higher education institutions in Zambia and professional groups like the Economics Association of Zambia.

#### *iv. Public Education*

Following a survey poll of 1000 Zambians conducted in April 1998 by CCJP, it was established that the majority of Zambians were aware of the huge external debt owed by Zambia. The survey, however, established that most Zambians were not aware of how this debt was accumulated and what programmes were in the offing for its cancellation. This lack of awareness was seen to extend to many key government officials, including Members of Parliament. It was felt, therefore, that there was need for some basic educational efforts, which could include tasks such as the following:

- Prepare and disseminate written materials explaining the debt situation, with the purpose of creating a better understanding among various levels of society.
- Hold two major conferences and four minor conferences, with participants including government and political officials, NGOs, church representatives, donors, etc.
- Publish small brochures and hand-outs, some translated into local languages, that can be used widely in education programmes in schools, churches, NGOs, etc (e.g., a comic book of cartoons explaining debt and economics).
- Prepare two 30-minute video shows, for use on national television and then in workshops. Also prepare brief radio presentations and arrange for interviews.
- Place articles in newspapers and magazines, in Zambia, Africa and outside.
- Hold regular briefings for journalists (print and electronic media) about the debt situation.
- Sponsor mini-courses for educators, politicians, NGO leaders and others to improve "economic literacy" about what is happening in the country and the relationship to debt.
- Sponsor similar courses for seminaries and for religious formation programmes, and also for continuing education programmes for priests and pastoral workers. Ecumenical participation to be encouraged wherever possible.
- Set up a small "resource centre" for materials on debt, economic justice, etc., for the use of NGOs, faculty and students, researchers and journalists.

Reaching a wide public, especially at local level, was seen as key to the educational efforts.

#### *v. Advocacy*

The advocacy programme of the project was seen as complimentary to the research and educational efforts. In particular, government officials and officials of international financial institutions were to be involved in the advocacy efforts. To accomplish this goal, the following tasks were identified:

- Focus on efforts to secure cancellation of Zambia's debt through shaping more equitable treatment from the IMF and the World Bank, highlighting the ineffectiveness of the current administration of the HIPC initiative for Zambia.
- Tie into the wider African advocacy efforts to get more fair treatment under the HIPC initiative, e.g., the September conference in Maputo sponsored by the Mozambican Debt Group.
- Relate regularly with relevant government ministries, MPs, political party officials of both the ruling party and opposition parties.
- Relate regularly with donor country representatives and representatives from the UN, World Bank and IMF offices in Zambia.
- Cooperate with advocacy efforts of international groups such as Jubilee 2000, OXFAM, AFRODAD, EURODAD, JDRAD, Vatican Justice and Peace, World Council of Churches, etc.

The advocacy efforts were to be guided by the need to demonstrate that Zambia is indeed a credible candidate for debt relief. This was interpreted to mean improving the image of good governance and honest administration. Equally important was the necessity of designing some sort of "terms of conditionality" that would assure that money freed from debt servicing would indeed be made available for social and productive needs. It was emphasized that in order to avoid "impositions" from outside, Zambian civil society must be engaged in the monitoring and evaluation efforts.

### **2.3 Management and Coordination of the debt project**

The evaluation learnt that the debt project is a cooperative effort between two key partners, CCJP and JCTR. The project was designed to fall under the auspices of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace and operationalised through the office of the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection. In addition, there was a proposal to set up an advisory committee to provide oversight of the project. This committee was to meet every second month.

In the first year of the project, the secretariat operated on the basis of full and part time staff. The project also benefited from secretarial assistance, consultants, and volunteers. In terms of staffing, the project is headed by the JCTR Director, assisted by the Coordinator of Jubilee-Zambia, who also serves as the research and communications officer. In addition, there is a project assistant and a person providing secretarial assistance. With time, another position was created, that of Policy Analyst.

The evaluation found that there was some ambiguity over the relationship between the Debt Project and Jubilee-Zambia. At first, these two appeared to be distinct entities. It was, however, clarified that the Debt Project and Jubilee-Zambia were one and the same thing. The term Jubilee-Zambia originated from the need to place the Debt Project alongside the worldwide Jubilee movement that set the year 2000 as the target date for achieving debt cancellation in the world's poorest countries. When the year 2000 came and total debt cancellation had not been achieved, many groups around the world, particularly those in the North, re-defined their mission, abandoning the debt cancellation campaign and



took up other causes such as fair trade. The Debt Project in Zambia, however, just dropped the nomenclature 2000 and became Jubilee-Zambia to emphasize the fact that the mission of the jubilee campaign remained pending in the post 2000 period and therefore still needed to be tackled.

## **2.4 Purpose of the Evaluation**

The main goal of the evaluation was to examine the extent to which the debt project had gone to achieve its set objectives. This, the evaluation did by analyzing the implementation and performance of the project. The guidelines for the evaluation were provided by the following terms of reference:

- (a) Purpose, origin and design of the debt project
- (b) Effectiveness and efficiency of the debt project
- (c) Achievements and constraints of the debt project
- (d) Major strengths and weaknesses of the debt project
  - conception
  - organisation
  - outreach effect
  - content
- (e) Contribution of the debt project to the development process in Zambia
- (f) What lessons can be drawn for future of the debt project

## **3.0 SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

Data for the evaluation was derived from several sources:

- Project documents, project evaluation reports, research reports, brochures, and other relevant literature available at JCTR.
- Interviews with key informants- staff employed by the project, members of the project advisory committee, members of the Jubilee-Zambia Provincial teams, staff at Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, representatives of OXFAM-Zambia, KEPA-Zambia and the IMF, members of the CSPR, representatives of EFZ, CCZ and ZEC, Trade Union representatives, NGOCC representative, researchers and academics.

