This semester was marked by key topics included in the agenda of the annual Scientific Committee meeting which took place at the end of June. The preparation and discussions for finalising CROP’s Strategic and Communications Plan 2015–2020 called for an intense and imaginative review of what CROP’s mission has been and will be in the coming years. Naturally, this exercise began with an assessment of current institutional capabilities and advantages related to the most pressing challenges that face poverty research in light of the elaboration of a new international development agenda.

There was a clear consensus in CROP that the promotion of critical inter-disciplinary research on the nature, extent, depth, distribution, trends, causes and effects of poverty should continue to be at the core of all strategic and action plans. It is equally important that the resulting knowledge be relevant for both poverty eradication and prevention. For this reason, scholarly work needs to go beyond the walls of research institutions and reach the relevant audiences involved in the construction of the new development agenda, which will continue to have poverty at its core. The understanding of how poverty is produced and reproduced in the contemporary world is indispensable for its eradication. No less relevant is how those with such knowledge reach out and use it to transform an increasingly global society that is tolerating extreme poverty while having enough resources to eliminate or at least dramatically to reduce it. The new strategic and communication plans are embedded in these premises and will help our institution concentrate its energies in key thematic areas that relate poverty with the conditions for social change, with social policies and the welfare state, with human sustainable development, with the role of the media, with child poverty and inequality and with global justice.

The second semester of 2014 will witness the preparation of action plans that reflect these institutional agreements. At the same time, core initiatives will be strengthened. Prominent among them will be the revitalisation of CROP’s Fellows Programme, inaugurated in 2010. The CROP International Studies in Poverty Prize 2014 was launched during the first semester, and we are in the process of receiving entries. Zed Books and CROP are closely collaborating on this initiative, which aims to reinvigorate our book series and disseminate high-quality poverty-related research.

Finally, we are happy to announce the appointment of Maria Sollohub as a permanent member of staff (http://www.crop.org/contentpg.aspx?zone=13&MenuNode=63395344227059509). After a competitive process of selection which involved 91 applicants, her appointment has now been confirmed. This completes the secretariat team and is indeed a step further in the institutional formalisation of CROP and its integration into UiB’s academic and administrative environment.
After an international workshop in Bergen in May 2013 (see http://www.crop.org/storypg.aspx?id=602&MenuNode=635060405556616250&zone=41), a follow-up workshop was held in January 2014 at the University of Bergen; CROP secretariat/UiB Global. The long-term objective was to consolidate a network that builds on previous international cooperation within the framework of the Worldwide University Network (WUN) on Sustainability Science and Human Development.

CROP, UiB Global and HEMIL — UiB’s department of Health Promotion and Development — were the organisers in Bergen of this two-day exploratory workshop. Participating in the discussions, either present in Bergen or via Skype, were academics from Norway, Canada, Brazil, Nigeria, Australia, Argentina and Kazakhstan. Participants presented their research topics focusing on how trans-disciplinarity and participatory research methods can provide new ways to address sustainability in the framework of the social sciences. Over the course of the two days, the group explored the opportunities for joint research projects, PhD-programmes or other collaborative activities in the broader field of sustainability science and participatory research methods.

There is great potential for further projects and there is an expressed will within the group to continue working together and to further develop both the consortium and the topic. The next step will be the publishing of the book “Development and Sustainability Science: The Challenge of Social Change” as part of the CROP-Zed book series, in 2015.

The workshop was wrapped up with the public lecture “Health, Poverty & Sustainability Science” which was held in the Bergen Resource Centre for International Development on January 29. During this lecture, Professor Jane Springett from the University of Alberta, Canada gave an introduction to the use of participatory approaches to research and how they can be a tool for change for ecosystem approaches to health and social equity. Professor Altyn Aringazina from Kazakhstan School of Public Health introduced the audience to health promotion in the context of sustainable development in Kazakhstan. For more details see: http://www.crop.org/storypg.aspx?id=727&MenuNode=&zone=41

WORKSHOP ON SUSTAINABILITY SCIENCE

The CROP International Studies in Poverty Prize 2014 was launched during the first semester of 2014. CROP, in cooperation with Zed Books, seeks original and high-quality manuscripts that challenge the dominant thinking. Poverty must be the central focus of the monograph. The winner will have their manuscript published by Zed Books and receive a price of NOK 50’000.

The closing date has been extended to September 14, 2014.

The complete guidelines can be found on http://www.crop.org/storypg.aspx?id=764&MenuNode=&zone=41
CROP, in collaboration with Equity for Children-Latin America, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO) (Mexico) and the Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas (IIJ)-UNAM, organised an international workshop on “Child Poverty, Public Policies and Democracy”. The event took place in Mexico City from February 19–21, 2014. Seventeen researchers were selected to present papers out of a total of 70 submitted proposals.

