

# CROP newsletter

Comparative Research Programme On Poverty

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## frontiers of poverty research

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### **DEVELOPMENT AND THE FOUNDATION OF FREEDOM** Amartya Sen's *Development as Freedom* and the Norwegian *Action Plan 2015*

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has released recently a document that presents Norway's latest policy agenda for development cooperation, *Fighting Poverty: Norway's Action Plan 2015 for Combating Poverty in the South*.<sup>1</sup> The ministry launched the *Action Plan* on March 4th 2002 during a symposium named *Poverty and Development: Development as Freedom*. The symposium takes its name from the economist and philosopher Amartya Sen's now widely known book *Development as Freedom*.<sup>2</sup> In this work, Sen presents in an integrated and enriched way the most relevant features from his early work on entitlement and famines, as well as from his critique and extension of welfare economics, the capability approach to international development. Amartya Sen delivered the keynote address entitled "Development and the Foundation of Freedom."<sup>3</sup> Below a summary of Sen's speech.

In his address, Sen outlined the conceptual framework of *Development as Freedom* applied to poverty reduction, given the *Action Plan* makes poverty reduction the overarching goal of development policy. The most relevant feature of Sen's framework is that it views development in a broad way, as an integrated process that takes the way people actually live, what they are able to be and to do, as its main goal. Development, Sen argues, is the "process of removing

unfreedoms and of extending the substantive freedoms of different types that people have reason to value (1999:86)." Sen looks at the ends and means of development policies, to what these policies do for people's lives and for achieving what they consider valuable, rather than to goals that have a mere instrumental value. Thus, Sen's framework brings ethical awareness to the debate of development and poverty policies.<sup>4</sup>

According to Sen, freedom has two distinct senses, 1) a normative sense, that is, freedom is an end valuable in itself; and 2) an instrumental sense, that is, different freedoms are means interrelated to other freedoms or other means. For example, the usefulness of wealth "lies in the things that it allows us to do—the substantial freedoms it helps us achieve (1999:14)." Given wealth is a means *Development can scarcely be seen merely in terms of enhancement of inanimate objects of convenience, such as the rise in GDP (or personal incomes), or industrialization, or technological advance, or social modernization. These are, of course, valuable—often crucially important—accomplishments, but their value must depend on what they do to the lives of the people involved* (2002:2).

After distinguishing the normative sense entailed by the recognition that freedom is the primary objective of development—normative because it entails that development's achievements and goals must be seen in terms of what they contribute to the lives and freedoms (as ends) of the people involved—Sen devoted most of his presentation to explain the synergies and mutual support of different freedoms, the second sense of freedom. Using empirical

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examples about the roles of democracy and political and civil rights, the roles of social arrangements for education, health care, land reform ...etc, Sen illustrated the claim that "what a person has the actual capability to achieve is influenced by economic opportunities, political liberties, social facilities, and the enabling conditions of good health, basic education, and the encouragement and cultivation of initiatives (2002:3)." As usual in most of his writings and speeches, Sen emphasized the chain of good outcomes that comes from empowering women's lives. He used, for example, new recent findings that suggest a

*"causal pattern that goes from the nutritional neglect of women to maternal under-nourishment, to fetal growth retardation and underweight babies, to greater incidence of cardiovascular afflictions much later in adult life (along with the phenomenon of undernourished children in the long run)"* (2002:7).

It is this "world of interdependences" among different types of unfreedoms, Sen argued, which is relevant for poverty reduction policy and institutional reform. The different freedoms involved in poverty must be taken together if development efforts are to be effective, and in this regard, Sen praised the *Action Plan* for "taking an inclusive and integrative approach. (2002:8)"

Sen introduced a section on the relationships among freedoms, human rights, and sustainable development, as topics that "tend to figure prominently in the literature on development (and significantly in the Norwegian Plan as well) (2002:8). In regard to human rights, Sen focused on how the recognition of different freedoms as rights "immediately broadens the relevance of freedom by linking it with duties to secure that freedom which the state, society, or other individuals have to acknowledge" (2002:9). Arguing that, whether legislated or not, human rights pose claims on any responsible agent who is on a position to help, Sen proceeded by endorsing the view that, rights that have a specific identifiable duty bearer (such as the person killed and the killer), as well as rights that do not lead to the identification of the duty bearer (such as a hungry person starving and the ones who ought to help them), have the same and equal weight. It would be inadequate, he added

*To insist that, say, human rights should cover only political liberties but not economic freedom, such as freedom from hunger (as some have proposed), or that economic rights should have procedural or temporal priority over political liberty (as others have suggested)* (2002:11).

The last part of Sen's presentation was devoted to the linkages between his conception of freedom and sustainable development. Even though under the leadership of Gro Harlem Brundtland sustainability is defined in terms of the quality of people's lives, Sen argued that a shifting of the focus from living standards to freedoms, can enrich the idea of sustainable development. A freedom approach to sustainable development allows for the protection of matters that may not directly contribute to increase the living standards but that are valuable for people. This way, Sen claimed, sustainable development can become a less anthropocentric view of the environment, a view that includes concern for future generations, in short, "rather than seeing people as simply patients who are no greater than their living standards" (2002:14).

Sen concluded his keynote address by praising the *Action Plan* and its emphasis on the synergies among different freedoms and their crucial role for poverty reduction. I am very encouraged, Sen said, "by the commitment to see development in its full splendor, and not in some reductionist and formulaic light" (2002:15).

