

# CROP newsletter

Comparative Research Programme On Poverty

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## frontiers of poverty research

### **KEY ITEMS FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

More than two thirds of the poor in the world are in developing countries. There is more grinding poverty in the developing than in the developed countries. Far more women are poorer than the menfolk in these countries. It is therefore not surprising that the searchlight on poverty is often directed at third world countries. These countries are the setting for challenging research on poverty. This short article will attempt to identify a few key issues in poverty research in the context of third world societies.

Although poverty has attracted considerable attention from scholars, it seems that the following deserve in depth study: (a) the experiential dimension of poverty; (b) safety nets if any for the poor; (c) impact of poverty reduction strategies/schemes; (d) impact of neoliberal economic policies on poverty; (e) gender and poverty; and (f) good governance and poverty.

#### *(a) Experiential Studies of Poverty:*

It is paradoxical that most of the researchers that study poverty have not experienced it. Consequently, there is a tendency for work on the phenomenon to be bereft of the standpoint of the poor. What is referred to as the experiential dimension is the need to attempt to understand the meaning of, and solutions to poverty from the standpoint of the poor rather than from that of the researchers who are largely drawn from the middle/upper classes. It is desirable to provide an avenue for the poor to articulate their concept of poverty, experiences, and perception of the most effective way of tackling their difficult

circumstances. There is no doubt that the data obtained in this regard is likely to provide deeper insight into poverty and how it can be tackled. Such studies can be implemented using an ethnographic/participatory approach. The method can also be used to shed light on the forces that engender inter-generational poverty, - a phenomenon that has hardly been studied in the developing countries.

#### *(b) Research on Safety Nets for the Poor:*

One of the unintended consequences of rapid social change in developing countries is the weakening of the extended family unit ties that hitherto have provided social security for its members. The individuals in these societies are no longer able to render support well beyond the limit of their nuclear family. Even though everyone is at risk, the poor face far greater risks than the small proportion of the population in the middle and/or upper classes. The challenge today is to put in place safety nets for the poor. The study of safety nets for the poor is therefore an important contribution to policy and programmes. Of significance are the following questions: (i) How are the poor in these countries coping with the vicissitudes of life in the context of rapidly modernizing societies that are bereft of a state sponsored social security regime? (ii) What safety nets if any exist for the poor in these countries? (iii) How can responsible national authorities provide and/or strengthen existing 'safety nets'? (iv) What kind of safety nets can be put in place for the poor in these countries?

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*(c) Impact Studies on Poverty Reduction Strategies:*

National and international bodies have responded to the plight of the poor by the introduction of presumably novel poverty reduction schemes. An example is micro-credit now being promoted/implemented in many contexts. There is need to: (i) take stock of the various poverty reduction strategies that are targeted at the poor; and to (ii) ascertain not only their effectiveness but also their sustainability. The following questions deserve answers: (i) What are the poverty reduction strategies that have been put in place in the different contexts? (ii) How effective are the strategies? (iii) Are they sustainable and if so how? (iv) Are strategies (i.e., the 'success stories') being sustained in the different contexts of their implementation and if so how?

*(d) Impact Studies on Neoliberal Economic Policies and Poverty:*

The world and national economies are currently being driven by neoliberal economic policies. For example, the endorsement of WTO by both the developed and the developing countries including the implementation of the structural adjustment programmes by the latter have serious implication for poverty. Yet, there is a dearth of critical study of the interplay between these agreements/policies and burgeoning poverty. Consequently, opportunity exists for robust work on how these policies exacerbate or reduce poverty in the different contexts of their implementation.

*(e) Gender and Poverty Research:*

Women are likely to be poorer than men in all human societies and more so in developing countries where the social structure is still deeply rooted in patriarchy. There is need for multi-site cross-sectional and time series studies especially in developing countries on the status of women and the changing face(s) of poverty among this group. Moreover, there is opportunity for comparative studies that will highlight the interplay between gender and poverty from the ethnic, regional, and comparative standpoints.