During the workshop, child poverty production, reproduction, and reduction in Latin America was discussed with a focus on rights, education, social policy and other relevant dimensions. Some of the presenters described and analysed the progress made in the region and the slow pace of convergence to decent standards of living as result of the intergenerational transmission of poverty and inequality. Others focused in the vulnerabilities and insufficient protection of rights that is characteristic in many parts of the region, while some focused on specific public policy actions — such as the Conditional Transfer Programmes (CTPs). http://www.crop.org/storypg.aspx?id=678&MenuNode=63400842158978281&zone=41

Child poverty was defined and analysed following different approaches and the multidimensional and the right based approaches proved paramount. These sees children and adolescents as holding specific rights, and broadly recognises deficiencies in the following dimensions as constituting poverty: education, nutrition, housing, drinking water, sanitation and information.

A great deal of discussion concerned methodological aspects related to measurement of child poverty, a matter that varies significantly between groups of countries within Latin America. There are some countries where overall child poverty averages 72% (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru and Bolivia) while in others the percentage is below 20% (Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Uruguay). Questions regarding the effectiveness of child protection system and social programmes were also raised. It was argued that social assistance programs designed and implemented in Latin America do not satisfy, in general, the set of social needs observed in the most urgent cases. Therefore, the social policies observed in many countries were not considered as appropriate for the eradication of child poverty in the short and medium term. It was also argued that a universal social protection system would be better suited for that purpose and on the top, it would be consistent with the Child-Rights approach intensively examined during the workshop.

As part of the workshop, two public events were held. The first one was organised at Mexico’s Federal Electoral Institute, one of the sponsors of the event, and focused on the “Development and building of citizenship in childhood”. The next day, a synthesis of the workshop discussions was presented at UNAM in a roundtable titled «Poverty, inequality, and democracy: from knowledge to action», followed by a Q&A session with the audience. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjEROrQ3fw8
Publishers are looking for in this field, and how are they trying to get it? Will the switch from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have an impact on the publishing environment?

These were the questions at the CROP roundtable on “Publishing on development” held at Bergen Resource Centre on April 25. CROP invited Kim Walker, Commissioning Editor for development studies for Zed Books, London — one of the most significant publishers of critical development studies literature — and Jakob Horstmann, independent academic publishing consultant and CROP’s Managing Editor, to share their views and facilitate a debate.

The major challenge for development studies titles, they both agreed, is to surpass the prevailing hyper-critical tone that has taken hold of the discipline following the uncritical optimism of this young discipline’s early years. “For a long time in the 70s and 80s the publishing in development studies had been dominated by rather naïve-sounding and borderline colonial paradigms”, said Horstmann. “In a way we are in still in the phase that was the backlash against such early development titles, where highly critical, negative views on the possibilities of development work prevail.”

Walker agreed that it is hard to find titles that show a more positive way of dealing with the issues at hand. “We’re always looking for books that not only criticize existing concepts, theory and practice but show where to go from here”. One bizarre casualty of this hypercriticism towards traditional notions of development studies is the notion of “poverty” itself, which has become somewhat unfashionable for commissioning editors over the years. “It’s come to a point where you can’t really pitch a book any more that contains the word “poverty” in the title just because it sounds so old-fashioned,” Walker explained. The CROP series is doing a great deal to counter this and put “poverty” back on the agenda.

During the discussion with the select audience it became clear that both the academics present and the editors expect a fresh impulse from the end of the MDGs and the approaching switch to the SDGs. “We felt that since 2000 the market had become quite crowded with books and articles on the MDGs and with that has become a bit navel-gazing,” said Horstmann. The inclusion of issues around sustainability in the mix is expected to infuse development literature with more environmental topics. “I’m sure there will be a lot of cross-fertilization from environment studies in the upcoming years,” said Walker. For more information see: http://www.crop.org/storypg.aspx?id=750&MenuNode=63506040556616250&zone=41
The conference in Malawi last year looked at the role of universities in the promotion of the Millennium Development Goals and how academia can contribute to future work in the fight against poverty. This discussion was followed up during the May seminar when different speakers from UiB presented various approaches to the topic.

UiB’s Vice-Rector for International Affairs, Anne Christine Johannessen, who is also the chairperson of the SANORD board, asked the question: “Why are the new Millennium Development Goals important for UiB and SANORD?” In her introduction she argued that, as education is one of the focus areas for the New Development Agenda, then the university sector has a clear place in the process. Academic head of UiB Global, Professor Gro Th. Lie, addressed the subject of “The importance of cross disciplinary cooperation in the debate about the new Millennium Development Goals”, arguing that the characteristics of many of the post-2015 goals transcend disciplinary boundaries and thus requires interdisciplinary thinking.