## **4.0 FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 Assessment of Purpose, Origin and Design of the Debt Project**

#### *Purpose*

The evaluation established that, the project was established with the intention of achieving several objectives: Firstly, the project aimed at increasing awareness among Zambians on the debt issue and its impact on the quality of life. Secondly, the project aimed at mobilizing the government of Zambia to push for better debt relief. Thirdly, the project aimed at working with foreign partners to push for

Zambia to get a better deal in its debt reduction efforts. Fourthly, the project aimed at advocating for the establishment of a debt mechanism that would ensure that money made available by debt relief was channeled to meeting the needs of the poor.

The evaluation, noted, however, that with time, especially under the influence of the world-wide Jubilee 2000 movement, total external debt cancellation, stood out as the long-term objective of the project. Indeed, the joint pastoral letter issued by the three church mother bodies (CCZ, EFZ and ZEC) in Zambia in August 1998, called for debt cancellation. This theme was picked up by the Zambia-Jubilee 2000 campaign which became a component of the debt project. This is consistent with the ethical dimension that underlie the project's view of the debt problem. The project is to be commended for its sense of realism. Debt cancellation is a protracted process requiring a paradigm shift in international economic relations. In the short-to-medium term, therefore, advocacy for debt reduction is a reflection of a good tactical approach to a complex problem. Not all have appreciated the efficacy of this approach, however. The more radical groups among the debt campaigners have tended to view advocacy for debt reduction as tantamount to consorting with the perpetrators of an evil system.

### *Origin*

The project was born as a product of historical circumstances surrounding the socio-economic development process in Zambia. The unsustainability of Zambia's path of development was already obvious by the end of the 1980's. That external debt servicing was consuming more resources than was being expended on human development made it a logical target of the debt reduction/cancellation campaign carried out by the project. Special tribute, however, is due to CCJP and JCTR, for establishing the project which became the pivot for mobilizing national, as well as international, support for Zambia's debt case. The evaluation noted that there were other earlier efforts by others aimed at the same which had come to nought. The evaluation learnt that for a project of this scope, international networks, institutional support and personal knowledge of the complexity of the problem, are important ingredients of success.

### *Design*

The evaluation noted that the project correctly identified external debt payments as a serious constraint to sustainable human development in Zambia. Subsequent analyses conducted by the project ably demonstrated the existence of a clear link between the country's debt and its lack of economic development. In other words, the project did a good job in identification of the problem. The evaluation, however, noted a weakness in the way the project has addressed the issue of re-orientation of resources released from debt relief to human development. In addition to calling for a debt mechanism that monitors the accounting side of the use of debt relief and government development priorities, there's an urgent need to spell out clearly who the beneficiaries of debt relief should be. In this regard, specific categories of vulnerable groups such as orphans, the disabled, old people, women and the rural poor should receive special attention. This would assist in building strong coalitions that ensure that debt relief benefits specific categories of

the needy in society. This is a matter that should receive special consideration in the project's current phase.

#### **4.2 Assessment of the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Debt Project**

The evaluation learnt that the debt project was very highly regarded by its funders. Actual terms used to describe the project included "one of our best projects because of impact of work on both policy and community levels," and "shining example of relationship between a project and ourselves." The project was commended for starting small, developing, expanding and diversifying sources of funding. It was described as "extremely effective." The funders were particularly happy with the way the project accounted for the funds disbursed to it. The evaluation learnt that there was no problem with retiring of funds. Project proposals were also described as very good and well thought out. Both funding agencies spoken to expressed satisfaction with the quality of dialogue between the project holders and themselves.

Project effectiveness, however, must be measured in light of achievement of objectives and costs expended to attain those objectives. From the perspective of the international financial institutions involved in working out debt relief mechanisms for highly indebted countries, the jubilee debt cancellation campaign has not had a direct impact on evolution of policy. The evaluation learnt that, debt relief is something that multilateral and bilateral development agencies have been engaged in for well over thirty years now. On a bilateral level, the Paris Club used to grant debt relief/re-scheduling until very recently when the IMF and World Bank took up a larger share of lending to the developing countries. In more recent times, the international financial institutions have come up with the HIPC initiative to deal with the debt re-payment problems being experienced by developing countries. According to the international financial institutions' perspective, Jubilee has played a more public relations role in both developed and developing countries. This has succeeded in making the public in the lending countries more sympathetic to the debt problems in the developing countries. The evaluation learnt that the campaign sloganeering of the Jubilee campaign and the journalistic type of analyses are unlikely to influence policy direction in the operations of the multilateral financial institutions.

The section that follows specifically looks at the project achievements. For now, let it suffice to say that the project, though it has not achieved its goal of total debt cancellation, has nevertheless been hugely successful in raising public awareness regarding the problem of debt. The evaluation therefore endorses the positive comments of the project's funding agencies with regard to effectiveness and efficiency.

#### **4.3 Assessment of the Achievements and Constraints of the Debt Project**

##### *Achievements*

Achievements of the debt project can not be simplistically looked at in terms of whether or not total debt cancellation has been achieved. This is because debt is a

huge problem which involves dealing with powerful international institutions. Therefore the impact can only be gradual and must be seen in the long-term. It has been correctly observed that debt is a "catalytic" issue and the results of the campaign for its cancellation are multifaceted and must be assessed at many levels.

First, the debt project has succeeded in generating a lot of interest on Zambia's debt situation, both locally and internationally.

