

## **Donations. A Broader View**

Dear Elizabeth, dear Carla, dear all!

I have followed the discussion about alumni contributions that Elizabeth initiated some weeks back with great interest. I found Carla's communication on the matter especially enlightening.

Beyond the issues raised so far, I think that there is a more general point that needs to be made: While I agree with Elizabeth that UWCs are more worthy of donations than most other educational institutions – are there not other causes or institutions worthier still?

Having myself been an AC student back in the 70s, I have never donated to AC or the UWC movement (you could call my present working for Muwci and the implicit forfeiting of a higher salary a contribution of sorts – but that would be stretching the concept a bit). And living in India (if in a rather isolated place and under extremely privileged conditions) sharpens the eye. Maybe the nine Armand Hammer UWC CEC visitors of last week will support me in this. There is much poverty, much misery, squalor around. And a wealth of ideas and creative activities that do not become reality because of simple lack of funding.

Do we – an elitist institution if ever there was one, even if it is not based on parents' incomes – really make a contribution to changing the world for the better that is comparable in effect to some of the low-price local initiatives of this and, I suppose, every area in India and abroad? Shall I tell you about the Sadhana women initiative in the villages of one of the two valleys that the college looks down upon? Or Aalochana in nearby Pune, a 2.5 million inhabitant city? Or SEWA (incidentally now led by Mirai, an ex-AC student) in Gujarat – last year so badly struck by the earthquake? Or better known Grameen Bank in neighbouring Bangladesh? Or, to take a more political example from a G7 country, the forum sociali glocali in Italy for that matter? And there are so many more.

This question of course touches the very fundamentals of our movement.

I have so far for myself come to the conclusion that there are other, more worthy causes to donate money to. I strongly believe that the movement is running the danger of losing relevance and that we urgently need to infuse it with new direction, content, and purpose if we are 'to make a difference' in today's world. I would be most happy if we were successful in this and I would then be amongst the first willing to donate to UWCs.

Best regards.

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