Alberto Cimadamore, academic director of CROP, followed up on his main points from last year’s SANORD event in his presentation “The key issue behind MDG — fighting poverty and leaving nobody behind?” in which he looked more closely at the numbers to see to what extent extreme poverty really had been reduced.

The final two speakers were assistant professor Anne Bang from UiB’s Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion, and assistant professor Tor Halvorsen, the SANORD contact at UiB.

On May 24, CROP co-sponsored a panel entitled “Social reform and segmented incorporation in Latin America: dead end or transit to social equality?” as part of the Twenty-Second International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) in Chicago, Ill., USA. Organized by Enrique Valencia Lomellí and myself, the panel gathered a distinguished and regionally diverse group of scholars.

Have recent reforms and innovations made a positive contribution to more cohesive societies, rather than societies deeply divided along socio-economic lines? The panel looked for answers to this question by addressing the policy architectures and political economies coming out of these reforms, in a conversation drawing on experience from other regions of the world such as Africa and East Asia.

Fernando Filgueira from the Catholic University and the University of the Republic in Uruguay opened the panel by explaining how over the last decade, expansive social reforms have incorporated previously excluded people into social policy for the first time. The direction of change is not unique but shows cross national variation. Carlos Barba and Enrique Valencia Lomellí, both professors at the University of Guadalajara in Mexico, compared the recent paths in Brazil and Mexico. During this past decade, these two countries have experienced different trajectories.

Huck-Ju Kwon, professor at Seoul University and visiting scholar at Harvard Yenching Institute, addressed the normative assumptions behind the pursuit of universalism in South Korea. His analysis gave depth and light to the scope and relevance of universalism across the right/left ideological divide.

A paper co-authored by Diego Sanchez-Ancochea, professor at the University of Oxford, and myself, called attention to policy architectures as a “missing link” between democratic institutions and progressive governments, and universal outputs. It provided a cross-national comparison of Costa Rica, Mauritius, South Korea, and Uruguay.

Are we asking too much from the term “universalism”? Discussant Professor James McGuire, chair of the Department of Government, Wesleyan University, closed the panel by welcoming the debate yet warning against overstretching the notion of universalism to apply to programmes and also to entire social policy regimes.

The presentations as well as the lively debate that followed made it clear that we are witnessing a unique opportunity to advance a redistribution agenda that promotes equitable provision of social services and transfers. The analytical challenge is to advance in our normative and empirical definitions and further explore why some countries are moving closer to the universal aspiration than others. The policy implications from the debate are vast: from the very characterization of change, to possible priorities, opportunities, and constraints to move forward in the direction of less rather than more segmentation.

*I am thankful to Diego Sánchez-Ancochea for his reading and reactions to this summary.
SANORD INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM 2014

[June 10–12, 2014, Karlstad, Sweden]

The University of Karlstad in Sweden hosted this year’s SANORD symposium from June 10 to 12, which was attended by almost 70 representatives of most of the member universities. The title was “A sustainable future – information technology and welfare development.” The potential for information technology (IT) to transform as well as sustain any social sector is widely recognized. At the same time, SANORD has a continuous focus on the welfare model of development. The task for the presenters at the SANORD symposium was to discuss how to contextualize and operationalize the vision for a sustainable future.

CROP and UiB Global contributed to two different sessions; Alberto Cimadamore, director of CROP, gave the introduction “Sustainability and the re-shaping of the democratic developmental states in the 21st century”. Tor Halvorsen from UiB Global, together with Hilde Ibsen from Karlstad University, Sweden, introduced their research on the democratic developmental state focusing on key actors and processes both in Nordic and Southern African countries.

During his presentation, Cimadamore argued that the notion of sustainability modifies the traditional views on development and economic growth, and calls for transformation of the current patterns of production and consumption since they are compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. When analysing the concept of democratic developmental state (DDS), he exposed how it was based on the premise that democracy and development are complementary. He described how that premise had been questioned (both empirically and theoretically) during the past decades, pointing out the contradictions between the incremental decision making that is typical in liberal democracies and the substantial political changes normally required to reach sustainable development.