*(f) Good Governance and Poverty:*

Good governance is elusive in many of the developing countries due to lack of transparency and accountability. Yet, poverty reduction may well depend on good governance. While it is useful for Transparency International to rank countries in terms of the level of corruption, it is perhaps more worthwhile to explore the deeper implications of this phenomenon for developing countries where more than two-thirds of their citizens live on a US dollar a

day. Therefore, there is need for robust studies that address the following questions: (i) What is the magnitude of funds that are inadvertently repatriated from developing countries due to bad governance? (ii) Which institutions (local or international) and/or countries benefit from and/or are the haven for the funds that are inadvertently repatriated from these countries? (iii) What is the ratio of in-flow (investment) vis-à-vis out-flow of funds due to lack of transparency and accountability in governance? (iv) What is the possible contribution of the repatriated funds to the economies of recipient nations on one hand and burgeoning poverty in developing countries on the other? (v) In other words,

what is the impact on domestic economic growth including poverty? (vi) What sort of domestic or international legal instrument(s) should be put in place to stem the repatriation of misappropriated funds that are needed to promote domestic economic growth? How should the policy/instrument be enforced? Finally, what moral lessons can be drawn from received knowledge on the barriers to development in the third world?

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## CALL FOR PAPERS

*CROP* and *Center for Economic and Financial Research and Studies*,  
Cairo University, convene the workshop

### *Poverty in the Light of the Informal Economy*

New date for the workshop: 20-22 September, 2004

New deadline for abstracts: 31 March, 2004

The workshop will be held in Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria, Egypt

For more information about the theme of the workshop, see the full call for papers featured in *CROP* Newsletter No. 3 - 2003, log onto the *CROP* website at <http://www.crop.org> or contact the *CROP* Secretariat.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

*CROP* and *Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales* (CLACSO),  
with *Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales* (FLACSO), Costa  
Rica, and *Universidad Centro-Americana*, Nicaragua,  
convene a workshop on

### *Poverty as a Trans-national Challenge to Citizenship and the State in Central America and the Caribbean*

The workshop will be held in two parts in Nicaragua and Costa Rica, in  
October/November 2004.

More information about the workshop will be posted on the *CROP* website in March.

## NEW BOOK ON THE WORLD BANK AND HUMAN RIGHTS

*World Bank, IMF and Human Rights*, has been edited by legal adviser to *CROP* **Willem van Genugten**, *CROP* Scientific Committee member **Paul Hunt** and **Susan Mathews**.

The book discusses the legal status of the World Bank and the IMF, in relation to human rights obligations, and to issues in

the political and economic field closely related to that.

For ordering information contact Wolf Legal Publishers (WLP), P.O. Box 31051, 6503 CB Nijmegen, The Netherlands, Fax: +31-24-355-4827, E-mail: [wlp@hetnet.nl](mailto:wlp@hetnet.nl), Internet: <http://www.wolflegalpublishers.com>

## editorial

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### PROMOTING POVERTY AS A MEANS OF CREATING WEALTH

Early in the 1980s Raúl Prebisch noticed what he called "the return of the orthodoxy": the adoption of the public policies that the world had known all too well at the turn of the twentieth century and that had brought the world to a tragic collapse with the Great Depression of 1929, dictatorship and war. The self-proclaimed disciples of Adam Smith, first reborn in Chile in 1973 and Argentina in 1976 to migrate a few years later to England and the United States, became the main agents of an economic policy whose main and long lasting result has been the unprecedented generalization of poverty. This assumed an extreme form in Latin America and Africa, and milder but still striking forms in Europe and the United States.

