

CROPnewsletter

Comparative Research Programme On Poverty

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WATER AND POVERTY: THE INEXTRICABLE LINK

Introduction

“Life at the edge of existence” is how the former Prime Minister of Norway and former Chairperson of the World Commission on Environment and Development, Gro Harlem Brundtland paraphrased poverty¹. It implies risk, vulnerability and above all income and capability deprivation.

Water's link to poverty

Water is considered to have the greatest potential as an entry point for poverty eradication. Water links well with not only opportunities for increased productivity and food security through irrigation, but also with the sanitation and health dimensions through the supply and provision of clean and safe water in adequate quantities. The report on World Water Development predicts growing per capita scarcity of water in many parts of the developing world because of population growth, pollution and expected climatic changes. It goes on to assert that, “Giving the poor better access to better managed water can make a big contribution to poverty eradication”. The Rio Summit Agenda 21, section 18, aims to protect the quality and supply of freshwater resources through the application of integrated approaches to the development, management and use of water resources. The Copenhagen declaration on social development in 1995, resolved that poverty would be conquered through the sustainable provision of access to safe drinking water in sufficient quantities and proper sanitation for all.

Presently, the outlook of the global water

supply exhibits great disparity between developed and developing countries and also between urban and rural areas in water supply. According to the Global Water Supply and Sanitation Assessment Report 2000, Africa lags behind in water supply coverage in both urban (85%*) and rural areas (47%) followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (93%*) urban and (62%) rural, then Asia (93%*) urban and (75%*) rural. Coverage is worst in rural areas, that is where Africa's poor are concentrated⁴.

One way of monitoring the link between water and poverty can be by a water poverty index (WPI). Such an index is currently being developed⁵. This is a potentially useful index if data for its computation is made available. As Sullivan (2002) argues, “where there is water poverty, any measures to reduce income poverty are unlikely to be successful... at national level... higher levels of income tend to have higher level of water use”⁶. Therefore identifying water poverty is a first and important step in the process of poverty eradication. In order to enrich the poverty dimension variables in the suggested conventional composite index approach, production and productivity, education for girls and leisure variables could be added⁷.

Another Target?

The World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) of 2002 set a target to *reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation*, a target, which was also declared by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Unfortunately safe drinking water provision to all seems to be a moving target. The earlier efforts of the

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Mar del Plata UN Water Conference, in 1977, which culminated into the UN Declaration of international Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade ended without achieving the desired target. The situation is summed up by UNESCO in pointing to the fact that, "a string of international conferences over the past 25 years has focused on a great variety of water issues including ways to provide the basic water supply and sanitation services...several targets have been set to improve water management but hardly any have been met"⁸. Inertia at the leadership level and lack of awareness of the gravity of the water problem have resulted in the failure to take timely corrective measures, the report asserts.

Need to walk the talk

Will the present target be achieved? Many commentators have expressed their scepticism about the possibility of the MDGs for developing countries being met (Jahan 2003⁹, Stalker 2003¹⁰, UN 2003¹¹). This is because the implementation of the MDGs depends largely on the contribution from donor countries through their pledges of 0.7% of their GNP to ODA. Jahan points out that the net ODA as a percentage of the donors' GNP has declined from 0.33% in 1990 to 0.05% in 2001. Furthermore, debt and debt servicing are debilitating developing countries' capability to implement development activities. With the current world trade arrangements and WTO negotiations in the doldrums, that prospect is further delayed. In addition, since the world community has committed to follow the sustainable development path as a way for future development, without incorporating this concept in the models we base decisions on, the desired success of well-intentioned declarations will not be forthcoming. The implication of such commitment is to change our behaviour with regards to the way we have been doing various everyday activities.

In terms of practice, one can wonder whether the traditional cost benefit models for deciding rural water projects financing are still valid with respect to sustainable development aspirations. Or, can water allocation models for irrigation using opportunity cost of water to different user through price discrimination be used without additional quantitative and/or qualitative analysis of social and environmental aspects? It is proposed that variables manifesting poverty impacts like waterborne diseases due to polluted water use, be included in Cost Benefit Analysis because safe water provision will to a large extent avoid these types of diseases and hence save lives, avoid production loss and productivity declines while saving

expenditure on health. Incorporating these as benefits will increase the feasibility of the proposed projects and hence its acceptance for implementation¹².

