



Mobilizing critical research for
preventing and eradicating poverty



STRATEGIC PLAN

/ 2010 - 2011

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Table of contents

PAGE 5	1 Organization and Governance
PAGE 7	2 CROP's Vision
PAGE 9	3 Mission and Core Objectives
PAGE 10	4 Key Activity Areas
PAGE 15	5 Agenda of Events 2010-2011

“CROP will work for the prominent incorporation of the imperative of poverty avoidance into the design of the global institutional order. Such incorporation in turn requires a much fuller understanding of the nature, extent, depth, distribution, trends, causes and effects of poverty.”

- From CROP's Vision



CROP works to mobilize critical research for preventing and eradicating poverty

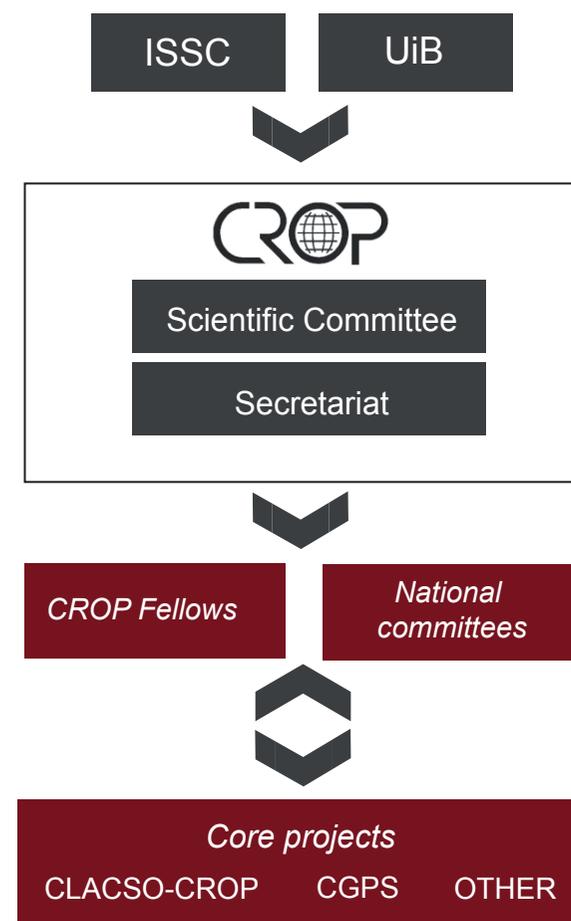
1 Organization and governance

The Comparative Research Programme on Poverty (CROP) was created in 1992 to promote social science research that theorizes and provides understanding of poverty in a global context. One of the key goals of the Programme was to consider how scholars working within different paradigms can develop a joint arena for multi-paradigmatic poverty research and to establish an international scientific network which will give impetus to a long-term research program.

During the past years, CROP has organized many workshops and events, has produced a space for South-South and South – North dialogue, has put forward alternative perspectives for poverty research, and produced a substantial amount of research findings with relevance for inter-

disciplinary scientific research and exchange as well as for political and practical processes worldwide.

Since the beginning of 2009, CROP has been in a process of restructuring and reorganization, including the design of a new governance structure, and a revision and actualization of its mission and core objectives. The International Social Science Council has signed an agreement with the University of Bergen (UiB), and UiB has become a sponsor of the Programme.



The agreement between the sponsors defines and gives mandate to the Secretariat, and supports new governance and accountability procedures for the well-functioning of the Programme. The agreement between the sponsors states that the drafting of the scientific content of the Programme falls on the Scientific Committee (SC).¹

The SC is mandated to meet at least once every year and make guiding decisions for the Programme's strategy and action plan.

To frame the new direction of CROP, the Secretariat organized a Review of the

¹ A list of CROP's current Scientific Committee can be found at www.crop.org/sc

Programme's achievements and challenges among all the members in CROP's database.²

The first meeting of CROP's SC was held at the International Social Science Council offices in Paris, September 27-28, 2009. This Strategic Plan emerges from the Review of the Programme held during August 2009 and the SC meeting, together with later work and consultation between the Sponsors, the Secretariat, and key partners.

At the meetings in Paris, the SC drafted a new mission and core objectives for CROP. This Strategic Plan aims to set in motion some of the central objectives stated there.

