

CROP newsletter

Comparative Research Programme On Poverty

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ETHICS OF POVERTY REDUCTION

Multilaterals, donors and elites often try to make the moral case for poverty reduction in their policies and documents. Yet the ethical underpinnings of poverty reduction are usually stated without an explanation. The description and assessment of the possible duties to help the poor are seldom spelled out, nor are the bases of any moral duty and their consequences for others analysed. More commonly, the moral case of poverty reduction is used as a rhetorical device to justify policies from multilateral and bilateral donors, or even to maintain policies and projects that are themselves ethically questionable.

Ethical reflection of a substantially complex social problem such as poverty reduction is difficult and unclear territory. Nevertheless, insights from moral and political philosophy, the philosophy of science, and the social sciences could help map the possible shapes and directions of such terrain.

Question to be addressed are for example:

- What are the ethical meanings of poverty reduction?
- Do different meanings and levels of poverty reduction require different ethical approaches? If yes, why?
- Who is responsible for poverty reduction and why?
- Does poverty reduction require a global ethic? If yes, why and how can that be possible?

- Poverty reduction actors—such as multilaterals, donors or elites from poor countries—are not transparent in regards to the ethical content of their policies and documents. Is such transparency an ethical requirement? How is it possible to make such transparency a requirement?

Important ethical problems rise when looking at “how” poverty reduction policies are designed and carried out. For example, unsuccessful poverty reduction projects may end up destroying the livelihoods of the poor without giving them alternatives. Also, there are ethical implications as to many donor’s policies which—assuming they have the right strategy—demand from the poor to wait for results and benefits even as long as generations.

In view of these examples, is it possible to assess ethically the consequences of poverty reduction policies and their actors both individually and collectively? What standards could be used for such purpose and what would be their own ethical justification?

Within this framework the Centre for International Poverty Research (CIP) and the Center for the Study of the Sciences and the Humanities (SVT), University of Bergen, convened an interdisciplinary workshop on “Ethics of Poverty Reduction: International Actors, Donors, and Elites”.

The workshop gathered a group of interdisciplinary researchers on the grounds that insights from moral and political philosophy, the philosophy of science, and the

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social sciences are needed to approach such issues.

The workshop was divided into three sessions, to display the various sides of the poverty and ethics issue.

David Crocker, University of Maryland, USA opened the workshop on "Thinking about the Ethics of Poverty Reduction"

The first session was introduced by two economists from the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration, Bertil Tungodden and Alexander Cappelen, on "The ethical meanings of poverty reduction" and "Do different meanings and levels of poverty reduction require different ethical approaches?"

The second session was introduced by philosophers Nils Gilje and Gunnar Skirbekk of the Centre for the Study of the Sciences and the Humanities, University of Bergen, on "Who is responsible for poverty reduction and why?" and "Does poverty reduction require a global ethic?"

The final session was on "Making transparent the values of poverty reduction agents: Is it an ethical requirement?" by economist Desmond McNeill, Center for Development and the Environment, University of Oslo. Philosopher Asuncion St. Clair, Center for International Poverty Research, University of Bergen, discussed "Ethical problems related to how poverty reduction policies are designed and carried out."

At the end the workshop discussed further co-operation around a research agenda for the ethics of poverty reduction.

FINAL DATE FOR THE CROP, CLACSO AND FLACSO WORKSHOP ON: "Indigenous Populations and Poverty: Multi-Disciplinary Approaches"

CROP, Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO) and Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) organise a joint workshop on Indigenous Populations and Poverty. The workshop has a multi-disciplinary character, in order to respond adequately to the manifold problems indigenous populations are confronted with.

The workshop will be held in Guatemala, 4-7 November 2001.

See CROP and CLACSOs webpages for more information.

VACANT PROFESSORSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL POVERTY RESEARCH

A Chair in International Poverty Research is vacant at the Centre for International Poverty Research, University of Bergen, Norway, where the CROP Secretariat is located.

