

# CROP newsletter

Comparative Research Programme On Poverty

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## frontiers of poverty research

### GLIMPSSES FROM THE INTERNATIONAL POVERTY ARENA

During the last few months several important events have taken place for those who are interested in poverty. Some of those events have elements of research. Others raise questions of relevance for future research. Still others call for researchers to come out and turn down the usual set of misshapen stereotypes on the poor and the faulty use of research documentation.

The UN Social Summit on Development + 5 took place in Geneva June 2000 and was a follow-up of the UN Social Summit in Copenhagen. It is too early to judge the impact of the Summit on future poverty reducing strategies. Comparing Copenhagen with Geneva shows that the latter had lower attendance, fewer heads of state turned up and there was much less public interest. It remains to be seen whether these indicators are significant for future action and the one hundred and fifty some paragraphs on new initiatives. In the latest issue of *Development* (43/3) it is argued that the Summit was a non-event without vision and commitment to change and that rich governments can safely ignore the Summit because the real decision-making forums for poverty issues have been moved to the WTO, IMF, the World Bank and OECD. John Langmore, a high ranking UN official, stresses the importance of a Tobin tax-like initiative from the Summit that can lead to "the start of a

more effective global management of the international financial system" (UNRISD News 22/00).

Two of the research based symposia in the Geneva 2000 Forum (the arena for the NGO's and other non-official participants at the Summit) were organised respectively by CROP in co-operation with UNESCO, MOST and the International Social Science Council and by UNRISD. The title of the first symposium was "Social Capital Formation in Poverty Reduction: Which Role for the Civil Society Organisations and the State?" It was well attended and brought out an interesting discussion. The full programme for this session appeared in the previous CROP Newsletter. The presentation of a paper on "Social capital formation as a poverty reducing strategy?", forms part of the critical review of the World Bank use of the concept of social capital, and can now be found on the CROP webpage. The symposium organised by UNRISD was an inspiring full day event organised around the recent UNRISD publication *Visible Hands*. More information on this programme, the UNRISD preparations before the Summit, and the follow-up after the Summit can be found in the UNRISD Newsletter, in particular No. 20-22.

In June WHO called for a conference on "Health and Poverty". Health issues and medical expertise dominated the discussion while increased scientific knowledge about poverty as both a dependent variable and an independent variable in health formation was called for. WHO has estab-

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lished a group to explore this relationship further and to initiate new research. A search in the WHO database on poverty brings out 525 hits. Only a few of these use the analytical tools available in poverty research.

Another important event has quietly reached its last stage within the OECD countries. During the last couple of years a group lead by the OECD Secretariat has been at work to formulate a set of joint guidelines for a policy on poverty reduction in the South. Recently a group of experts, including several members from CROP, was called on to comment on the last draft. It is doubtful whether the poverty researchers had an impact so late in

the process. When the guidelines appear CROP will call on its members to assess them. If all the OECD countries fall in line and jointly implement the guidelines they may become a powerful instrument in future poverty formation.

An event that did not pass by quietly was the launching of the *World Bank Development Report 2000/2001. Attacking Poverty*. See elsewhere for comments and the invitation to join the critical analysis of the Report.

UNDP received less attention with its *Human Development Report 2000. Human Rights and Human Development*. The major arguments are that human rights are a

right in itself and a necessary instrument for worldwide poverty reduction. The forthcoming CROP/IISL workshop in Spain in May 2001 will bring this discussion further when the impact on poverty formation of different international legal instruments are evaluated by researchers from the legal and social sciences.

In between these large events small workshops and conferences on issues in poverty research are taking place at an increasing pace. In the long run they represent the future and competence building in the field. If you want our members to know about such events you are welcome to announce them on the CROP webpage.

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## National Conference on Norwegian Poverty Research in the Third World

### *Partners in Research: Setting an Agenda for Norwegian Poverty Research in Collaboration with Researchers from the South*

The first National Conference on Norwegian Poverty Research in the Third World, *Partners in Research: Setting an Agenda for Norwegian Poverty Research in Collaboration with Researchers from the South*, was organised by CROP, in cooperation with the Research Council of Norway and the University of Bergen, in Oslo 28-29 August 2000.

CROP has been appointed by the Research Council to act as a node for the development of a network of Norwegian poverty researchers and other specialists with a professional interest in poverty questions. The Conference was an initiative to gather Norwegian poverty researchers within this framework. The Conference was also the first in a series of scientific conferences within the Research Council's programme on "Globalisation and marginalisation. Multi- and interdisciplinary research on development paths in the South".

The Conference was funded by the University of Bergen, the Research Council and the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO.

61 researchers participated in the conference.

Professor **Stein Tønnesson**, Research Council of Norway, Environment and Development Division, opened the conference.