² To see a summary report of the Review please go to www.crop.org/review09



CROP Scientific Meeting in Paris, September 2009, where Strategic Plan 2010-2011 was developed

2 CROP's Vision

[EXTRACT] The most widely underfulfilled human right today is "the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of oneself and of one's family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control"

(1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25(1)).

This human right remains unfulfilled for over half of humankind:

- Some 2.5 billion lack access to basic sanitation,
- 2 billion lack access to essential medicines,

- almost one billion lack adequate shelter,
- nearly as many lack access to safe water,
- 1.6 billion lack electricity,
- 774 million adults are illiterate,
- 218 million children are working for wages outside their household,
- the number of chronically undernourished has recently broken above one billion for the first time in human history,
- about one third of all human deaths, 18 million each year, are to poverty-related causes.

Lifelong severe poverty has always been the fate of a

majority of human beings. What is new in recent decades is that such poverty is almost entirely avoidable.

In the year 2000, the poorer half of humanity had only 1.1 percent of global household wealth while the richest percentile had 39.9 percent.

In 2002, the poorest three quarters of humankind had only 8.4 percent of global household income, the poorest half had 3.0, and the poorest quarter just 0.92. This extreme polarization has occurred over a 200 year period and is still ongoing.

During 1988-2002, the poorest

quarter lost more than a fifth of its relative position, declining from 1.16 to 0.92 percent, while the top tenth of humankind increased its relative position from 64.7 to 71.1 percent. The 6.4 percent of global household income, which has gone into expanding the share of the top tenth, would be sufficient to double all incomes for the bottom seven tenth of humankind. In fact, just 1 percent of global household income — some \$350 billion annually — would suffice to end severe poverty worldwide.

In light of these facts, the response to the problem by the world's elite is appalling. Insisting on a go-slow approach, they are celebrating the Millennium Development Goals that — repeatedly diluted — envision, between 2000 and 2015,

a 21-percent reduction in the number of extremely poor people.

The dominant narrative, produced by the World Bank, presents the persistence of poverty as due to various local problems that the affluent countries are working to overcome with their experts and development assistance.

This narrative ignores that economic polarization takes place in the context of a highly integrated global economy, governed by an elaborate regime of treaties and conventions about trade, investments, loans, patents, copyrights, trademarks, double taxation, labor standards, environmental protection, use of seabed resources, production and marketing of weapons, maintenance of public security, and much else.

Designed and imposed primarily by the world's most powerful governments and corporations

for their own benefit, this regime influences profoundly the evolution of poverty and global inequality.

It fails by and large in human-rights terms by perpetuating poverty and dependence and by bringing on new risks and vulnerabilities with which the poor are least able to cope: economic crises, for example, as well as environmental degradation, resource depletion, climate change, and extreme weather events.

Yet, this regime also includes some positive elements — such as the recognition of human rights, women's rights, equality and non-discrimination standards, labour rights and environmental protections — which were typically gained by activists from South and North in protracted struggles and which now provide openings in many countries for the poor and disenfranchised to hold their governments to account and to protect their human rights.

Building on these achievements, CROP will work for the prominent incorporation of the imperative of poverty avoidance into the design of the global institutional order. Such incorporation in turn requires a much fuller understanding of the nature, extent, depth, distribution, trends, causes and effects of poverty. We need a better grasp of what poverty consists of than some poverty line denominated in international dollars — an understanding that is responsive to the lived experiences of poor people and can be shared by them.

We need better explanations of how the emerging rules of the world economy have affected the global distribution of income and wealth, education and health care, job opportunities and disease vectors, violence and environmental burdens.

3 Mission and Core Objectives

Our fundamental mission is to work in collaboration with like-minded knowledge networks, institutions, and scholars, in order to build independent, alternative and critical knowledge and education on poverty, and policies for preventing and eradicating poverty.

The CROP Key objectives are to:

1) promote critical inter-disciplinary and comparative research on the nature, extent, depth, distribution, trends, causes and effects of poverty,

2) produce knowledge with relevance to diverse policy communities and create spaces for dialogue with various policy actors at national, regional and global levels,

3) contribute to building and enhancing global comparative research capacities,

4) undertake critical analysis and monitoring of national and international policy responses to poverty everywhere.

