

EDITORIAL

Globalisation, Networking & Subsidiarity:
September 2009

GLOBALISATION & SOCIAL ACTION

Globalisation has helped the networking for social change of community based organisations and non government organisations.

Email, more affordable air travel and Skype conferencing, make it cheaper and easier to be in touch with colleagues from other places and to share information in a timely manner.

Citizen journalism via blogs, websites and YouTube creates new channels of information that are less able to be suppressed and controlled than the traditional media. Social networking applications and mobile phones have generated new forms of action such as the flash crowd.

Regional and international networks, coalitions and campaigns are more possible than ever.

NETWORKING FOR CHANGE

Our networking may take different forms and have different purposes, for example:

- **Peer to peer networks** of people or organisations doing the same kinds of things which exchange experiences and provide mutual support;
- **Solidarity networks** in which people and organisations stand ready to respond to requests from others in need, for example the Hotline Asia Urgent Appeals network;
- **Capacity building networks** in which some members share skills and experience with others;
- **Action networks** in which all contribute towards some shared action.

Each of these forms of networking has its place.

LAYERS & LEVELS

Our social justice concerns today involve many overlapping layers of actors, causes and consequences.

How then do we decide who should act and at what level? How can we ensure that our networking is neither anarchic - lacking order and effectiveness - nor tyrannical - centralising power and decision making?

In *Caritas in Veritate*, Benedict XVI reminds us that the principle of subsidiarity can help us. Larger or higher level bodies may step in to help when individuals or groups are unable to accomplish something on their own, but this help must always be at the service of freedom and participation through taking up one's own responsibility¹.

Our networking should remember that each person and group is always capable of giving something to others, and make space for these contributions.

Can we move towards networking that is multi-disciplinary, multi-level and focussed on common mission? Daniel Villanueva SJ² calls this synergic networking because it is focused on achieving synergy for mission, rather than on the institutional interests or even the effectiveness of participants in the network.

This seems like the kind of response to globalisation and the needs of the global common good that Benedict XVI is promoting.

Sandie Cornish
Editor

NEW PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

Did you miss the August Faith Doing Justice Newsletter? I was in Manila at a Jesuit Social Apostolate meeting – but my IT arrangements let me down. We're moving our publication schedule now to the first Thursday of the month, rather than the third Thursday.

¹ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, n 57.

² Daniel Villanueva, *The Jesuit Way of Going Global*, unpublished STL Thesis, 2008.