A description of the position with an outline of area of responsibility, particular duties and other circumstances which will be stressed at the time of appointment, as well as guidelines for applicants, are obtainable from the Secretariat for the Faculty of Social Sciences, phone no.: +47-55 58 90 56, e-mail: gunhild.eide@svfa.uib.no. This document can also be read at the CROP webpage on Internet at <http://www.crop.org>.

Additional information on the position is obtainable from professor Else Øyen, Centre for International Poverty Research, University of Bergen, Fosswinkelsgt. 7, N-5007 Bergen, Norway, phone no.: +47-55 58 97 40, e-mail: crop@uib.no, or co-ordinator Kirsti Thesen Sælen, Fosswinkelsgt. 7, N-5007 Bergen, Norway, phone no.: +47-55 58 97 39, e-mail: kirsti.salen@sif.uib.no

University of Bergen applies the principles of public access to information in connection with appointments to academic positions.

The successful applicant must comply with the guidelines that apply to the position at

any time.

The application is to be submitted in 5 copies and must contain a complete overview of the applicant's education, earlier positions and other activities, along with a complete list of scholarly works and information about where these have been published. The applicant must name the scholarly works or parts of such works on which the committee should place special emphasis in its evaluation. These should not exceed 15 in number. The application must contain a list of attachments providing evidence of the applicant's teaching qualifications.

Applicants must submit 5 copies of all the scholarly works - published or unpublished - which they want to have evaluated, to the Secretariat of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Bergen, Fosswinkelsgt. 6, N-5020 Bergen, Norway, within three months of the expiry of the application deadline.

Applications should be addressed to the Senate (Det akademiske kollegium) and sent with confirmed copies of certificates to the Secretariat of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Bergen, at Fosswinkelsgt. 6, N-5020 Bergen, Norway, **before August 30, 2001.**

UNDP CONFERENCE ON POVERTY

A UNDP conference on "Poverty Reduction Strategies: What have we learned?", took place in Bergen, Norway, March 15-16, and was co-organised by the Chr. Michelsen Institute and CROP.

High level representatives from national governments, bilateral and multilateral development organisations, civil society and academia attended the conference. UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown and the Norwegian Minister of International Development, Anne Kristin Sydnes, opened the conference. The conference included both panel discussions and parallel working sessions dealing with the experiences of the countries Uganda, Mali, Laos, Nepal, Guatemala and Latvia. A team of researchers presented their findings of the evaluation of UNDP's Poverty Strategies Initiative.

The UNDP publication *Choices for the Poor* was launched at the occasion.

The book can be read by visiting <http://www.undp.org/dpa/publications/index.html> on Internet.

PUBLIC MEETING ON TRADE BARRIERS AS DEVELOPMENT BARRIERS

CROP was asked by the Nordic UNDP office to organise the meeting on March 14. In the panel were Mark Malloch Brown, UNDP; Julian May, University of Natal, South Africa; Ottar Mæstad, Foundation for Research in Economics and Business Administration, Norway; Sigrun Møgedal, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Aslak Orre, ATTAC, Norway. About 100 persons attended the meeting.

CROP ANNUAL REPORT 2000 AND PLAN OF ACTION 2001-2002

The CROP Annual Report 2000 and Plan of Action 2001-2002 can now be accessed at the CROP webpage at <http://www.crop.org>. Please write to the CROP Secretariat if you want a hardcopy of the reports.

editorial

It is easy to become blasé in the midst of change but consider what has happened in the social sciences in the brief space of fifteen to twenty years. Through the development of computers, statistical packages and the internet the south has moved, in what is effectively the twinkling of an eye, from the use of shovels to the driving of powerful bulldozers; from travelling by ox-wagon to flying by supersonic jet. From the perspective of the South the change is even more dramatic than that for the new technology has melted both space and time so that the isolation of the past can give way to a closeness and a synergy that could facilitate the release of new energies to attack old problems.