In order to initiate these critical and collaborative tasks, the Scientific Committee members of CROP and the staff at the Secretariat have agreed to set into motion a process aimed at developing a second opinion against the dominant defenses of the status quo and to produce a series of clear, comprehensible research outputs that are immediately accessible to policy makers, activists, the media and the general public.

4 Key Activity Areas

CROP's Strategic Plan for 2010-2011 is structured along seven key interrelated activity areas:

1. Developing a critical global poverty research agenda

(i) A key strategic action is a broad, consultative agenda-setting or visioning exercise which would also serve to reach out to existing networks, build new ones, and raise CROP's visibility.

(ii) A workshop in May 2010 is aimed at producing framing papers on key thematic clusters. Some thematic clusters have already been identified. The key themes that are al-

ready structuring some of the activities listed at the end of this document are centered on the following clusters:

- Climate change and the poor
- Rights, values and global justice
- Social cohesion, welfare, and global dimensions
- Child poverty
- Feminization of poverty
- Methodological and integral research design tools

2. Developing and coordinating interdisciplinary

South-South and South-North comparative research

(i) Promoting further the existing core projects (the CLACSO-CROP Programme on Poverty Studies in Latin America and the Caribbean) by linking them to other activities of the CROP Secretariat. A conference in Cuba, November 2010, on Poverty, Environment and Climate Change, links the usual network activities of this core project with involvement of key actors outside the region.

(ii) Stimulating and promoting support for a few international projects to become core projects. The first adoption of an international project is the

Critical Global Poverty Studies Group (CGPS), focused on the theme Reframing Poverty: What Role for the Middle Classes. CGPS is now a core project of CROP.

(iii) Identifying and promoting research projects in the undertaking of other actions, such as the visioning process or the expansion of the Programme's activities into new regional areas, or in the work with National Committees.

3. Building and extending the global reach and impact of the CROP network, facilitating knowledge exchange

(i) A key strategic action is the establishment of a network database searchable online and making this available on the CROP website. The CROPNet will contain information about the network members, their research projects, key publications and activities.

(ii) Identifying and establish collaborative agreements with target groups of like-minded scholars through the appointment of CROP Fellows (a core resource group of committed scholars and/or activists who lend ideas, help promote the CROP network, lead strategic initiatives in thematic working groups and serve in programme committees for CROP workshops.

(iii) Establishment of agreements with like-minded institutions. One concrete existing inter-institutional alliance that fits our already identified thematic focus is the UN's Global Social Floor Coalition. The UN Chief Executive Board resolved in April 2009 to work towards a global

"Social Protection Floor which ensures access to basic social services, shelter, and empowerment and protection of the poor and vulnerable".

This has subsequently been elaborated in the June 2009 UNCEB document as a "floor (that) could consist of two main elements: (a) public services: geographical and financial access to essential public services (water, sanitation, health, education); and (b) Transfers: a basic set of essential social transfers.....to provide a minimum income security". CROP lends support to this initiative as one step towards eradicating world poverty.

A second key partnership already built is with Childwatch International/UNICEF; A major research building conference is already planned for April 2010 at Penn State University. A third already ongoing partnership is with the Transnational Institute (TNI), and CROP has started collaborating on the organization

of the conference to be held in Tampa, Florida in 2011).

The Secretariat is in conversation with UNRISD (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development) for a similar partnership, and an event launching the new UNRISD Poverty report is scheduled for 2010.

(iv) Establishment of regional partnerships along the line of the CLACSO-CROP Programme on Poverty Studies in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Secretariat is in discussion with the Council for the Development of the Social Sciences in Africa (CODESRIA). CROP's Scientific Director will travel to Dakar early 2010 to hold meetings with CODESRIA's leadership.

We plan to hold a major conference in Dakar, Senegal in February 2011, launching the first stage of the new CODESRIA-CROP Critical Poverty Studies Programme.

(v) Establishment of agreements with other key ISSC Programmes. CROP is forging alliances with the International Human Dimensions of Environmental Change Programme (IHDP), through seeking of joint appointment of observer status in both Programmes and joint activities.

