

Highlights 2004

In 2004, Inter Pares provided more than \$5 million to support the work of our counterparts in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The following are highlights of some of these activities. More detailed information is available on the Inter Pares Web site at www.interpares.ca.



Claudine Sauve

Africa

- advocate for a five-year moratorium on GMOs in Mali to allow for more research on their impacts on livelihoods and traditional farming methods.
- In May 2004, Inter Pares staff joined our counterpart in Guinea Bissau, *Tiniguena*, and over 200 fisherfolk from Formosa, Nago and Chedia islands to participate in the 3rd Urok Assembly. The purpose of this special gathering was to adopt a management plan for the sustainable use of the Urok islands' natural resources. Developed over three years using traditional knowledge and practices of the Bijagos people, this plan is a model for participatory sustainable management planning that can be reproduced in other West African coastal areas.
- With support from Inter Pares, Third World Network Africa (TWN-Africa) created and now coordinates the African Initiative on Mining, Environment and Society (AIMES), a pioneering effort that draws together civil society organizations across Africa involved in advocacy on mining issues. AIMES has been instrumental in strengthening and consolidating a pan-African position on mining in response to the World Bank's Extractive Industries Review. In 2004, TWN-Africa brought together 18 organizations from 12 countries, including Canada, to demand a stop to World Bank financing of extractive industries until adequate and transparent mechanisms are established for lending, and until damages to national economies, local communities and the environment are addressed.
- In April 2004, Inter Pares hosted a delegation of four African colleagues from ACORD. During their visit to Canada, the ACORD team met with government officials, Inter Pares friends and donors, human rights groups, foundations, and other Canadian NGOs. The tour provided an important opportunity for ACORD to participate in discussions on Canadian foreign policy through the Africa-Canada Forum, strengthen links with long-time Canadian colleagues, and create relationships with new partners. This visit marked almost 30 years of solidarity and collaboration between Inter Pares and ACORD.

Asia



Philip Gaim

- In Malaysia, Inter Pares supported the Chin Refugee Committee to provide legal assistance and protection to ‘illegal’ migrant workers fleeing the Burmese dictatorship. In Thailand, India, Bangladesh, China and Malaysia, countries with large numbers of refugees from Burma, Inter Pares contributed over \$1.5 million towards humanitarian assistance and refugee programs in 2004.
- In the Philippines, Inter Pares supported Tricom in its work with approximately 12,000 indigenous people on the island of Mindanao. Tricom’s aim is to ensure that land traditionally belonging to indigenous peoples will be protected for future generations. Tricom staff helped communities to produce documentation required to prove their ancestral land occupancy, which would grant them legal rights to their land.
- In early 2004, Inter Pares staff joined more than 100,000 people in Mumbai, India for the World Social Forum (WSF), the largest international gathering of peace, human rights and social justice activists in history. With significant leadership from Inter Pares counterpart Focus on the Global South, the WSF was a key opportunity for debate on global social and economic trends.
- Inter Pares continued to support refugee women’s organizations in their work to combat sexual violence perpetrated by the military in Burma. In 2004, the Karen Women’s Organization and the Women’s League of Burma sought to reveal the horrific truth of women’s experiences by publishing reports describing the junta’s use of rape as a weapon of war. KWO and WLB also trained their members on research methodologies and supported the development of services for traumatized women.

Latin America



Pedro Isztin

- In Colombia, Inter Pares and Project Counselling Service (PCS) supported local associations of internally displaced persons representing over 4,000 people in the poorest neighbourhoods of the city of Bucaramanga. Our assistance helped these groups to develop and present proposals for housing, water services, and employment for inclusion in regional development plans. In 2004, Inter Pares contributed over \$1 million towards capacity-building work with the internally displaced population and other initiatives to address the conflict in Colombia.
- In Nicaragua, Inter Pares supported a three-year process of community organizing for legal access to land in the Managua shantytown of *14 de Febrero*. In 2004, the community was granted legal ownership of the land on which they live. For the first time, women were named as heads of households in the title deeds, giving them the legal right to own land.
- In Guatemala, survivors and witnesses from rural indigenous communities jointly presented charges of genocide against two former dictators. As witnesses and lawyers faced mounting death threats, Inter Pares supported the Guatemala-Canada Solidarity Network and *Projet Accompagnement Québec-Guatemala* to train Canadian human rights accompaniers to defend the lives of people involved in this process.
- In Peru, Inter Pares and PCS collaborated with civil society organizations, national universities and the regional government in a pioneering effort to develop the first diploma program for community leaders in Huancavelica, an area that suffered some of the highest rates of killings, torture and disappearances during the war in Peru. Through the program, participants learn about local government, human rights, and technical aspects of development planning.

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