If Smith had announced the advent of a world in which wealth would be harmoniously distributed thanks to the workings of the invisible hand, his sombre descendants live obsessed with the promotion of poverty. As Max Weber has taught, the doctrine of predestination made the Calvinist bourgeois look into the augmented possession of wealth and material goods in search of the godly signs that would confirm his salvation. Conversely, contemporary neoliberal policy-makers turn their eyes toward poverty to find the sacred message confirming that they are walking in the right track of the "market-oriented" reforms. For the reborn disciples of Smith, mass poverty is a promising sign that things are moving fast in the right direction. Completely indifferent to any type of moral consideration, the economists of the Washington Consensus celebrate the increase in the figures of unemployment and poverty as clear indications that market forces are at work, free of the "artificial" state interventions decreed by hostile governments. The transition from the ill-fated "developmentalist" model to a market economy has some temporary costs for the poor and the middle classes. But it is claimed these are no more than the "delivery pains" announcing the advent of the good society, and there are not reasons for concern. Supporters of the neoliberalism claim that sooner or later the invisible hand will start to do its job, redistributing wealth and incomes, and rewarding everyone in accordance with his or her efforts. Neoliberalism is, therefore, a perverse regression to Calvinism: the multiplication of the poor is certainly painful message, but it is also the promising sign posted at the beginning of the road towards prosperity and happiness. Nothing could be more inappropriate than despair and

## LAW AND POVERTY V

CROP and the Social Science Academy of Nigeria (SSAN) organized the *Law and Poverty V* workshop in Abuja, Nigeria, 24-26 November, 2003. It was sponsored by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

The workshop was a follow up of four previous CROP workshops on *Law and Poverty* in 1995, 1997, 1999 and 2001.

The workshop was planned by an academic programme committee consisting of Prof. **Etannibi Alemika**, (University of Jos, Nigeria), Prof. **Willem van Genugten** (University of Tilburg, The Netherlands), Prof. **Femi Odekunle** (Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria), Prof. **Lucy Williams** (Northeastern University, USA), and Prof. **John A. Yakubu** (University of Ibadan (UIO), Nigeria).

The workshop was opened by Prof. **Layi Erinoshio**, Executive Secretary of SSAN, and Prof. **Else Øyen**, Scientific Director of CROP. Prof. **Mike Kwanashie**, Vice-President's Office, Nigerian State Office, presided over the opening session of the workshop.

The following papers were presented:

- *Gender philosophy, corruption and the rule of law: Interjecting ethics of change into the pragmatics of corrupt practices in Nigeria* by **Irene O. Adadevoh**, UIO, Nigeria.
- *The dynamics of gender and poverty under Shariah legal systems in Zamfara and Sokoto states of northern Nigeria* by **Fatima L. Adamu**, Usman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto, Nigeria.
- *From the OAU to AU, from NIEO TO NEPAD: A rights-centred critique of poverty-eradication strategies in Africa* by **Kwadwo Appiagyei-Atua**, National University of Ireland.
- *Extraterritorial human rights- a tool for poverty alleviation?* by **Paul Arnell**, The Robert Gordon University, UK.
- *Poverty reduction in rural Nigeria through targeting approach and legislation* by **Chigozie C. Asiabaka**, Federal University of Technology, Owerri, Nigeria, and **J. U. Nwagwu**, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria.
- *Fisheries laws and dimensions of poverty in marine fishing communities of Lagos State, Nigeria* by **B. T. Fregene**, UIO Nigeria.
- *Transnational corporations, human rights*

*and poverty production* by **Willem van Genugten** and **Else Øyen**.

- *Poverty, human rights law and socio-economic realities in South Africa* by **John Mubangizi**, University of Durban-Westville, South Africa, and **Betty Mubangizi**, University of Natal, South Africa.
- *Poverty reduction through minimum wage legislation: The Nigerian experience under the Obasanjo democratic dispensation (1999-2003)* by **Isaac N. Obasi**, SSAN.
- *Multinational oil corporations and human rights related poverty reduction rules in the Niger delta oil communities: A political economy perspective* by **Iwebunor Okwechime**, Obafemi Awolowo University, Osun State, Nigeria.
- *Effective welfare provisioning and the role of law: innovative perspectives from South and southern Africa* by **Marius Olivier**, Rand Afrikaans University, South Africa.
- *Mobilizing West African populations for poverty-reduction legislations* by **Segun O. Odunaga**, UIO, Nigeria.
- *Alleviating poverty through skills development: Lessons for law-making in developing countries* by **Debi S. Saini**, DCAC, University of Delhi, India.
- *Land tenure arrangements and peasantry in sub-Saharan Africa: The case in northern Nigeria* by **Adamu I. Tanko**, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria.
- *Choices of legal forums to address poverty within a global context* by **Lucy Williams**.