It is in this context that we believe that members of the CROP network might be able to make a major contribution over the next few years in helping to generate a critical mass of policy orientated research workers in different countries focussed on the problems of poverty as detailed in fresh, more comprehensive data emerging from integrated household and other surveys. In Africa, for example, the time is ripe to begin working on a systematic process of encouraging further networking, building on the growth of small centres of research analysis in the different universities around the continent. Already there are data sets, not all of them easily accessible, for different countries which could be more widely used. But there is also need for more data more systematically collected on a country by country basis in those many places where what is available is inadequate or out of date. Training programs need to be set up on the world wide web enabling young researchers to down-load data in the process of learning how to use it to ask questions which, through the use of such statistical packages as STATA or SPSS, can be answered. The isolation of individuals or small teams in different countries can easily be overcome through joint programs using the internet. Much has already happened but in the vast majority of countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America we are only at the beginning of what could be an extraordinary process of information gathering and analysis of poverty in all its many dimensions. But for this to happen there has to be in every country a critical mass of numerate social scientists - economists, sociologist, epidemiologists and others - working on good data and asking penetrating questions. Such work would benefit hugely from collaboration between scholars in different universities and other

CROP LAW AND POVERTY NETWORK

During the last 8 years a group of researchers from the legal and the social sciences have met to develop poverty issues of joint interest to the different disciplines.

So far two publications have appeared: "Law, Poverty and Poverty" (sold out) and "Poverty and the Law" (see below). Two more manuscripts are under preparation for publication: "Law and Poverty III: Law as a tool for combating poverty" (suggested title) and "Law and Poverty IV: Moving towards

international poverty law" (suggested title), the first edited by Asbjørn Kjønsstad, Peter Robson and Lucy Williams, and the second edited by Peter Robson and Lucy Williams.

Altogether 4 workshops have been organised (see present and previous CROP Newsletters). The next one will be held in 2003. The Law and Poverty network invites to a broader participation. Those interested can contact the CROP Secretariat.

NEW LAW AND POVERTY PUBLICATION

Hart Publishing has recently published the proceedings from the second CROP workshop on Law and Poverty. The title of the publication is "Poverty and the Law"

and it is edited by Peter Robson and Asbjørn Kjønsstad. Contact the CROP Secretariat for ordering information.

LAW AND POVERTY IV:

MOVING TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL POVERTY LAW

3-4 May 2001, the fourth in the series of CROP-initiated workshop on law and poverty, "Law and Poverty IV: Moving Towards International Poverty Law", was held at the International Institute for the Sociology of Law in Oñati, Spain.

On the Programme Committee were Professor **Camilo Perez-Bustillo**, Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (ITESM), Mexico, Professor **Peter Robson**, University of Strathclyde, Scotland, and Professor **Lucy Williams**, Northeastern University School of Law, USA.

Peter Robson opened the workshop with a review of the previous law and poverty workshops held in Oñati. The following papers were presented and discussed: *Poverty as entitlement failure: A rights-based approach to the acquirement problem* by **Bas de Gaay Fortman**, Institute of Social Studies, The Netherlands; *What can human rights do for poverty reduction? A philosophical assessment of the Human Development Report 2000* by **Asuncion St. Clair**, Centre for International Poverty Research, University of Bergen, Norway; *Biodiversity vs. biotechnology: A struggle between trade and the environment* by **Margarita Gabriela Prieto Acosta**, Rutherford College, Great Britain; *The role and influence of international human rights instruments on South African poverty law* by **Marius Olivier**,

Faculty of Law, Rand Afrikaans University, South Africa, and **Linda Jansen van Rensburg**, Potchefstroom Univeristy, South Africa; *Microcredit's ability to help escape third world poverty: A view from moral and political philosophy* by **Khandakar Quadrat-Elahi**, Canada; *The significance of the UN special rapporteur on the right to food for the poor countries* by **Ahmed Aoued**, University of Oran, Algeria; *Privatising human rights: Voluntary codes of conduct between standards, guidelines and the global compact* by **Aurora Voiculescu**, Wolfson College, Great Britain; *Developing universal anti-poverty regimes: The role of United Nations in the establishment of international poverty law* by **Gabriel Amitsis**, University Research Institute of Social Insurance, Health and Welfare/Faculty of Law, Athens, Greece; *The ILO committee on freedom of association: An empirical analysis of labor rights and multilateral judicial decision-making* by **Edward Weisband**, Virginia Tech, USA.