There has been increased awareness regarding the debt situation in Zambia. Results from three opinion poll surveys carried out at different intervals have indicated that Zambians are now more aware of the problem of debt than was the case before the project began its activities. This is an indication that the campaign for debt cancellation has used effective outreach methods to carry the message to the population. The project has extensively used, both the electronic and print media, to sensitize the population. Other methods have included the use of popular theatre, brochures, cartoons, research papers, conference reports and articles (scholarly and popular) and the petition signatures. In the districts covered by community radio stations, it was reported that the issue of debt has become part of the local agenda for development debate, thanks to the activities of the Provincial Jubilee teams.

The emphasis on public education can be seen from the activities organized by the debt project. On 22 May 1999, for example, the project organized what was called a National Event. This was characterized by marches and gatherings in six cities, with schools, churches, NGOs, trade unions and individual citizens participating. In the capital, Lusaka, the crowd was addressed by government officials, NGO representatives, and church leaders, and the media covered it well. Again in 2000, a "procession" was organized by the debt project that was attended by several hundred representatives from church groups and NGOs. The procession involved marching from the Civic Centre to the Japanese Embassy where a statement was delivered by the debt project coordinator on behalf of all present and also some 1700 post cards were delivered to Embassy officials. This event was organized to coincide with the Okinawa Summit of the G8 in Japan.

Public education has relied on various media to reach the people. From March to June (1999), the main channel of ZNBC –Radio aired a thirteen-part programme which presented the background, analysis, descriptions of the debt cancellation campaign. The programme included interviews with prominent persons, such as former President Kaunda, government officials, church and NGO leaders, IMF officials and ordinary Zambian citizens.

The project conducted eight provincial conferences in Chipata, Monze, Kasama, Kabwe, Ndola, Solwezi, Livingstone and Mongu. In these conferences, the project staff, working closely with the local CCJP, educated the local people on the issues of debt and the PRSP. The meetings which took place between July and September 2000, were attended by civil society activists, government officials, traditional rulers and ordinary citizens. It is from these meetings that Provincial Jubilee teams originated. At inception, eight provincial Jubilee teams were established but this number was subsequently reduced to five for ease of

management. It is to be noted, however, that no defined partnership exists between the provincial teams and the national office. This is a weakness that needs to be attended to in order to avoid false expectations, and streamline operations.

The project, in a bid to overcome the barrier created by the use of English contracted popular Patrick Magolo Memorial Theatre Group who did a four episode drama series in Cinyanja and a two-episode series in English. Both programmes were on the national radio station during the first half of 2000 and were repeated in July just prior to the Okinawa G8 summit. Another vernacular outreach was a continuation of the community drama performances with the Kamoto Theatre Group.

As is evident from the above, the use of the media was central to public education. Apart from programmes and interviews carried by the national broadcaster, ZNBC (both television and radio), extensive use was made of Radio Phoenix, Radio Icengelo, and Radio Christian Voice. Community radio stations in places like Monze, Mongu and Chipata were also used to put the issue of debt on the local agenda. Excellent use was also made of the print media through articles appearing in both state-owned and private media.

Popular education also included secondary school debates which started in early February 2000 and ended in the second half of the year. It is reported that a lot of good came out of these debates, signifying heightened awareness regarding the debt situation among schoolchildren.

At the international level, attendance at conferences organized by the Northern partners, participation in protest meetings targeted at policy makers and interviews given through media that covers the globe, have been effective means of presenting the Zambian case for debt cancellation. Examples abound. In October 1998, at the invitation of the USCC, the Deputy Minister for Finance and his economic assistant, accompanied the Archbishop of Lusaka, the coordinator of the SAP Monitoring Project and the JCTR director to a major conference in New Jersey. Three CCJP/JCTR debt project people participated in the Cologne meetings of civil society organisations calling upon the G8 to cancel the debt of poor countries. On their way back they stopped in London to join in Jubilee 2000-UK events. In September 2000, the Jubilee 2000- Zambia coordinator joined other activists in Prague during the IMF-World Bank annual meetings to advocate for total debt cancellation of poor nations' debt. The Jubilee 2000-Zambia coordinator also attended some seminars organised by the two multilateral institutions. The case of Zambia received special world attention when the coordinator featured on a BBC radio programme and also on CNN television. Later in December 2000, the project coordinator featured on the international "African Journal" television programme sponsored by the Voice of America.

The debt project communications and research officer represented Zambia at a major international conference in Germany on apartheid debt (South Africa) and apartheid -caused debt (Southern Africa). She made a strong appeal on behalf of Zambia to have this illegitimate debt cancelled. In the same year (2000), the debt

project director was invited to Rome, along with a member of the Zambian Parliament, to present a paper at a major meeting for Parliamentarians from all over the world. Zambia's case was discussed as a model of an initiative to get co-operative effort for debt cancellation.

Members of the CCJP national office also advanced Zambia's case for debt cancellation through their participation in several international meetings on debt. The CCJP executive director was a featured speaker at the concluding meeting of the Jubilee 2000-UK campaign in England. The SAP Monitoring Project Assistant spoke at gatherings in Finland and Ireland. The SAP Monitoring Project coordinator spoke at CAFOD gatherings in England earlier in the year, and was also a delegate to a December conference in Rome, sponsored by the Vatican Justice and Peace Commission.

At the continental level, staff of the debt project were key participants at a number of international and regional conferences.

