

| Preface

The Comparative Research Programme on Poverty (CROP) was launched by the International Social Science Council (ISSC) in 1992, in close collaboration with UNESCO's Sector for Social and Human Sciences.

The aim of CROP is to build a solid foundation of empirical and theoretical knowledge on poverty causes and poverty manifestations in developed and developing countries. The ultimate goal of such knowledge is to move to a broader and deeper understanding of the dynamics of poverty upon which future programmes for poverty eradication can be built.

As part of this aim, and in collaboration with ISSC and UNESCO, CROP organized an international scientific symposium to discuss the current status of research on poverty in different regions of the world. The papers for the symposium were prepared by scholars well-known for their work on poverty and representing different disciplines. The papers survey the ground that has been covered by research in the past and identify the gaps that exist which need to be filled by future research. In this way, the book fills an important need and should be an invaluable reference document both for policy-makers and poverty researchers alike.

The book is thus CROP's contribution to the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty (1996) proclaimed by the United Nations.

Funds for the project were provided by UNESCO, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), ISSC, Centre for Health and Social Policy Studies of the University of Bergen, Norway, CROP, and the corps of authors who wrote their contributions to the book without any other compensation than the academic pleasure and altruistic satisfaction of collaborating with like-minded colleagues on an important project.

The CROP Secretariat and Centre for Health and Social Policy Studies coordinated the project and organized the scientific symposium in Paris where all the authors met to discuss their contributions to the book.

We are deeply grateful to the many people who made this book come true, whether on the funding, the organizing or the scientific side. Without the concerted efforts of the many actors involved in producing this volume, the book would never have appeared.

We would like to quote the greeting in Maori offered by the New Zealand participant at the symposium in Paris which very aptly summarizes our feeling: "Whakamoemiti kite Atua mo nga manaakitanga me nga awhina kia matou. Nga rangatira ma tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa." (I thank the source and spirit of life for the many ways we have been blessed and protected in coming to this gathering. I greet you all as elders and chiefs.)

With this greeting, we invite the readers of this book who are concerned with the scourge of poverty and who are committed to its eradication.

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