Akintola Jimoh, Nigeria, and **Karunatissa Atukorala**, Sri Lanka, could not be present at the workshop, but their papers (respectively) *International monetary law and the poverty agenda* and *Need for advocacy and laws for participatory lending* were presented by the Programme Committee.

research centres around the world. Learning more about ourselves in an environment of more open debate, more transparent knowledge is surely one of the most exciting proc-

esses of our time. It is one which we in CROP could do much to encourage.

Francis Wilson, Chair of CROP

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ENVIRONMENT AND URBANIZATION

The April 2000 issue of the journal *Environment and Urbanization* has 12 city case studies discussing the links between *Poverty Reduction and Urban Governance*, including studies in Ahmedabad, Bamako, Bangalore, Cebu, Colombo, Guatemala City, Johannesburg, Kumasi, Mombasa and Santiago.

The April 2001 issue on *Rethinking aid to urban poverty reduction: lessons for donors* includes evaluations of urban projects or programmes funded by US AID, the World Bank, DFID, SIDA, NORAD and UNICEF, along with papers considering the constraints on donor effectiveness.

For ordering information contact David Satterthwaite, IIED, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD, UK, Ph: +44-20-7388-2117 Fax: +44-20-7388-2826, E-mail: david@iied.org. Both issues are also available on Internet at www.catchword.com/titles/09562478.htm

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON POVERTY

The Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, University Abou-Bekr Belkaid, Tlemcen, Algeria, convenes an international symposium on "Poverty and co-operation", 23-25 October. For more information contact: Comité d'organisation du symposium "Pauvreté & coopération", BP 226, Tlemcen 13000, Algeria, Ph/Fax: +213-43-212166, E-mail: a_benhabib@mail.univ-tlemcen.dz

SPECIAL ISSUE ON ANTI-POVERTY POLICIES

A special issue of the *International Journal of Economic Development* entitled *Anti-Poverty Policies* has recently been published. It examines approaches to poverty prevention and reduction through economic, educational, social, political, and legal policy. The publication can be downloaded from Internet at http://spaef.com/IJED_PUB/v2n2.html. For more information contact Stuart Nagel, University of Illinois, 361 Lincoln Hall, Urbana, IL 61801, USA, Ph: +1-217-352-7700, Fax: +1-217-352-3037, E-mail: s-nagel@uiuc.edu

LIST OF CROP EVENTS 2001 - 2002

July 2001

3-5: The empirical case studies in the CROP/IDS Elite project will be presented and reviewed at a workshop in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Participation by invitation only.

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.

November 2001

4-7: "Indigenous Populations and Poverty: Multi-Disciplinary Approaches", a joint CROP/CLACSO/FLACSO workshop, Guatemala.

April 2002

Academic session in conjunction with the International Social Science Council Executive Committee meeting, Durban, South Africa.

July 2002

7-13: "Issues in pro-poor policies in non-OECD countries". Joint session with RC19 at the ISA XV World Congress of Sociology, Brisbane, Australia.

November 2002

CROP symposium at ISSC 50th Anniversary

OECD/DACs "GUIDELINES FOR POVERTY REDUCTION"

OECD/DACs "Guidelines for Poverty Reduction" were recently agreed by DACs high level meeting.

One of the major purposes of the guidelines for poverty reduction has been to develop an international platform for the work of the donors in poverty reducing strategies. It has been important to define terms, point to good and bad practices in development assistance, bring in the dialogue with development countries and between the donors, as well as to single out strategic important areas in the fight against poverty.

The guidelines can be downloaded from Internet at <http://www.oecd.org/dac/html/meetings.htm>

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.

If you wish to have your name listed in CROPnet, you are welcome to write to the 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 webpage 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, Scientific Director of CROP
Kirsti Thesen Sælen, Co-ordinator
Inge Erling Tesdal, Executive Officer
Einar Braathen, Programme Officer
Asuncion St. Clair, Research Fellow

THE QUOTE

«Poverty is not created by poor people. It is created by the institutions made by society.»

Muhammed Yunus

Grameen Bank