The project gave input at a regional meeting in Harare in November 1998. In March 1999, a delegation from the debt project visited Malawi and participated in a meeting of the steering committee of their campaign. Staff participated in the "Southern Africa Debt summit" in Johannesburg (March) which brought together many African debt campaign groups; and in the Nairobi follow-up in August. In May 1999, the debt project in conjunction with the Harare based AFRODAD, hosted a regional meeting in Lusaka which issued what was called the Lusaka Declaration. The project assistant participated at the Dakar meeting organised by Jubilee-South in conjunction with northern groups in a bid to build more South-South and North-South collaboration.

Second, awareness raising by the debt project would not have been possible without investment of time and resources in good networking with other organizations, inside and outside the country. This is an observation which was confirmed by respondents, both from within and outside the country, during the evaluation process.

Locally, the evaluation learnt that the debt project united civil society on the issue of debt. This effort gathered momentum after a half-day conference on 13 August 1999 that brought together a large representation of major NGO groups. This was a "briefing/strategising" session to follow-up on the Cologne meeting. One of the outcomes of this meeting was commitment by all NGOs present to establish a "focal point" to integrate debt work in their respective programmes and constituencies.

A major achievement in the area of networking by the project has been the ability to go beyond the confines of the churches to include groups like NGOCC, FODEP, PAM, WFC, AFRONET, CSUZ and others.

Further evidence of successful networking by the debt project can be seen in the emergence of CSPR. The JCTR, no doubt, due to its huge success with the debt project, was asked to serve as the facilitating co-ordinator for civil society participation in the PRSP process. This effort resulted in the formation of a co-

ordinating steering committee comprised of representatives from NGOs, trade unions, professional groups, etc. The committee succeeded in placing 14 representatives of civil society on the eight government working groups that were charged with coming up with thematic policy papers. Through these efforts, the CSPR has emerged as an autonomous project with oversight over the PRSP process. At the time of writing, this organization represents about 22 civil society organizations and is run by a full-time coordinator and an assistant.

Internationally, the debt project has linked up with a number of influential regional, international and Northern civil society groups that support debt cancellation. These have been very crucial in supporting Zambia's case for debt cancellation. Some of these organizations have provided funding to support the debt campaign in Zambia, others have pressured their governments to cancel Zambia's debt, while others have presented Zambia's case at for a of international policy makers.

In terms of funding, special mention should be made of the support that the debt project has received from OXFAM, KEPA, CAFOD and USCC. Funding from these agencies has provided the resources for project implementation. Information and experiences exchange with these, and other groups, also went a long way in focusing attention on Zambia's debt situation and locating it within the broader context of the international movement for cancellation of the debt owed by the world's poor nations. In this regard, the CIDSE network, JDRAD, AFRODAD, EURODAD, Jubilee-USA, USCC Justice and Peace, KEPA-Finland, Jubilee-UK, OXFAM, IMBISA and AMECEA, all showed tremendous support for Zambia's case.

Third, the debt project could also be said to have been a huge success in the area of ecumenism. Major groundwork was carried out by JCTR among the churches in Zambia to conscientize them regarding Zambia's debt burden. This culminated in the publication of the joint pastoral letter by the three main church mother bodies (CCZ, EFZ and ZEC) on 7 August 1998 which launched the Jubilee-2000 campaign in Zambia. The three church mother bodies formed the ecumenical steering committee that launched the Jubilee 2000 debt cancellation campaign in Zambia. The evaluation learnt that, this was the second time in the history of Zambia that the churches exhibited a strong unity of purpose. The first time was when former President Kaunda attempted to introduce the teaching of scientific socialism in schools. The churches got together and successfully opposed the move. Ecumenism around the Jubilee-2000 campaign went a long way to demonstrate that debt was a national issue. The evaluation also learnt that, with time, some individuals from other church organizations that had withheld their support from the debt project because they saw it as a Catholic programme, have since rendered their support to the cause. In the provinces, some of these individuals have since come to sit on the provincial teams. Moreover, individuals from other faiths, besides the Christian churches, have also come out in support of the debt project.

The evaluation has also noted that ecumenism has extended beyond the issue of debt. A case in point is the cooperation and collaboration organized around the Oasis forum where the three mother bodies are cooperating with other civil

society groups on issues of constitutionalism and the integrity of the electoral process. The evaluation learnt that the experience of working together in the Jubilee-2000 campaign, no doubt played a role in facilitating such cooperation among the churches in areas outside the issue of debt. Such cooperation portends well for building a society based on values that uphold the sanctity of human life and promotes peace.

Closely related to the success of ecumenism is the fact that the debt project has overcome the barrier of religion which causes many funding agencies to withhold support. It is to the credit of the project that funding agencies which normally would not support religious organizations, have been persuaded that this project embraces aims which transcend peoples' religious affiliations.

Fourth, another major achievement of the debt project can be seen in the manner that it got government to listen to civil society. The debt project has attained a high degree of respectability in the eyes of government as evidenced in the kind of collaboration and co-operation that has ensued between the two. The evaluation learnt that this was not possible before 2000. Government's change of stance has come about possibly because of the good research carried out by the project and its strong links with international lobby groups that challenge governments in the North and international financial institutions. Government has publicly acknowledged the debt project as partners in Zambia's campaign to attain better terms and conditions for debt relief under HIPC.

Signs that the government was taking special interest in the activities of the debt project came in July 2000, during the CG meeting which brought together government and international creditors and donors. Civil society was requested to present papers on poverty, economic and political governance, gender and debt. The debt project served on the steering committee preparing for this event and its presentation was well received by both government and donors.

