

CROP newsletter

Comparative Research Programme On Poverty

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REDUCING URBAN POVERTY

Many aid agencies and development banks are recognizing the need to address the growing levels of urban poverty in Africa and in much of Latin America and Asia. As they develop programmes to do so, there are many remarkable initiatives implemented by Third World NGOs and some by governments on whose experience they can draw, writes David Satterthwaite at the International Institute for Environment and Development, London.

Most of these initiatives combined direct action by low income groups themselves working with local NGOs (developing savings and credit schemes for emergency credit or credit for micro-enterprise and/or housing, building or improving housing, installing some infrastructure, setting up and managing some basic services) with some support negotiated from one or more external agency (local government, national agency, national or international donor). Most recognized the need to act on different fronts - in response to the many different kinds of deprivation that most low income groups face.

Case studies of seven such initiatives provided the core for three workshops on urban poverty reduction held during late 1996 and early 1997 for staff from international agencies, with support from the Dutch government and from Sida. Two case studies centred on savings and credit groups formed by low income groups (mostly women) which, in turn, are part of federations,

namely the South African Homeless People's Federation, and Mahila Milan/National Slum Dwellers Federation in India. Three case studies were on initiatives that developed new ways of working with low income groups to improve housing and living conditions and basic services: the Orangi Pilot Project in Karachi, the Casa Melhor and Mutirao programmes in Fortaleza (Brazil) and the Barrio San Jorge programme in Buenos Aires. One case study was a government fund which supports the community initiatives of the urban poor, the Thai government's Urban Community Development Office. The final case study was a donor funded programme - PRODEL in Nicaragua, funded by Sida - which encompasses community level infrastructure and services, credit for house construction or upgrading and support for micro-enterprise development.

Each of these case studies included some support negotiated from one or more external agency in order to improve housing and living conditions, basic services and livelihoods. Each sought to make limited funding go as far as possible - and most achieved partial or total cost recovery for some (or all) of their interventions. All recognized that keeping costs down and keeping down the requirement for external funding also meant more chance of the low income households and their community organizations being able to retain the right to determine what was done and how it was done. Most of the case-studies included the use of credit to allow low income groups to spread the cost of capital (*continues on page 2*)

CROP Secretariat, Fosswinkelsgate 7, N-5007 Bergen, Norway

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Post

CROP Secretariat

Ph: +47 55 58 97 39
Fax: +47 55 58 97 45
e-mail: crop@uib.no

<http://www.svf.uib.no/helsos/crop>

investment over a number of years. But perhaps more importantly, each of the initiatives documented by these case studies also changed the relationship between poor urban groups and local authorities.

Discussions during the three workshops also highlighted how many aid agencies and development banks find it difficult to fund initiatives such as these, especially through conventional project-cycle oriented funding for capital projects which is channelled through recipient governments. International agencies may also find it difficult to fund initiatives that aim to change the policies and practices of local (or national) governments. They may find it difficult to support initiatives which are multi-sectoral, relatively cheap and require long term support because they are long term processes rather than discrete projects. Initiatives that generate cost recovery may also present them with difficulties, as they are not set up to manage the repayment of funds. Most official donor agencies will need to develop new channels to support such initiatives - for instance through support for intermediary funds for community projects located within these cities.

These seven case studies along with other studies, a paper on setting up funds for community initiatives in third world cities and several overview papers have been published:

- +SPARC and its work with the National Slum Dwellers Federation and Mahila Milan, India
- +The Integrated Improvement Programme, Barrio San Jorge, Argentina
- +The Orangi Pilot Project, Pakistan
- +The Urban Community Development Office, Thailand
- +Mutirao and Casa Melhor in Fortaleza, Brazil
- +The PRODEL programme in Nicaragua
- +The work of the National Fund for Low Cost Housing (FONHAPO) in Mexico
- +The work of the Women's Credit Union in Sri Lanka
- +The People's Dialogue and the South African Homeless People's Federation
- +Bottom-up Initiatives for Poverty Reduction: An NGO effort in Ga Mashie, Accra, Ghana
- +An overview of Urban Poverty: Reconsidering its Scale and Nature
- +Reaching Low-income Groups with Housing Finance
- +Setting up and managing City-based Funds for Community Initiatives

All are available by post for £4/US\$6 each (half price for Third World orders) from Human Settlements, IIED, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H ODD, UK, e-mail: humansiied@gn.apc.org.

Our Internet address is
www.crop.org
please make a visit

POVERTY COURSE

THE UNITED NATIONS STAFF COLLEGE AND CROP

ORGANISE A GLOBAL COURSE ON POVERTY

TURIN, ITALY, NOVEMBER 17 - 28, 1997

The United Nations Staff College and CROP invite senior HQ-staff of UN-agencies and voluntary organisations, representatives of bilateral agencies, and core people from the private sector, to participate in a two-week course on poverty.

