

messages projected by these NGOs. For example, one medium-sized NGO provides scholarships for an orphanage and school in Thailand, certainly commendable projects, but according to Wurfel (p. 15), the amount of contributions required from each donor is so small, and the promotion materials emphasize a continuation of the dependent relationship, that very little understanding of partnership between Japanese and Thais is projected. In fact, the experience does little to change existing attitudes of superiority, and many of the Japanese donors complain that they do not receive thank-you letters from their scholarship recipients.

One of the most popular educational tools of NGOs involved in Southeast Asia is the "exposure tour" (pp. 16, 17) in which Japanese donors or volunteers are taken on a trip to the location where organization funds are being used. Among the hundreds of such tours being taken each year are those which profoundly impress the participants, and propel them into further activism on behalf of people in need. However, there are tours which are no more than excuses for tourism or which are self-congratulatory by showing how noble the contributors have been to fund a new school building or a new well. The most effective trips are those which allow the Japanese traveler to assist with a project on site, and work closely with the local people who will use the facility.

Some of the NGOs have the express goal of addressing wounds from the war. For those groups, it is important to supplement the limited information most Japanese receive in their schools about their country's activities in Asia. Although such exposure tours may not necessarily be the most pleasant for Japanese participants, they generally have sought the experience because they do want to learn about what happened. Many current NGO leaders were first compelled to choose a life of activism because of the profound impression they received from exposure tours (p. 18).

Another important education tool used by the majority of Japanese NGOs is the newsletter. Of course newsletters go primarily to current members, but they are an effective way of increasing consciousness about a variety of issues. NGO newsletters also find their way to public access areas such as libraries and schools where they can be used as resources. The newsletter produced by the Asian Health Institute (AHI), an NGO which trains Asian health workers, has both an English and Japanese edition, and topics such as feminism and the environment are featured in each issue. One recent newsletter had a profile of an AHI supporter who was a city council woman, showing how international concerns are linked with concern for domestic issues as well (Nisshin City women in action, 1996). Several NGO coordinating bodies receive newsletters from many organizations, and make them available to those who wish to learn about the groups in general, or about a particular type of group activity.

Somewhat related to the newsletters are media coverage of NGO activities. Of course not all media exposure is initiated by the groups themselves, but if the message is positive, they can increase membership and general awareness about group activities. Overall, media coverage of political issues has improved Japanese public awareness and level of participation (Flanagan, 1996) so the frequent newspaper articles and television news spots on NGO activities cannot avoid making an impact on the average citizen. Some NGOs that have close ties with the government make the most of media coverage, and stage ceremonies which enhance their image as respectable civic groups (Wurfel, 1996, pp. 13, 14), but which blur their identities as nongovernmental entities.

Conclusion

Because this paper is just a brief summary of NGO educational efforts, it is difficult to arrive at any major conclusion. However, the need for more research and data is certain. Presently there is very little information summarizing group activities, and particularly, group budget breakdowns. Although the Japanese NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC) produces an NGO yearbook, it is not available in English, and does not have the kind of detail which would be helpful in making comparisons, or in drawing general conclusions about educational activities. Instead, one must rely on the newsletters from individual groups, which vary considerably in content.

The importance of public education would seem obvious to organizations which rely on contributions and