Jubilee-Zambia was invited to sit on the committee that prepared the case for Zambia's acceding to the enhanced HIPC decision point. The Minister of Finance during the presentation of the 2001 national budget in Parliament explicitly thanked Jubilee 2000 for the role it played in helping Zambia qualify for HIPC. President Mwanawasa and his predecessor have both acknowledged the work of the debt project. As recent as 4<sup>th</sup> September 2002, President Mwanawasa wrote to the National coordinator for Jubilee-Zambia to acknowledge receipt of a petition from Northern Province on debt cancellation for poverty eradication. In the letter, the President also thanked Jubilee-Zambia for the work it is doing and pledged to ensure that resources mobilised through debt cancellation are used to uplift the conditions of the people. This was in response to the petition prepared by the Jubilee committee of Kasama Archdiocese which was handed over to the local Member of Parliament who in turn gave it to the Minister of Finance for onward transmission to the President.

Dialogue with government officials has gone beyond dealings with central government. The provincial Jubilee teams have held meetings with ward councilors, local members of parliament, Heads of government departments, area



Members of Parliament and civic authorities. In most cases, the response from these leaders has tended to be supportive of the aims of the Jubilee movement.

Consequently, in some provinces and districts, Jubilee representatives have been invited to sit on the PDCCs and DDCCs, respectively. This, indeed is the true meaning of putting the issue of debt on the local agenda. In all the provinces where Jubilee teams are in place, these groups are playing an active watchdog role in ensuring that HIPC resources go to poverty eradication.

At national level, Jubilee-Zambia has been invited to sit on the HIPC expenditure monitoring committee. This is no mean achievement for an organization that is run by a small staff.

Fifth, the debt project has also achieved a measure of success in the area of dialogue with the international financial institutions and donors. The staff of the debt project have presented the Zambian case to the offices of the IMF and World Bank representatives in Lusaka and Washington. These organizations have also occasionally sent delegations to the debt project resource centre at the JCTR secretariat. The jubilee national coordinator and the debt project policy analyst have shared the platform with the IMF resident representative and senior government officials on ZNBC television discussion forum on the economy. Platforms such as these have provided opportunities to get honesty feedback from the international financial institutions regarding their thinking on debt cancellation and the various debt reduction initiatives. As already mentioned above, it would be an exaggeration to suggest that the Jubilee debt cancellation campaign has resulted in the meeting of minds between the international financial institutions and the Debt Project. The two are still separated by a gulf of differences in perspectives and analyses. What is crucial, however, is the opportunity created to get "honesty Feedback" from each other.

Sixth, although measures like the HIPC debt relief fall short of the overall objective of the debt project, they could nonetheless still be considered as stepping stones to total debt cancellation. As already pointed out above, it is very unlikely that total debt cancellation could be achieved with ease and within a relatively short period. Bearing this in mind, it could, therefore be said that the debt project's contribution to getting Zambia to qualify for HIPC is a laudable effort. Noteworthy also is the fact that bilateral creditors have begun to give the matter of debt cancellation active consideration. The Royal Dutch government has already announced a 100 percent debt cancellation to Zambia while the Irish and Italian governments are also giving the matter active consideration.

Last, but not the least, the debt project has demonstrated intelligent pro-activism in the manner it has redefined its mission in light of changed circumstances. Jubilee-2000 was a time bound campaign whose mission was expected to last up to the end of the first year of the new millennium. However, as is now obvious, the goal of Jubilee-2000 was not achieved within the timeframe set by the worldwide Jubilee movement. Other groups have since gone to pursue different objectives or simply lost the zeal to continue with the debt campaign. This has not been so with the debt project in Zambia. The project-holders in realization that debt is a continuing problem, removed the time limit by transforming Jubilee-

2000 Zambia into simply Jubilee-Zambia. The campaign has also redefined its mission to include strong emphasis on advocacy for a debt mechanism that would ensure that resources released by debt relief do indeed go to poverty eradication. Similarly, there are also strong calls to involve Parliament in the acquisition of new loans to avoid irresponsible borrowing.

In conclusion, it can be said that though the debt project has not achieved its overall objective of total debt cancellation, its activities so far have initiated a process that is strongly supportive of equitable and sustainable debt relief. The debt project has contributed to the success of the worldwide debt cancellation campaign in general and Zambia's qualification for debt relief under HIPC<sup>1</sup> in particular. This is but the beginning of a long process that involves increased transparency, accountability and good governance on the part of government. It is also a process that has potential for increasing consultations between government and the citizens in policy-making. Seen in this light, the success of the debt project may appear modest in terms of the overall objective but phenomenal in its wider ramifications.

### *Constraints*

The evaluation learnt that the smooth operation of the debt project was hampered by multiple constraints.

The mobilisation of the religious constituency, particularly in the early years of the project, was affected by perceptions that the jubilee campaign was a Catholic programme. This affected the participation of certain religious groups, especially those falling outside the membership of the three main church mother bodies, CCZ, EFZ and ZEC. It is gratifying, however, to note that, some individuals from these groups, especially in the provinces have come to appreciate the non-sectarian character of the debt project and have since become active supporters of Jubilee-Zambia.

Another constraint is presented by the fact that government is not always forthcoming in rendering support to the project. This problem has gone on, notwithstanding the public pronouncements of senior politicians, including ministers and the president himself. The project has had difficulties accessing good data from the government. There appears to be a tendency to be secretive and oversensitive with regard to disclosure of certain information. Closely related to this problem is the fact that getting government to acknowledge the necessity of carrying out certain actions is one thing but getting it to do so is another. A case in point is the issue of the establishment of a "debt mechanism" in which civil society can participate actively. The response of government to this request is the establishment of a HIPC expenditure monitoring committee on which Jubilee-Zambia has been invited to sit. This falls far short of what civil society is looking for. An ideal situation is to participate in a mechanism which not only looks at accountability but also participates in the setting of priorities.