**Shanti George**, independent researcher, The Netherlands; **Ellen Bortei-Doku Aryeetey**, Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), University of Ghana (absent); and **Nazneen Kanji**, International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED), Britain, were speakers at a session entitled "A critical perspective on Western poverty research as seen from the South: The needs and challenges for future collaboration between researchers from North and South." The papers can be found on the CROP webpage.

The second session was on "An alternative view on the forthcoming World Bank Development Report 2000/2001, as seen by a group of Norwegian poverty researchers." The papers can be found on the CROP webpage.

The final session at the conference on "The instrumentalization of knowledge: challenges for poverty research and development research" was introduced by Researcher **Knut G. Nustad**, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)/Department of Social Anthropology, University of Oslo.

The conference was summed up by **Else Øyen**, CROP, who initiated a discussion on "how to develop a platform for Norwegian poverty research focused on the South".

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## A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2000/2001

The World Bank *World Development Report 2000/2001: "Attacking Poverty"* and the drafts that preceded it have been reviewed by a group of Norwegian researchers. In their comments the researchers raise questions about the way concepts are presented, the efficiency of the proposed strategies and the Bank's use of research.

Visit the CROP webpage to read the comments.

To read the World Development Report 2000/2001 log onto "<http://worldbank.org/poverty/wdrpoverty/>" on Internet. The report can also be ordered from World Bank Publications, Ph: +1-800-645-7247, Fax: +1-703-661-1501.

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## CORE FUNDING FOR CROP

CROP has received funding from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ministry will contribute 150.000 NGL to CROP's core functions over the next three years.

We are grateful for this generous contribution. It will be used to strengthen the relationship with CROP members in the South.

## editorial

The World Bank released its first report on poverty in 1980. After 10 years came the second Bank report on poverty. After another 10 years the World Bank *World Development Report 2000/2001. Attacking Poverty* (WDR) has appeared. With this last report, the many drafts, research papers and country reports that preceded it, the Bank has set itself to become the major actor in poverty reduction worldwide. The strong presence of World Bank employees at fora where poverty is discussed and the high profile of the Bank president on poverty issues signals the intention of the Bank to become the foremost expert on poverty understanding. As a result the discourse on poverty is now dominated by Bank views, its definitions and wording, its explanations of causes and its choice of strategies for poverty reduction.

This is a fact that cannot be ignored. The Bank controls enormous resources in terms of manpower, networks, experience and money and it has had a major impact on the world economy for at least three decades. The impact on the poverty discourse and poverty formation in the future is not likely to be less. Whether we agree or disagree with the strategies outlined by the Bank we shall need other voices to bring about a fuller and more complete understanding of poverty reduction. For some it is a political challenge to change the discourse, for others it is an academic challenge.

The WDR presents itself as a document based on scientific knowledge. A group of Norwegian researchers from different disciplines and with different research interests have taken this position seriously and treated the WDR as such. In a critical review of the report the researchers go behind the rhetoric and use the analytical tools of their disciplines to evaluate the logic of the report, its coherence, reasoning, use of research and the relationship between knowledge and strategies proposed. You will find their reviews on the CROP homepage at [www.crop.org](http://www.crop.org).

The WDR aims to be one of the major policy documents guiding the Bank's lending activities in the next decades. As such the conceptualisations and intervention tools proposed are likely to become a model for many governments and donors. This is another important reason why the WDR needs to be analysed and scrutinised by independent scientists.

The Norwegian initiative is but a small step

## Call for Papers

### *Water, Poverty and Social Development*

### "The Role of Water in History and Development"

10-12 August 2001, University of Bergen, Norway

The International Water History Association 2nd conference will bring together researchers from different disciplines who all study the character and role of freshwater in history and development.

Societies have managed and harnessed water in various ways with various implications both for water resources and for society. This conference will explore these variations in man/water relations in time and space, and examine why some societies have apparently succeeded, while others have failed to secure a sound management system of their fresh water. The conference will have two main aims:

- to present different empirical research findings and to create a forum for theoretical discussions on how the relationship between man and water can be analysed and understood in the most fruitful ways.
- to produce relevant input into present day debates about issues including the control and ownership of water, water conflicts and water pollution.

**CROP** has been invited to organise a session on: *Water, poverty and social development*. The session will deal with distribution and access to water and sewage in the modern megalopolis and how these facilities are made available to the poor. Important changes are taking place in the distribution and control of water for household consumption. How does privatisation vs. public control of water distribution affect social relations, political systems and the water supply system? How does lack of water and distribution systems affect development and poverty formation in rural areas in the South?

All participants will be expected to take part in the proceedings (in English), presenting and discussing papers. Participants bear the responsibility for their own funding. However, a limited number of travel grants are available. The grants will be awarded from the CROP Secretariat, according to geography (CROP's policy is to prioritise researchers from the South) and the relevance, quality and originality of the abstract/paper. Further details will be forwarded to those whose papers are accepted for the session. As a rule accommodation and meals will be provided for all participants.