There is also a need to practice the various concepts in a generally acceptable way in order to succeed in objectives and hypotheses based on those concepts. Participation in the decision making process and implementation of water management decisions as well as benefiting from them, is one of the vital tenets of democratic participation. Parthasarathy et al¹³ say the notion of participation is 'practiced' by poor farmers' contributing "brawn", while the rich farmers contribute 'brain' through participation in decision-making in water management allocation committees! Such mis-presentation of democratic principles does not hold promise for success of a democratic approach.

Lastly, Natural Resource Accounting (NRA) for water should be given priority. Presently, there are many countries working on NRA but still few have water accounts¹⁴. Water accounts include all fresh water resources within a territory of reference that provides both direct use and non-use benefits¹⁵. The usefulness of the accounts include: enable assessment of the availability and scarcity of the resource; help determine how water is being used in the economy on a national or regional basis; improve understanding of the economic and environmental interactions; and analyse the effects on the water resource of structural and policy change in other sectors.

Notes:

¹ See Øyen, E et al (1996) *Poverty: A Global Review*, Scandinavian University Press, Oslo.

² World Development Report of 2000/2001 and Human Development Report 2003.

³ This measure is deemed to be *inadequate* in measuring poverty as the broad definition of poverty would have it i.e. income and capability deprivation as defined by Sen (1981).

⁴ It is important to note that urban coverage estimates may be overstated due to exclusion of sub-urban and squatter areas.

⁵ See Sullivan, Caroline (2002) "Calculating a water poverty index" in *World Development* Vol.30, No. 7, pp. 1195-1210.

⁶ See Sullivan (2002). A country's water use however, includes annual water withdrawals, net imports of water and virtual water consumption through importation of water intensive use products including agricultural crops such as rice, manufactured products such as beer and soft drinks.

⁷ There are other alternative ways suggested to produce a water poverty index such as the gap method, matrix approach and simple time analysis (Sullivan, 2002).

⁸ UN (2003), *World Water Development Report*. Coordinated by the World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP). [Measure of progress

towards achieving the goal of Sustainable Development and the targets set out in the UN Millennium Declaration of 2000.]

⁹ See <http://idpm.man.ac.uk/cprc/conference/conferencepapers/jaha.pdf>

¹⁰ See http://pstalker.com/home/b_escapmdg.htm

¹¹ See <http://www.unescap.org/LDC&POVERTY/MDG%20Asia%20Pacific.pdf>

¹² Of course lenders would be concerned about project loan repayment, however, governments should weigh the costs and benefits of the above criteria and find alternative ways to meet this obligation.

¹³ Parthasarathy et al (2002) *Poverty Dimensions of IMT in Large Scale Canal Irrigation in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat*, India. Paper presented at the Water History Association Conference, University of Bergen, Norway.

¹⁴ These include Australia, Canada, Norway, Sweden, UK, Finland New Zealand, Netherlands, Philippines, Namibia, South Africa, Indonesia, Chile, and Costa Rica.

¹⁵ Water in oceans and seas is not included in the accounts because such water is rarely abstracted for direct use. However, desalination of seawater is increasingly being considered as an alternative source as the water crisis deepens.

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UN WORLD WATER DEVELOPMENT REPORT (WWDR)

WWDR is a periodic comprehensive review of the state of the world's freshwater resources. Co-ordinated by the World Water Assessment Programme, the Report is the result of the collaboration of twenty-three UN agencies and convention secretaries.

WWDR is part of an ongoing assessment project to measure progress toward achieving the goal of sustainable development formulated at the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, and the targets set down in the UN Millennium Declaration of 2000.

The first edition of the Report, *Water for People, Water for Life*, was launched on World Water Day at the "Third World Water Forum" in Kyoto, Japan, earlier this year.

Visit UNESCO's webpage at <http://www.unesco.org/water/wwap/wwdr/index.shtml> for more information about the Report and how to order it.