It also took government a long time to come to terms with the concept of debt cancellation. The government seemed to have been under the influence of the World Bank and IMF whose view has been that debt cancellation may be

acceptable in the "biblical sense" but does not belong to "the real world" of international economics. This was compounded by the reluctance of the two international financial institutions to abandon their structural adjustment policies in spite of the more than twenty years of unproven results.

It is not only the government and the international financial institutions who were reluctant in acknowledging that debt cancellation is a feasible and realistic target. A section of the citizenry were, and some still are, not convinced that debt cancellation is a worthwhile effort to pursue. It has been noted above, of course, that the position of the international financial institutions is that, they were not introduced to debt cancellation by the Jubilee campaign. They have argued that they have been actively involved in negotiations of debt cancellation of one form or another by providing advice to both the debtor countries and the Paris Club, for a long time.

Despite the wide media publicity that the debt project has received, there are still some obstacles in getting the message across to the population. The government press is always handy to cover activities and statements of the project which are seen to be complimentary to the efforts of government but reluctant to report whatever they perceive as a challenge to government.

The huge success of the project has also placed some serious constraints on the project staff and secretariat. The secretariat is run by a skeleton staff that has to attend to many other demands. The small, but highly motivated and committed staff, have worked tirelessly to carry the banner of debt cancellation for Zambia within and outside the country. This has meant that, often the staff have been overstretched. There are queries to be attended to, conference papers to be written and presented, meetings to attend, and planning and evaluation to be done, to mention only a few. As a result of overstretched human capacities it has not always been possible to achieve all targets.

The strain on the small staff establishment is also indicative of a wider problem involving the operation of the whole debt network in the country. The debt project is supposed to be a coordinating unit with awareness raising activities anchored in the participating partner organizations. It appears, however, that the bulky of the work has been left in the hands of the secretariat while the network partners have not done much to mainstream debt cancellation in their own programmes. For example, there was a sentiment expressed at the reparations conference held on 27 February 2002 that the other two church mother bodies, CCZ and EFZ, could do more to share the responsibility of the debt campaign. In the interviews conducted with both CCZ and EFZ, however, it emerged that part of the problem of failing to live up to the expectations of the Debt Project, was a result of lack of human capacities. Both organizations did not have a "debt desk". The evaluation recommends that the debt project national secretariat sits down with these two organisations to discuss how this constraint can be overcome. This is important and necessary because both organisations still believe that debt cancellation campaign is a just cause.

Staff at the secretariat also expressed a desire to see an active staff development programme that would keep them abreast with trends in their respective fields of

work. This may not have been anticipated at the beginning of the project, but it is quite evident that unless this is put in place now, even, at the minimum, short term training programmes, staff may operate with obsolete skills.

The evaluation also learnt that there was a widespread feeling that the project needs to do more to get to areas outside Lusaka. Currently, the project has established jubilee provincial teams based in Ndola, Kasama, Monze, Livingstone and Mongu. The feeling among those interviewed is that there is need to go beyond the provincial capitals, to the districts and the remotest parts of the provinces. There was a suggestion that the project could do more to achieve this goal by involving traditional rulers in its outreach campaign. There was a feeling that the project over-relied on CCJP structures at popular levels and probably this contributed to the persistent perception that Jubilee Zambia was a Catholic programme. Closely connected to the foregoing observation, was the view that at the national level, participation of stakeholder organizations would be enhanced if meetings were hosted on a rotational basis. The feeling was that other members of the steering committee besides JCTR needed to be more actively involved in the operations of the project in order to enhance the sense of ownership. It was, however, felt that to make this participation more meaningful, there would be need to build the capacities of sister organizations like EFZ and CCZ in handling debt matters. At the time of the evaluation, both CCZ and EFZ attributed their low- level participation in Jubilee-Zambia activities partly to this lack of capacity.

Finally, the evaluation established that most provincial teams faced budget constraints in the implementation of their programmes. In two cases, for example, the teams had budgeted for K56 million and K34 million for their programmes, respectively, but only received K2 million each. This, however, is a complex problem which involves ensuring that adequate capacity building training is delivered to these teams before they expand their programmes. The evaluation learnt that guidelines were explained before establishment of the teams. However, it appears that these guidelines need to be re-visited and adapted to suit the prevailing situation.

#### **4.4 Assessment of the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Debt Project**

##### *Conception*

The achievements of the debt project highlighted above, attests to the fact that its conception was both timely and relevant. Apart from the increased awareness of Zambia's debt problem, both locally and internationally, the other evidence of the gravity of this problem is to be seen in Zambia's qualification to debt relief under HIPC. Though, arguably, HIPC leaves much to be desired, Zambia's accession to this form of debt relief is in itself an admission that the country's economy is not able to sustain debt repayments.

To further strengthen the project, it would be necessary to give equal concern to government's expenditure priority setting and accountability in the use of borrowed funds and public resources in general. Government has not only borrowed from abroad, but is also a major debtor on the domestic capital market. Domestic debt has contributed greatly to macroeconomic disequilibria that forces

government to borrow from abroad. It is therefore important for the debt project to take a keen interest in the expenditure patterns of the government and advocate for greater transparency, accountability and civil society participation in monitoring mechanisms. The evaluation, however, learnt that the project has no intentions of including the problem of internal debt within its compass. At some date, it will become obvious that external debt has a bearing on internal debt and that the two should be approached simultaneously.

A major strength of the project has been its ability to redefine its mission at the conclusion of the Jubilee 2000 debt cancellation campaign. The project has remained consistent with its objective of debt cancellation without closing the door on small windows of opportunity that contribute to its overall goal, such as debt relief under HIPC.