**Donald P. Chimanikire**, (University of Zimbabwe), **Nations S. Msowoya** (Department of Fisheries, Malawi), and **Camilo Perez-Bustillo** (City University of New York, USA) could not attend the workshop but their papers (*A poverty profile of Zimbabwe since independence (1980-2003); Prospects, challenges and patterns for the promotion of economic, social, political and religious rights as a panacea for poverty reduction: The case of Malawi;* and *The right to have rights: Comparative aspects of the African and Latin American origins of international poverty law* respectively) were presented on their behalf.

The planning of the **Law and Poverty IV** workshop has already started. It will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa in early 2005. The workshop will be organised by CROP and the Center for International and Comparative Labour and Social Security Law (CICLASS).

pessimism, or yield to the temptation of changing the course. Those are transient announcements and soon or later, more optimists, will appear along the road. Neoliberal paradise is not far away, despite the present sufferings, and to reach its

shores is seen as just a matter of endurance and time. Sooner, the wealth accumulated in the top will start to descend. "Trickle-down" theory is promoted as right, and the present sacrifices are supposed to last not more than one or two generations.

## NEW POVERTY RESEARCH PROJECTS IN CROP DATABASE

CROP operates a network of poverty researchers. Many of the members send information to CROP about their on-going research. The following projects are the latest additions to the CROP database:

- Globalization and social safety nets in Asia-Pacific region
- Cyberculture and intercultural migration
- Macroeconometric analysis of growth, unemployment and poverty in Nigeria
- Participatory poverty assessment in Ohangwena Region, Namibia
- Income inequality in Ukraine: Substance and regulation
- Southern African values project
- Rural development and poverty alleviation in the Philippines, Mongolia and Sri Lanka
- Poverty, decentralization and forest use in Bolivia
- Motherwork and politics in revolutionary Nicaragua
- New representations of poverty in Africa: From moral philosophy to policies

Contact the CROP secretariat if you want further information about the projects listed.

## NEW BOOKS ON POVERTY RESEARCH

*Structural Adjustment: The SAPRIN Report - The Policy Roots of Economic Crisis, Poverty and Inequality*, has been prepared by the Structural Adjustment Participatory Review International Network (SAPRIN).

The book is a critique of structural adjustment policies in developing countries in both North and South. The topic has been thoroughly researched over the last five years, covering a wide range of economic sectors.

*Thirsty Planet - Strategies for Sustainable Water Management* by **Constance Elizabeth Hunt**.

The book argues that in twenty years time more than 2 billion people will live in regions or countries with absolute water scarcity, and discusses how the planet's water should be used and managed based on this outlook.

These books have recently been published by Zed Books. For more information about them, and the *CROP International Studies in Poverty Research* series, contact Zed Books, 7 Cynthia Street, London N1 9JF, UK, E-mail: [sales@zedbooks.demon.co.uk](mailto:sales@zedbooks.demon.co.uk), Web: [www.zedbooks.co.uk](http://www.zedbooks.co.uk)

## 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, followed by public meeting in La Paz.

September 2004

20-22: *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.

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.

October/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. on the CROP website in March.

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.

## NEW PUBLICATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND POVERTY

*Pathologies of Power - Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor*, by **Paul Farmer**, with a foreword by CROP Scientific Committee member Nobel laureate Prof. **Amartya Sen**.

The book argues that promoting the social and economic rights of the world's poor is the most important human rights struggle of our times.

For more information about the book visit: <http://www.ucpress.edu/books/pages/9875.html>, or contact: California-Princeton Fulfilment Services, 1445 Lower Ferry Road, Ewing, NJ 08618, USA, E-mail: [orders@cpfs.pupress.princeton.edu](mailto:orders@cpfs.pupress.princeton.edu)

## 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](http://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

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