WORKSHOP ON CROP/ CLACSO RESEARCH PROGRAMME

The Latin American Social Science Council (CLACSO) held its XXI General Assembly, *New world hegemony. Alternatives of Change and Social Movements*, in Havana, Cuba, 27-31 October.

A special workshop on "The CROP/CLACSO research programme on poverty studies: State of the art, issues and agenda" was organised at the Assembly. The Latin American Coordinator of the research programme, Dr. **Alberto Cimadamore**, introduced the workshop. Prof. **Else Øyen** gave the keynote speech.

ISSC/IHDP WORKSHOP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

On the 1-3 December CROP participated in the joint International Social Science Council (ISSC) and International Human Dimensions for Environmental Global Change (IHDP) workshop on Social Science Perspectives on Sustainable Development, in Cuernavaca, Mexico.

The workshop was held to identify major current and emerging issues in social science perspectives of sustainable development, to give and update on current projects and to plan for future collaboration on this topic between members of the ISSC. CROP found the opportunity to participate in the meeting rewarding, both in terms of learning about IHDP's work on global climate change and the ISSC commitment to develop comparative research on the issue of sustainable development. It was particularly positive for CROP to come in contact with representatives of IHDP's Global Environmental Change and Human Security (GECHS) Project, with whom points of common interest and possible future collaboration were identified.

CITIZENSHIP AND POVERTY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

CROP organised a workshop on "Citizenship and Poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean" at the annual conference of the Norwegian Association for Development Research (NFU), *Politics and poverty reduction*, in Oslo, Norway, October 23-24.

Over the last decade Latin American and Caribbean states have introduced legal and practical initiatives to ease and improve the conditions of citizenship in the region. These initiatives have been introduced in response to the region's social movements, but also with an acceptance amongst policy-makers that the persisting conditions of poverty in the region are largely linked to high levels of social, economic and political marginalisation. Although democratic government has no direct relationship to development and poverty reduction, the government of democratic citizenship can either allow or deny access to important paths out of poverty. On this background the workshop explored and discussed the linkages between citizenship and poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The workshop was conducted in both Spanish and English and was divided into three sessions. The first session introduced the issue of citizenship and poverty in Latin America and gave particular focus to the politics of participation and education in Guatemala. Session 2 focused on the formation of identity and operation of state and market practices of social exclusion in the Andean Region. The final session continued this focus and exposed the way in which state policies in Peru, Ecuador and Brazil seek to address poverty through radically different and context-specific forms of social policy.

The following papers were presented:

Session 1

- *Introductory Remarks: Citizenship and Poverty in Latin America*
John McNeish, CROP, Norway
- *Poverty and "Espacio para actuar"*
George Midré, Department of Social Policy, University of Tromsø, Norway
- *Educación Ciudadanía y Pobreza en Guatemala*
Virgilio Alvarez Aragón, FLACSO, Guatemala

Session 2

- *Education for Credit: Bolivian Micro-credit NGOs as Citizenship Projects*
Sian Lazar, Centre for Latin American Studies, University of Cambridge, UK
- *The Ambiguity of Agency: Informality and Citizenship in Processes of Urbanization in the Andes*
Cecilie Ødegaard, Dept. of Social Anthropology, University of Bergen, Norway
- *Social Policy towards Areas Affected by Violence: The Case of PAR in Peru*
Jemima García-Godoy, Centre for Development and Environment, University of Oslo, Norway

Session 3

- *Child Welfare Policy, Democratic Citizenship and the Poor Child in Ecuador*
Espen Leifsen, Dept. of Anthropology, University of Oslo, Norway
- *Achieving Citizenship and Reducing Poverty by Land Reform*
Laura Tavares Soares, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro/University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

REPORT FROM CROP/UNESCO SCIENTIFIC CONSULTATION

On the initiative of UNESCO, CROP organised a scientific consultation in Bergen, Norway, 5-6 June, 2003.

The theme of the Consultation was the draft document produced by the UNESCO Sector for Social and Human Sciences, outlining a new strategy for the abolishment of poverty through the international human rights framework.

15 international specialists on poverty and human rights were invited to the Consultation. 2 observers (from NORAD and the Norwegian National Commission for UNESCO) also participated, together with 3 representatives from the UNESCO Sector for Social and Human Sciences and 2 representatives from the CROP Secretariat. The Consultation was chaired

by **Pierre Sané**, Assistant Director General of UNESCO, and **Else Øyen**, Scientific Director of CROP.