### *Organisation*

It is probably in the organizational aspect that the project has its greatest strengths.

The evaluation learnt that the project has benefited greatly from the good leadership of the JCTR Director who serves as the debt project national director. The National director's intellectual insights, management skills, good international connections and experience, have been key factors in the project's achievements. The project staff were particularly appreciative of the director's problem solving approach to issues. It is also evident from the amount of travel and attendance of meetings that staff have been involved in, both locally and abroad, that the project national coordinator has been good at delegating responsibility. This approach to leadership is empowering to the staff and makes the whole process less dependent on one individual in the long-term. It is good for sustainability and capacity building.

Closely connected to the issue of good leadership is the team spirit exhibited by the project staff. They are a committed, diligent and intelligent group who have worked well as a team. They compliment each other's strengths very well.

It is also obvious that the investment in building strong networks, both locally and internationally has yielded rich dividends. Ecumenism has been a huge factor in placing the debt problem on the national agenda. This has yielded positive spill-overs which are giving the church an important role in other areas of national development. There does not appear to be any other civil society project that seems to be well connected internationally like the debt project. For instance, when the international financial institutions wanted to deny Zambia access to the HIPC decision point, it was the Northern partners that rang the bell. It's the same northern partners who played a crucial role in pushing their governments to give Zambia favourable consideration. This was made possible because of close networking between the project in Zambia and its northern allies. The project played a particularly useful role in providing good research data which the Northern partners used to lobby their governments.

The project has also been adept at using for a where Zambia's case has received the attention of important decision-makers. At home, the project has succeeded in

reaching a wider group of civil society organisations including the labour movement, professional associations, academics and students.

Another important organizational aspect of the project has been the effective and efficient use of the media. The project has cultivated a good relationship with the media, both nationally and internationally. There are not many projects in Zambia that have received so much media coverage, including CNN, BBC and VOA. This is definitely a strength that needs to be sustained.

The numerous strengths of the debt project notwithstanding, however, there are areas of weaknesses which need urgent attention.

The evaluation learnt that sometimes expectations are not met, because some of the partners are also overstretched. There have also been many time consuming meetings with little results to show for them. At times, meetings have been organized and expected participants have failed to turn up.

It is also evident that some of the pressures exerted on the small secretariat have to do with the inability of the local debt network partners to integrate debt issues in their programmes. There is need to hold some joint planning meetings at which responsibilities could be shared. The project has also experienced a high turn over of staff as these very bright and dedicated Zambians have been given fellowships to pursue graduate degrees in economics outside the country.

Another area of concern has been the role of the advisory committee. The evaluation learnt that this committee was moribund. It is necessary to spell out clear terms of reference for this committee and revamp its operations.

Lastly, the role of CCJP is not very clear in this partnership. It is important to clarify what ought to be its expected inputs into the project.

### *Outreach Effect*

The evaluation learnt that the outreach effect of the debt project has been an empowering process. As people have come to understand the connection between debt and poverty, they have begun to question government performance and demand accountability from those charged with the stewardship of public resources.

There is evidence of development of constructive engagement of government at central, provincial and district levels. Participation of the debt project staff in government meetings and public committees is a good sign of capturing the attention of government. Similarly, participation of the provincial jubilee teams in PDCC and DDCC meetings is an acknowledgement that the issues being raised by the Jubilee teams deserve to be put on local government agenda.

However, there's concern that not much is known about the activities of the debt project outside Lusaka and the provincial capitals. This seems to suggest that the project depends too much on a technocratic approach that focuses on the elite

groups based in the urban areas at the expense of the majority poor people in the rural areas.

Related to the urban-elite bias of the project is the issue of effective communication, or its lack. The failure to translate the materials of the project into local languages is certainly a barrier to reaching the illiterate and semi-illiterate populations.

Much work also needs to be done to reach the Members of Parliament. Since parliamentarians hold the key to changing legislation in the acquisition of public loans, it is important that thorough sensitization work is carried out among them.

To overcome the lingering perception that the debt project is a Catholic programme, there's need to minimize the use of CCJP diocesan structures and premises. This will help entrench the project at the popular level. There's, however, need to proceed with caution on this matter, as in some areas CCJP structures are the only active mechanisms for mobilising the population. But as much as possible effort should be made to make the local teams interdenominational and intersectoral.

Lastly, the financial constraint facing local teams has to be removed, or at least greatly reduced if there will be a greater outreach effect. This calls for a consultative process of identifying themes and planning between the national office and its provincial teams. It also calls for greater capacity building to ensure that resources disbursed to local teams advance the overall purpose and objectives of the debt project.

### *Content*

The content of the debt project is to be seen in the consistency of its objectives and the programmes that it has used to implement them. These programmes have been complimentary and this is what has contributed to their efficiency and effectiveness.

Organisational collaboration/cooperation has served to give the project a louder voice and access to international for a where exchange of information and experiences has resulted in greater visibility and effectiveness. Good data and analyses yielded by the research programme of the project has fed well into collaboration and advocacy as well as in carrying out public education.

The conception of the project at a time when there was a worldwide interest in the issue of debt also served to give the project higher prominence. The project fitted well into the worldwide Jubilee movement without compromising its focus on the specific nature of the Zambian debt problem. At the same time, the project's ability to re-invent itself in the face of a faltering world debt campaign movement is one of its greatest strengths.

To maintain its momentum, the project should consider strengthening the orientation of its activities at the popular level, especially among the poor in the rural areas. This will involve appropriate outreach methods, such as popular theatre

and materials translated in local languages. The project should also seriously consider widening the base of its activities by strengthening the capacities of its network members to integrate the issues of debt in their own programmes

Research should also extend to comparative studies of the experiences of other countries.