(vi) We are working on the organization of two visioning workshops in the Asia region, coordinated by the SC members and CROP Fellows in the region. One of these workshops will be held in Bangladesh, and though CROP encourages local partners to shape workshop themes, partners there have already stated an interest on working on the interrelations between Poverty, Human Rights and Climate Change. The second event will be held in China.

(vii) Strengthening of relations with North America. A conference under the label "Social Movement Governance, the Poor, and

the New Politics of the Americas" will be held in Tampa Florida (USA) February 2-4, 2011, in collaboration with the Patel Centre for Global Studies of the University of South Florida, the Journals Globalizations and Third World Quarterly, Routledge, and the Transnational Institute.

(viii) Our regional strategy includes strengthening and forging relations with partner institutions in Europe, including former Eastern Europe. CROP is partnering with two key poverty studies centres in Europe for activities in this Strategy period.

First, we have been partners with the Peter Townsend Poverty Centre in the Peter Townsend Memorial Workshop, held in London November 2009 and we are also in discussion for the publication of a memorial volume in our CROP/Zed Book poverty studies series.

Second, we are partnering with the Brooks Poverty Centre and

the Chronic Poverty Centre at the University of Manchester in their major conference "Ten Years of 'War Against Poverty': What have we learned since 2000 and what should we do 2010-2020?"

The conference will be held in Manchester September 2010. We are working on the identification of CROP Fellows in Russia and Eastern Europe and plan to organize a workshop in 2011.

(ix) Establishment of National Committees to further strengthen the impact of the Programme. The first of these committees has already been created in Norway. A first meeting is scheduled for February 2010.

4. Strengthening of poverty research capacities through educational activities

(i) Creation of a CROP Summer Research School designed and organized with like-minded institutions and partners every two years.

(ii) Incorporation of educational activities and pedagogical components in most of the activities promoted and undertaken by CROP. Many of our programs do have courses built into their descriptions (for example, in the CLACSO-CROP Programme). A Graduate course will be held in parallel to the Scientific Committee meetings and presentation of framing papers in Bergen, May 2010.

(iii) Building of graduate and undergraduate level syllabus with regional differentiations and distributing those on the CROP website.

(iv) Design of online teaching tools available for use by all members of the CROPNet.

5. Promoting dialogue with policy and decision makers, opinion shapers and civil Society

(i) Active seeking of policy impact and influencing global opinion is one of the core objectives of the Programme.

CROP is initiating a dialogue with various policy and stakeholder groups, starting with conversations with current funding organizations. The dialogue is already initiated through the inclusion of relevant SC members and CROP fellows from sister organizations. This dialogue is also carried out in the form of support to concrete proposals, such as the ILO/WHO driven Global Social Floor coalition.

(ii) Use of the consultative status with ECOSOC that ISSC provides to its Programmes. An example of this activity was the participation of CROP's Scientific Director in the World Social Forum of

the Human Rights Council held in Geneva August 2009 on the theme Poverty and the Global Financial Crises. CROP presented a Recommendation to its President.

(iii) Reaching out to key regional bodies such as the European Union and the European Commission; and establishment of dialogue with key policy-makers whose work relate to poverty eradication.

This dialogue entails the participation of policy makers in all our events, but also to listen to their needs and priorities through their inclusion in our 'visioning process'. By bringing policy actors into our visioning process, we hope that their concerns can also be reflected in the emergent state-of-the-art agenda that shall follow.

(iv) Active policy oriented dissemination strategy. More engagement with policy makers will also be achieved

through concrete dissemination strategies specially designed for policy relevance.

As stated below, we are creating a policy brief series, 1Pagers, and we hope to generate a Rapid Response Team (through network members and fellows) that can produce quick responses to policy-makers work on poverty.

(v) Establishment of strategic planning in all events and actions of CROP so they include media outreach.

(vi) Establishment of a dialogue with civil society organizations and NGOs by incorporating participants of these organizations in our national committees, activities and workshops. We also aim to reflect the concerns of these actors in the emergent state-of-the-art agenda. Key NGOs are members of the Norwegian National Committee.

(vii) Identification of like-minded social movements working for

causes that fit the description of our mission and forging of strategic partnerships.