VISIT TO CROP BY A UKRAINIAN YOUTH GROUP

[May 23, 2014, Bergen, Norway]

On May 23, a group of seven postgraduate students from the National Academy of Public Administration in Kiev, Ukraine, visited the CROP secretariat to learn more about the work carried out by CROP, as well as Nordic experiences more generally in the fields of poverty eradication, social policy, and social cohesion. The group was part of the “Youth Generation Will Change Ukraine” programme, whose objective is to help create a critical mass of young people who will be able to carry out future transformation in Ukraine. One of the purposes of their project is to study the experience of some of the European countries that have reached high levels of human and economic development, focusing on the political, economic, and social reforms that were functional to the construction of welfare states. In a long-term perspective, they hope that this will enable them to introduce the most relevant reforms to Ukraine.

The group that visited Oslo and Bergen in Norway was composed of young professionals aged 23–35 with different educational backgrounds (such as political science, law, engineering, finance, and linguistics), but now all enrolled in the same academy. At the CROP secretariat they learned more about the work of the programme, and engaged with the staff in a discussion of the current situation on global poverty, international efforts towards its eradication and the (post)-MDG process.

http://www.salg.no/salg.functioner/salg_youth generation_ukraine.pdf
On June 27, CROP organised a seminar at Bergen Resource Centre on the topic “Responding to poverty in South Africa: an overview of local and regional development responses.” It was led by Professor Etienne Nel, from the University of Otago, New Zealand, a member of the CROP Scientific Committee and a guest researcher at CROP in June/July. His presentation commented on the key challenges that the post-apartheid government in South Africa currently faces.

The presentation gave an overview of the political and economic transitions in the country, as well as the current government policy. Professor Nel highlighted the fact that even though the black majority have experienced an improvement in their living standards, the country still shows high levels of inequality. The inequality is based partly on ethnic and geographic factors, and the current key poverty interventions, such as social and labour plans, are impressive but unsustainable. “A strong political leadership exists,” he said, “but unfortunately poverty remains.” Even though social welfare schemes have helped lift a considerable number of people out of poverty, they have not resolved the problems of structural poverty. The current economic growth is “jobless,” and unemployment remains a key challenge to be resolved.

The audience discussion that followed was very constructive. Many participants were from countries neighbouring South Africa, and other countries with comparable challenges. The students from the Bergen Summer Research School (BSRC) posed various well thought-through questions that allowed the speaker and the audience to engage in a rich debate on the social aspect of southern Africa’s future. For more see: http://www.crop.org/storypg.aspx?id=773&MenuNode=634008042158978281&zone=41
Over the course of two days, the CROP secretariat gathered the members of the CROP Scientific Committee in Bergen for a meeting with an extensive agenda. It included work on strategic issues such as the CROP Strategic Plan and CROP Communication Plan 2015–2020.

Thomas Pogge (Yale University), chair of the Scientific Committee, presided over the meeting, with Scientific Committee members Norman Duncan (University of Pretoria, South Africa), Varun Gauri (World Bank), David Hulme (University of Manchester, UK), Alberto Minujin (New School, USA), Elma Montana (IAI Uruguay), Etienne Nel (University of Otago), Mathieu Denis (International Social Science Council, ISSC) and the rector of UiB, Dag Rune Olsen. The head of UiB Global, Gro Lie, participated as an observer, together with the director and staff of the secretariat.

Other topics discussed during the meeting were the Activities Report 2013, Financial Report 2013, and the Fellows Programme, as well as the current situation and future plans for CROP publications on poverty.

An internal workshop on the post-2015 development goals was followed by a public event described below.

**PUBLIC EVENT ON THE NEW DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

[July 1, 2014, Bergen, Norway]

Following the Scientific Committee meeting and workshop, a public event on the post-2015 development goals was organised by CROP together with local partners BSRS and the Bergen Resource Centre for International Development. A round table on “The New Development Agenda: completely eradicating poverty by 2030?” drew more than 80 participants, including the 70 graduate students at the summer school. This event at the Bergen Resource Centre was included in the BSRS programme as an expression of the strong ties of cooperation between UiB Global and CROP.

Professor Thomas Pogge’s introduction, “How we are fighting undernourishment,” focused on how the methods of measurement in this field are constantly changing, in a way that creates increasingly positive results. Professor David Hulme gave an introduction to the more historical background of the development agendas, and showed how the post-2015 goals are marked by a significantly higher level of public debate than for previous processes. Finally, Alberto Cimadamore, director of CROP, explored interpretations of the discourse on poverty eradication. Are World Bank statistics backing up UN claims of success for the previous development goals or is the connexion somewhat different? The three speakers thus provided the audience with different approaches to the topic of the development goals, but they all provided ample food for thought.
LAUNCH OF THE “POVERTY, LANGUAGE AND MEDIA IN LATIN AMERICA” PROJECT
[January 16–17, 2014, Foz de Iguazu, Brazil]

On January 16–17, 2014, CROP co-organised a workshop for the project on “Poverty, Language, and Media” (POLAME). The event was held in Brazil and hosted by UNILA (the Federal University for Latin American Integration), a key partner of the consortium of universities participating in the project.