The report from the Consultation can be downloaded from the CROP webpage at <http://www.crop.org/publications/reports.cfm>

UN WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION REPORT 2003

Prepared by the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the UN has published the *World Social Situation Report 2003 - Social Vulnerability: Sources and Challenges*.

Vulnerability and poverty interact with each other creating a vicious circle in which the two reinforce each other. The report stresses the need for policies that address vulnerability and concludes that reducing social vulnerability requires a multi-pronged and internally consistent policy framework, since its causes and effect are multi-faceted and interlinked.

Visit <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/rwss/rwss2003.htm> for more information about the report.

NEW BOOK ON DEVELOPMENT RELATED ISSUES

"Doing the Rights Thing: Rights-based Development and Latin American NGOs" by **Maxine Molyneux** and **Sian Lazar**, has been published by ITDG Publishing.

The authors examine the ways in which rights-based strategies have been understood in development practice in Latin America. They stress the political and personal nature of development – especially the importance of enabling people to make their own demands on the state and other institutions.

To order the book contact ITDG Publishing, 103-105 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4HL, UK, Fax: +44-(0)20-7436-2013, E-mail: orders@itpubs.org.uk

CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The Graduate Program in International Affairs, The New School University and UNICEF host an international conference on *Promoting Human Rights and Social Policies for Children and Women: Monitoring and Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*.

The conference will be held April 28-30, 2004 at the New School in New York. Paper proposals for the Conference should focus on human rights and children, women, and family well-being issues based on the use of household data, especially Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS). For more information about the conference and how to submit paper proposals contact **Marina Komarecki**: komam525@newschool.edu

LIST OF CROP EVENTS 2004-2005

April 2004

14-16: *Work and the Production of Poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean: Structure, Discourse and Actors*. A joint CROP, CLACSO and Centre for Development and Agricultural Studies (CEDLA) workshop in Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

May 2004

Poverty in the Light of the Informal Economy. Workshop to be held in Alexandria, Egypt. Jointly organised by CROP and Center for Economic and Financial Research and Studies, Cairo University. Date to be announced.

July 2004

6-9: Special CROP session at European Association of South Asian Studies (EASAS) conference, in Lund, Sweden.

October 2004

Education, Knowledge and Development. The annual conference of the Norwegian Association for Development Research (NFU). CROP will be co-organising the conference, which will be held in Bergen, Norway. Date to be announced.

November 2004

Workshop under the CLACSO/CROP programme, together with Facultad Latinoamericana De Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO), Costa Rica, and Universidad Centro-americana, Nicaragua. Date and topic to be announced.

January 2005

Law and Poverty VI. Workshop co-organized with Centre for International and Comparative Labour and Social Security Law (CICLASS), in Johannesburg, South Africa. Date to be announced.

2005

Workshop in co-operation with the Science Academy of the Dominican Republic. Date and topic to be decided.

CONFERENCE ON POVERTY AND EDUCATION

The University of Botswana holds an international conference on *Adult Education and Poverty Reduction: A Global Priority*, June 14-16, 2004, in Gaborone, Botswana.

The aim of the conference is to provide an international forum to discuss policy initiatives, programme strategies, and research projects that will strengthen the role of adult education in poverty reduction worldwide. For more information contact **Julia Preece**: preece@mopipi.ub.bw

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

Please note: We cannot answer the 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.

WEBPAGE FOR CROP

Those who have an Internet connection and a WWW browser programme installed on the computer, can find the CROP webpage at www.crop.org. The site holds general information about CROP, news about past and ongoing activities, as well as the latest CROP newsletter.

AT THE CROP SECRETARIAT YOU WILL MEET:

Else Øyen, Scientific Director of CROP
Kirsti Thesen Sælen, Co-ordinator
John McNeish, Lat. Am. Co-ordinator/
 Researcher
Inge Erling Tesdal, Executive Officer
Hege Aarethun, Executive Officer

SEASONS GREETINGS



*We wish all our contributors,
 supporters and friends
 a peaceful and happy
 New Year 2004*