6. Developing an effective outreach and information strategy

(i) Creation of the CROPWeb as the 'one stop shop' of poverty studies. This is a virtual space for mobilizing alternative poverty research, displaying links and material from network members and projects, and linking to webpages and resources from like-minded groups. The Secretariat is working to host this virtual space at the newly created Bergen Resource Centre for Development Research, a centre jointly owned by the Chr. Michelsen Institute and the University of Bergen.

(ii) Creation of a new graphic design that communicates the new vision and core objectives of CROP.

(iii) Linking of the CLACSO Virtual Library to The Bergen Resource Centre for Development Studies.

(iv) Creation of a Critical Poverty Studies Briefs Series to display research results of CROP activities. The first Brief will be based upon CROP's Mission and its statistical sources.

(v) Production of a 1Pager Series.

(vi) Revamping of the CROP Newsletter with material collected through the CROPNet, input from SC members and Fellows.

(vii) Production of biweekly news email, collecting the most recent additions to material in the website.

(viii) Restructuring of the CROP & Zed Books collection on Poverty Studies. In collaboration with Zed Books, the collection will have as its goal to seek monographs and high

quality work from others, and not exclusively be an outlet for publication of CROP workshop papers as it has been in the past. Members of the SC are members of the editorial committee. All book proposals will be blind peer reviewed. The series will have a new marketing strategy and a new graphic design.

(ix) Promotion of Peer Review journal publications. High quality papers presented in CROP workshops will be transformed into special issues of highly reputed peer reviewed international journals (for example, we are preparing a special issue of the Journal of Global Social Policy from the Workshop held at the World Social Science Forum last May).

(x) If funding is available we will initiate bi-annual conferences CROP Open Meetings, and produce a bi-annual Report.

7. Professionalization of the CROP Secretariat and development of an international resource mobilization strategy

The secretariat is organized so it has a local, national and international set of functions that, although interrelated, are distinguishable from one another.

(i) Integration of the Secretariat at the University of Bergen, through its incorporation in the Research Department, or possibly a Global Research institute or Poverty Research Initiative section at UiB.

(ii) Creation of a Norwegian Poverty Research Network, in coordination with CROP's National Committee, and the establishment of similar national committees in other countries.

(iii) Reinforcement of the human resources at the Secretariat, and capacity building on documentation and

web maintenance, organization of activities and events, management of CROPNet and associate research fellowships to strengthen research management capacities.

(iv) International tender for the position of a managing director; pending confirmation of funds.

(v) Fundraising strategy and development of an international resource mobilization strategy.

The Implementation of this action plan requires close collaboration with and support from CROP's two cosponsors, the University of Bergen and the International Social Science Council.

Examples of CROP output 2010-2011:

- Workshops
- 1Pagers
- Zed Books on Poverty
- CROP Newsletter

5 Agenda of Events

2010

- January, 2010, WUN-CROP Research Building Workshop, CGPS Project on Middle Classes, Solstrand Fjord Hotel, Bergen
- February 4, 2010, National Committee Meeting, Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM), University of Oslo
- February 2010, Working meetings with CODESRIA, Dakar, Senegal
- March 2010, presentation of UNRISD Poverty Report (final date pending release of Report)
- April 2010, New Core Research Building workshop: Child Poverty, Penn State, US, in collaboration with Child-Watch
- May 2010, SC Meetings. One day workshop presenting to the wider public the key framing papers, also inviting National Committee, NFR and NORAD
- September 10-12, 2010, partners with Manchester Chronic Poverty/Brooks international Conference, Ten Years of 'War Against Poverty': What Have We Learned Since 2000 And What Should We Do 2010-2020?
- November 10-12, 2010, Conference on Poverty, Environment and Climate Change, La Habana, Cuba; in collaboration with CLACSO-CROP Programme

- November 16-23, 2010, ISSC General Assembly, IHDP/CROP/other ISSC Programs Joint Conference, Japan

2011

- April 2011, Launching of CODESRIA-CROP Programme, Africa
- August/September 2011, event in Egypt or region
- October 2011, Poverty, Human Rights and Climate Change Conference in Bangladesh
- 2011 Eastern Europe & Russia workshop
- February 2011, Conference Social Movements Governance in the Americas Conference, Tampa, FL., USA
- March 2011, Workshop "Towards an understanding of Peasant poverty in a changing environment: nature and society relations, causes, features and solutions" coordinated by Julio Bolvinik, Colegio de Mexico

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