POLAME is a three-year project to research how agenda-setting media convey and construct notions of poverty in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico. The study focuses on ideologies and interests expressed through the notions, conceptions, and definitions of poverty transmitted by agenda-setting media, in order to understand the theoretical and practical implications of the linguistic framing of poverty. The project is funded by the Norwegian Research Council.

In addition to issues related to the more general framework of the project, this meeting focused on the Brazilian cluster and its coordination with the Argentinean and Colombian partners.

Participants in the workshop included Alberto Cimadamore (CROP); Sonia Álvarez Leguizamón (University of Salta, Argentina); Gerónimo De Sierra, Ana Fonseca, Laura Amato, Andreia Moassab, Giane Lessa, Victoria Darling and Félix Pablo Friggeri (UNILA, Brazil); and Gabriel Quiroz Herrera (University of Antioquia, Colombia). Gisele Ricobom (UNILA’s Vice-Chancellor for Institutional and International Affairs) was in charge of the opening session. Another international workshop will take place in UNILA during the second semester of 2014 (September 3–5). On that occasion, the results of the first year of research will be presented and discussed by the leading researchers.

For more about POLAME visit: http://www.crop.org/contentpg.aspx?zone=59&MenuNode=635149372763427500

FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES: RESULTS FROM THE SPRING SEMESTER 2014

During the first semester of 2014, the CROP secretariat worked together with local and international partners to present five proposals to the SPIRE programme at UiB. SPIRE — the University of Bergen’s Strategic Programme for International Research and Education — aims to support the university’s strategy and plan of action for international activities from 2011 to 2015. There is a special emphasis on collaborations with UiB’s strategic international network partners, as well as with the BRICS countries.

In this year’s call, CROP had two successful applications, one in the International Networks/Partnerships Grant category and one in the Visiting Researcher Grant category. In the first category, the network project “The Democratic Developmental State – Southern African and Nordic experiences” was funded. This is a joint project with UiB Global and SANORD, and is the result of ideas generated and cooperative efforts with Tor Halvorsen (UiB) and Nordic and southern African partners. As part of this project an international workshop will be held in Western Cape, South Africa in February 2015.

In the second category, CROP was allocated funds to invite Santosh Mehrotra, director general of the Institute of Applied Manpower Research at the Planning Commission of India, to Bergen for two months as a visiting researcher. During his time in Bergen, Dr. Mehrotra will work with the CROP secretariat, as well as other units at UiB, in order to develop new collaborative projects. CROP is looking forward to working with our partners and UiB in these strategic partnerships.
After a few years of hibernation, CROP and Zed Books London have now resumed the collaboration on the book series on International Studies in Poverty. The relaunch was marked in Bergen on April 25, by an event at the Bergen Resource Centre attended by Kim Walker, commissioning editor for Zed Books. More than ten books are currently in different stages of production for this series, and the aim is to see the first few published in the spring of 2015.

This series aims to:

• present cutting-edge research on all aspects of global poverty;
• address poverty from diverse disciplinary and comparative perspectives;
• ensure that voices from the South can be heard;
• provide alternative policy prescriptions for the reduction of poverty; and
• explore links between poverty and other major global issues.


CROP Poverty Briefs

CROP Poverty Briefs are a series of short research notes highlighting recent research and trends in global poverty. The brief series is edited by Etienne Nel and co-edited by Enrique Delamonica.

In spring 2014, two new poverty briefs were published:


Calendar of events 2014

Updates about these activities can be found at: www.crop.org

September 3–5  CROP–UiB Mid-term WORKSHOP for the NRC Project on “Poverty, Language, and Media in Latin America.” Foz de Iguazu, Brazil.

September 5  ROUND TABLE on “Poverty, Language and Media in Latin America.” Public event with UNILA, Foz de Iguazu, Brazil.

November 2–8  SEMINAR, “Transformations to sustainability in urban contexts” for the World Social Science Fellows in conjunction with the Urbanization and Global Environmental Chance (UGEC)-International Human Dimension Programme (IHDP) conference on “Urban transitions and transformations: science, synthesis and policy.” Taipei, Taiwan.

November 19–21  INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP on “Child poverty and youth (un)employment”, jointly organised with the Institute of Labour (General Confederation of Greek Trade Unions), Democritus University of Thrace and the UNICEF Office for Middle East Countries. Athens, Greece.

Last week of November  Announcement of the CROP Prize 2014.