Themes include:

- * different characterisations of poverty
- * poverty production on the local and national level
- * framework for anti-poverty strategies
- * poverty in transitional economies
- * poverty in a global context
- * the two worlds of the poor and the noon-poor

Lecturers will include: professor **Ponciano L. Bennagen**, The Philippine Social Science Council, professor **Julio Boltvinik**, El Colegio de Mexico, **Dr. Richard Jolly**, UNDP, **professor Archie Mafeje**, The American University, Cairo, **professor Alastair McAuley**, New Economic School, Moscow, **professor S.M. Miller**, The Commonwealth Institute, USA, **professor Else Øyen**, Chair of CROP, and **professor Francis Wilson**, University of Cape Town.

All enquiries and applications to the course should be addressed to:

Dr. Arnfinn Jorgensen-Dahl, UN Staff College Project,

International Training Centre of the ILO, Corso Unità D'Italia 125

10127 Turin, ITALY, fax: +39-11-693-6797, email: a.jorgensen@itcilo.it

THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Two important reports have appeared within a couple of weeks: *World Development Report 1997*, *The State in a Changing World*, and *Human Development Report 1997*, dedicated to an analysis of world poverty. The first report is published by the World Bank, while the latter is published by an independent office under the United Nations Development Programme.

Read separately the two reports describe two different worlds built on different ideologies and different perceptions of

what it takes to shape the future and create a better world for the next generations.

Read together the juxtaposition of the arguments is valuable for poverty researchers grappling with the consequences of public intervention in poverty alleviation when the role of the state varies from a benevolent welfare state to a corrupt poverty producing regime.

For CROP the two reports constitute basic documents in the research project on *The Role of the State in Poverty Alleviation* (which by the way has been launched under the acronym ROSA).

editorial

We are happy to announce that the United Nations Staff College has invited CROP to organise a global course on poverty for core staff in the United Nations and organisations working with the UN. This is a unique opportunity for CROP to communicate the results of our research to an audience oriented towards policy and global poverty alleviation strategies.

Members of the CROP Scientific Committee met in London with representatives of the UN Staff College to draw up the contents of the course. It was agreed to provide the participants in the course with as diversified a picture of poverty as possible. Throughout the lectures people with different approaches to poverty research will be pitted against each other so as to give the audience the opportunity to challenge the lecturers and explore the issues further. An important focus for the course will be those aspects of poverty which are created and sustained outside the reach of the poor and those aspects which can be influenced through policy making. The comparative approach will be utilised to analyse the poverty situation in different regions and set them into a global framework. We have been asked to use the CROP book *Poverty: A Global Review* as a basic text for the course, and contributors to the book will serve as lecturers.

The global course lasts for 2 weeks and will take place at the UN Staff College in Turin, Italy, November 17-28, 1997. For applications and more information, see page 2.

Else Øyen
Chair of CROP

our email address is
crop@uib.no

CROP PUBLICATIONS

"Law, Power and Poverty", edited by Asbjørn Kjøenstad and John H. Veit-Wilson, CROP Publications: Bergen, 1997. The book demonstrates both the beneficial and the detrimental powers of legislation in creating and sustaining poverty. It is written by a group of social scientists and experts in legal theory who met for the first time in 1995 at a workshop arranged by CROP and the International Institute for the Sociology of Law, Oñati, Spain. Price: Norway: NOK 150 +p&p, Europe, USA and Japan: USD 18 (p&p incl.), all other countries: USD 15 (p&p incl.).

"Poverty and Participation in Civil Society", edited by Yogesh Atal and Else Øyen, UNESCO and Abhinav Publications: Paris and New Delhi, 1997. This book is based on the papers from the Round Table organised by CROP and UNESCO which took place during the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, Denmark, 1995. Price: Norway: NOK 90 (p&p incl.), all other countries: USD 12 (p&p incl.).

SPECIAL OFFER: Buy both books: **"Law, Power and Poverty", edited by Asbjørn Kjøenstad and John H. Veit-Wilson, CROP Publications: Bergen, 1997** and **"Poverty and Participation in Civil Society", edited by Yogesh Atal and Else Øyen, UNESCO and Abhinav Publications: Paris and New Delhi, 1997,** Price: Norway: NOK 200 +p&p, Europe, USA and Japan: USD 25 (p&p incl.), all other countries: USD 20 (p&p incl.).