Lastly, the content of the project's programmes depends on the capacities of those who have to implement them. At the moment, the small staff has done a highly commendable job under extreme pressure. But as the project expands there's need to look at staff capacities and spell out clear terms of reference for each person. It appears the project will need someone to manage its resource centre in a highly professional manner. This will facilitate easy access to the information of the project by the wider public. Training needs also need to be identified and appropriate training programmes implemented as a way of further motivating the highly committed staff.

#### **4.5 Assessment of the Contribution of the Debt Project to the Development Process in Zambia**

Evaluating the contribution of the debt project to the development process in Zambia is no easy task. This is so because of the multifarious links that the project has established with so many actors, both inside and outside the country. As such, the scale of the project's impact is difficult to measure. What is, however, clear is that the debt project has galvanized massive institutional and human energies around the issues of debt, poverty, governance, participation and development. The project has waged a campaign that could be described as an empowering process for those who have participated in it.

As a result of the activities of the debt project, many people have come to appreciate the linkages between the issues of debt, poverty, governance, participation and development. Individuals and organizations that have become so empowered have begun to demand a greater say and participation in the running of the affairs of the nation. This, it can only be hoped, would contribute to increased transparency, accountability, good governance and a people-centred development process that respects the rights of those groups that have stood on the margins of decision-making.

In more specific terms, the debt project has contributed to focusing both, national and international attention, on the burden that Zambia's external debt has imposed on its citizens. The debt project has, therefore, served as Zambia's good-will ambassador internationally and as a rallying point for alternative development nationally. The already acknowledged role of the debt project in Zambia's reaching the decision point for debt relief under HIPC is evidence of the relevance of the project. The project has also been useful in quickly analyzing the shortcomings of HIPC and demanding for more equitable and sustainable debt relief.



The role played by the project in the establishment of CSPR is also testimony that it is possible to create space for civil society participation in the policy-making process of government. This has presented a new challenge that is going to test how far government is willing to go in opening up its systems to greater scrutiny by civil society. One thing for sure is that, should this process succeed, Zambian society would be all the more better because of the ensuing checks and balances. This would contribute to the reduction of misapplication of public resources.

At the international level, the debt project has been part to a process that has called into question the impact of neo-liberal policies in poor countries. It can only be hoped that this would result in changes that would see the emergence of new policies that give hope for sustainable development in countries like Zambia.

Last, but not the least, the project through its ecumenical approach has contributed to the process of strengthening the role of the church as the conscience of the nation.

## 5.0 LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE DEBT PROJECT

The first three years of the debt project (1998 to 2001) offers very useful lessons for its future. The evaluation has established that the project is relevant in terms of its focus on an issue that affects the lives of many Zambians and highlights the unjust nature of current international economic relations. Specific lessons drawn from the evaluation are presented below:

- ♦ *Global governance*- debt is an issue that is intrinsically linked to the issue of global governance. It involves powerful international forces and deeply entrenched perspectives on economic development and relations. A campaign against such forces and dominant thinking, therefore, is bound to be protracted and results gradual.
- ♦ *Coalition building*- a project aimed at reforming the global governance system has higher chances of success if it is built upon effective networking between northern and southern civil society partners. Northern civil society organizations stand a better chance of exerting pressure on their governments because they are capable of mobilizing public opinion against politicians in their respective countries. At the same time, such pressure can only yield intended results if it is backed by good research and information from the southern civil society partners.
- ♦ *Constructive engagement of national governments*- government is likely to warm up to a civil society organization that is non-antagonistic in its approach and is able demonstrate in a credible manner that its mission is not only for the greater good of society but is actually in government's own interest.
- ♦ *Multiple outreach methods*- a project should endeavour to be creative and very active in using all legally possible means to convey its message to its intended audience. Messages should be packaged in appropriate and captivating ways. The success of the debt project's public education and advocacy programmes is a direct result of devising multiple outreach methods suited to the needs of different audiences.

- ◆ *Civil society capacity building*- the future of the debt project is closely linked to its ability to build the capacities of its network partners so that they can integrate debt issues in their own programmes.
- ◆ *Good and well informed leadership*- this has been a critical ingredient in the success of the debt project. This will always remain important in maintaining existing and establishing new partners. It will also be important in motivating and empowering staff of the project to effectively carry out advocacy work.
- ◆ *Quality research and good data*- The debt project's success owes much to its high quality research and accurate data. This element should therefore always be kept in good shape.
- ◆ *Role clarification among the partners*- As a joint initiative of CCJP and JCTR, it is crucial for the future of the project that the roles and responsibilities of each partner are well clarified. This also pertains to the role of the advisory committee.
- ◆ *Debt mechanism*- in its current phase, the debt project should work towards the establishment of a debt mechanism that will not only monitor the use of resources released through debt relief but also advocate for the involvement of parliament in the acquisition of new loans.
- ◆ *Funding of provincial Jubilee teams*- this matter deserves urgent consideration. If the provincial teams are to succeed in their objectives, they will need levels of funding that are higher than what they are currently receiving. Joint planning sessions between the national office and provincial teams would go a long way in identifying priority issues.

**Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR)**

**JCTR Repository**

**<https://repository.jctr.org.zm>**

---

Reports

Advocacy on Socio-Economic Development

---

2001-12-30

# December 2001 JCTR: Final Report of the Evaluation of the Dept Project

Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection

Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection

---

<https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14274/1757>

*Downloaded from JCTR Repository, Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR)*