#### THE DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 1st 2001

If you wish to present a paper, please send an abstract (in English) to the CROP Secretariat. The abstract should include: Personal name, title, full postal (and e-mail) address (indicate nationality if this is different from the address), TELEPHONE and FAX numbers; the title of the proposed paper and a summary of the main theme or argument. The summary should include: Theory, methods and findings. Do not exceed ONE PAGE (A4). Include also a brief CV and list of your most recent publications on a separate sheet.

Participants will be notified by March 1st whether their abstract has been accepted and will then be given details of the format in which the paper should be prepared (the deadline for submission of the paper will be June 1st, 2001).

**All enquiries about the workshop should be addressed to:** CROP Executive Officer **Inge Erling Tesdal**, CROP Secretariat, Fosswinckelsgate 7, N- 5007 Bergen, Norway,  
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forward in an important and necessary process to monitor, evaluate and understand the impact of one of the most influential actors on the lives of the poor for many generations to come.

CROP will continue the analysis of the WDR and the World Bank and invite other inde-

pendent scientists to link to our website with their comments. We shall prioritise the academic challenge of an analytical approach that can bring the understanding of the processes of poverty understanding further.

*Else Øyen, Chair of CROP*

## NEW UNRISD REPORT ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

*Visible Hands: Taking Responsibility for Social Development.* An UNRISD report for the Geneva 2000 World Summit that explores recent efforts to reassert the value of equity and social cohesion in an increasingly individualistic world. The report argues that markets in themselves have no capacity to imagine or create a decent society for all. Only the "visible hands" of governments and public-spirited people can do that.

To order the report contact UNRISD, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland, Ph: +41-22-9173020, Fax: +41-22-9170650, E-mail: [info@unrisd.org](mailto:info@unrisd.org). The report can also be downloaded from Internet by visiting "<http://www.unrisd.org/engindex/cop5/forum/report.htm>"

## REPORTS RELATED TO POVERTY RESEARCH

Several reports related to poverty research have been published recently, including the *Human Development Report 2000*, the *World Health Report 2000*, and *Amnesty International's Annual Report 2000*.

All of these reports can be accessed in full on Internet. Hyperlinks are provided on the CROP webpage.

## THE BERNARD CONYERS AWARD 2001

This award offers individuals in the Third World (or lesser privileged areas of Europe) the opportunity to produce/publish original material in the field of rural development and or education, which may take the form of a book, newsletter, workshop, film, video or via the internet, etc.

GBP 8000, in total, is available for the 2001 awards. Apply to: The Arkleton Trust, Enstone, Oxon OX7 4HH, GREAT BRITAIN (Registered Charity No. 275153). Ph: +44-(1)608-677255, Fax: +44-(1)608-677276, Internet: "<http://www.enstoneuk.demon.co.uk/arkleton>"

## LIST OF CROP EVENTS 2000 - 2001

October 2000:

12-14: "State and Society: Partnership in Poverty Reduction?", workshop organised jointly with ISSER, University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana.

November 2000:

9-11: "The Demography of Poverty in Latin America", a joint CROP/CLACSO workshop, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

May 2001:

2-4: "Law and Poverty IV", workshop organised with the International Institute for the Sociology of Law (IISL) in Oñati, Spain.

August 2001

10-12: "Water, poverty and social development". Session at the *International Water History Association* conference "The Role of Water in History and Development," University of Bergen, Norway.

## POVERTY CONFERENCE IN NEW ZEALAND

The Development Studies Network (DEVNET) convenes a conference on "Poverty, Prosperity and Progress", in Wellington, New Zealand, 17-19 November 2000. The conference will look at how aid and development implemented by organisations like the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, bilateral agencies and NGOs are focused.

For more information about the conference and to register online visit "<http://www.devnet.org.nz/conf/index.html>" on Internet.

## UN MILLENIUM DECLARATION

The UN Millenium Declaration was presented at the UN Millenium Summit. A section of the declaration is dedicated to the issue of poverty eradication. Read the declaration by visiting "<http://www.un.org/millennium/summit.htm>" on Internet.

## 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, on a non-profit basis. CROP has developed a 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 to the CROP Secretariat and request a copy of the CROP Database Survey form. For further information please contact the CROP Secretariat

## WEBPAGE FOR CROP

Those who have an Internet connection and a WWW browser programme installed on the computer, find the CROP web page at <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

Kirsti Thesen Sælen, Co-ordinator

Hans Egil Offerdal, Special Adviser, pt. Mexico

Einar Braathen, Programme Officer

Inge Erling Tesdal, Executive Officer

## THE QUOTE

*"To construct an overall picture of poverty, it is necessary to go well beyond identifying the poor"*

**Amartya Sen**