ORDER FORM (send to CROP Secretariat, Fosswinckels gt. 7, N-5007 Bergen, Norway, fax: +47 55 58 97 45) PLEASE USE CAPITAL LETTERS

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DID YOU KNOW THAT:

- * South Asia has the most people affected by human poverty
- * Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest proportion of people in - and the fastest growth in - human poverty
- * In Latin America and the Caribbean income poverty is more pervasive than human poverty
- * Eastern Europe and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States have seen the greatest deterioration in the past decade. Income poverty has spread from a small part of the population to about a third
- * In industrial countries more than 100 million people live below the income poverty line

Source: HDR 1997

NEW MEMBER OF THE CROP SECRETARIAT

Einar Braathen has been assigned as an adviser to CROP from August 1, 1997 to December 31, 1998. As such, he will have responsibility for coordinating research projects and workshops. He will work in particular with the projects on "The Role of the State in Poverty Alleviation" and "The Social Costs of Poverty".

Mr. Braathen will work part time as an adviser, while maintaining his position as a Research Fellow at the Department of Administration and Organization Theory, University of Bergen.

Mr. Braathen has been working as a university assistant professor, as college external examiner and as a consultant on institutional development for SIDA, NORAD and the World Bank. He has organized several international workshops and conferences. His research covers a comparative study of five African countries (Structural Adjustment of Public Administration), and a case study of Mozambique (Local Government Reform and Popular Participation).

EMPOWERING THE URBAN POOR - 1997 ESCAP HRD AWARD

"Empowering the Urban Poor" is the theme for the 1997 ESCAP HRD Award. The award is presented annually in recognition of exemplary work in the field of human resources development. The award was established in 1990 by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

The Award is open to individuals (resident nationals), organisations and institutions in both government and non-governmental sectors in developing and transitional countries and areas of the ESCAP region who/which have undertaken practical research, training or other innovative HRD work relating to the empowerment of the urban poor. The Award-winner will receive a price of USD 20 000. Deadline for applications is 1 November 1997.

More information is available on the Internet, <http://www.escap-hrd.org/awd1997.htm> or by email from: hrd-section.unescap@un.org

LIST OF CROP EVENTS

1997 - 1998

September97:

24-27: "Human Rights as an Instrument for the Eradication of Poverty, CROP/ALOP Workshop in Santiago, Chile

October97:

8-11: "The Role of the State in Poverty Alleviation", CROP/University of Botswana/BIDPA Workshop in Gaborone, Botswana

November97:

17-28: UNSCP/CROP "Course on Poverty", Turin, Italy

February98:

27-28: "Poverty Alleviation as a Strategy for Social Development in the Mediterranean Area", CROP/INSEA Workshop in Rabat, Morocco.

WORKSHOPS UNDER PREPARATION

"The Role of the State in Poverty Alleviation", two workshops to be held in Africa in 1998 as part of the CROP project on the same topic.

"Social Costs of Poverty II"

ERROR IN PRICING

We regret that a wrong price on the book "Poverty and Participation in Civil Society" went to print in the previous Newsletter. The correct price is USD 12 (incl. p&p.) Have you bought the book from the CROP Secretariat, please make contact for reimbursement.

CONFERENCE ON POVERTY AND HISTORIC URBAN CENTERS

The International Sociological Association (ISA) organises an international conference on Shelter and Revitalization of Old and Historic Urban Centres. It will take place in Havana, Cuba, March 30th - April 3rd 1998. Abstracts of papers to be presented at the congress should reach the organisers by October 1st, 1997. For more information contact TRIALOG c/o Lehrstuhl für Staedtebau und Entwerfen, Universitaet, Raum 11.40 -G-009, 76128, Karlsruhe, Germany. Email: havana.conference@usa.net

CROP IN BRIEF

CROP is a world-wide network of researchers and experts on poverty. The aim of CROP is to establish an arena for interdisciplinary and comparative research on poverty in developed and developing countries. CROP organises regional workshops, symposia and international conferences, promotes joint research projects and publications, links poverty researchers and disseminates information about poverty research. CROP is developing an international database on poverty researchers, and documentation of ongoing research. CROP is chaired by professor Else Øyen, University of Bergen, Norway.

If you wish to have your name listed in CROPnet, you are welcome to write the CROP Secretariat and request a copy of the CROP Questionnaire. For further information please contact the CROP Secretariat

WEB PAGE FOR CROP

Those who have an Internet connection and a WWW browser programme installed, find the CROP web page at <http://www.svf.uib.no/helsos/crop/> or <http://www.crop.org> The pages hold general information about CROP, news about past and ongoing activities, as well as the latest CROP newsletter.

Please note: We can no longer answer the increased demand for copies of single papers presented at CROP conferences and workshops. However, if you have the patience, most of the papers become available through the publications that follow the conferences and will be duly announced. We still supply the authors addresses, phone & fax numbers.

AT THE CROP SECRETARIAT

you will meet:

Else Øyen, Chair of CROP

Hans Egil Offerdal, CROP Co-ordinator

Einar Braathen, CROP Adviser

Inge Erling Tesdal, CROP Assistant

THE QUOTE

"The world has the material and natural resources, the know-how and the people to make a poverty-free world a reality in less than a generation."

James Gustave Speth,
UNDP Director