#### Notes:

- 1) For an executive summary of the document in English go to <http://www.crop.org/publications/reports.cfm>
- 2) Sen, Amartya (1999) *Development as Freedom*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf
- 3) Sen Amartya (2002) *Development and the Foundation of Freedom*, Keynote address, Oslo.
- 4) Sen's capability approach and his later reformulation in terms of freedoms is one of the main areas of study by development ethicists. Development ethics is a rather new discipline that reflect on the ethical reflection to the ends and means of global development. For more information on development ethics got to <http://www.development-ethics.org> and to <http://www.iadb.org/etica/ingles/index-i.htm>

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### CROP ANNUAL REPORT 2001 AND PLAN OF ACTION 2002-2003

The CROP Annual Report 2001 and Plan of Action 2002-2003 can now be accessed on the CROP webpage at <http://www.crop.org/publications/annual.htm>.

Those interested in receiving a hardcopy of the report can contact the CROP Secretariat.

### POVERTY AND WATER:

#### *With particular emphasis on Africa South of the Equator*

The academic session was organised in co-operation with the University of Natal and in conjunction with ISSC's Executive Committee meeting, in Durban, South Africa, April 23-24. The Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (SIDA) and ISSC were the main sponsors of the event.

Altogether 28 participants attended the session, including Assistant Director General of UNESCO, Pierre Sané, and John Nkinyangi, Chief, Unit for Coordination and Evaluation (UCE), Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO, as well as the President and the Secretary General of ISSC, plus members of ISSC's Executive Committee.

The following papers were presented at the session:

- Institutional Challenges to Water Management and its Implications for Service Provision in Nigeria* by **Ibidun O. Adelekan**, Nigeria
- The Link between Poverty and Water Supply: The Nigerian Example* by **Olumide Ajayi**, Nigeria
- The Interface between Accessibility to Safe Water and Poverty. Recent Experiences from Tororo District* by **Florence A. Asiimwe**, Uganda
- Opportunities for Reforming the Irrigation Sector: The Case of the Fish-Sundays Scheme of the Eastern Cape* by **Beatrice I. Conradie**, South Africa
- The Gender Dimension of Rural Poverty: Water, Disease and Development in South Africa* by **David Hemson**, South Africa
- Working For Water Programme: Fighting Poverty Through A Participative, Equitable And Sustainable Social Development Approach* by **Mthembeni Khumalo**, South Africa
- The Role of Time Use and Health Effects in Cost-benefit Analysis of Water Supply Projects* by **Kassim A. Kulindwa**, Tanzania
- Access to Water and Right to Life. Political Economy of Water Supply to the Urban Poor in India* by **C. Ramachandraiah**, India
- Poverty and Water Management: A Case of Smallholder Irrigation Schemes in Tanzania* by **Remigius Ignace Rushomesa**, Tanzania
- Water Pricing Reform, Economic Welfare and Inequality* by **Carl Erik Schulz**, Department of Economics, University of Tromsø, Norway

It was decided to develop a publication based on the best papers from this session as well as a selection of papers from the "Water, Poverty and Social Development" session that CROP organised at the International Water History Association "The Role of Water in History and Development" conference held at the University of Bergen last year. Editors are **David Hemson**, South Africa, and **Kassim A. Kulindwa**, Tanzania.

## editorial

### POVERTY AND WATER

As part of the preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development due to be held in Johannesburg in August, CROP recently invited, to a workshop in Durban, a number of social scientists particularly from Africa, but also including colleagues from Europe and India, to debate the problems of water from the perspective of those enduring poverty.

Evidence from Nigeria highlighted a truth that is surely universal. Dr. Ajayi, on the basis of studies in four cities, showed the link between access to clean drinking water and the incidence of poverty. Where the cost of safe water is exorbitantly high low-income families either have to use contaminated water, thus increasing incidence of the disease, or they have to pay more for clean water (if they can get it) thus depriving themselves of other basic necessities.

From Tanzania a careful paper from the University of Dar Es Salaam analysed the role of time use and health effects in cost-benefit analysis of rural water supply projects. Dr. Kulindwa showed that if too narrow a definition of benefits was used by private contractors then projects to supply water might not seem to be viable. But if the social benefits deriving from better health and from more time available for other activities were taken into account then the projects were definitely worth installing. The conclusion is significant in alerting authorities to the importance of ensuring good data and proper analysis.

But water is vital not only for consumption but in production. And in South Africa opportunities for reforming the irrigation sector in order to provide viable jobs for small-farmers were explored econometrically by Dr. Conradie who concluded that a higher priority might well be to establish an environmental reserve in order to ensure intergenerational sustainability.

From outside Africa Dr. Ramachandriah argued that the Constitution of India, which recognizes every citizen's 'right to life' as fundamental, should be used more aggressively to compel local governments to provide adequate access to clean drinking water particularly to the urban poor.

Everywhere poverty and water are inextricably linked and the struggle for sustainable development has to focus on them together. Moreover although the problem is obviously global the solution is essentially local and requires attention by researchers around the world. It would be good if the great assembly in Johannesburg could stimulate members of the CROP network to develop further the work that has begun in this area.

**Francis Wilson**, Chair of CROP  
(E-mail: [fwilson@cssr.uct.ac.za](mailto:fwilson@cssr.uct.ac.za))

## Call for papers

**CROP, CLACSO and Fundação Joaquim Nabuco (FJN),**  
convene a workshop, in Recife, Brazil, 19-21 March 2003:

### **The Role of the State in the Struggle Against Poverty**

International reports reveal that nearly one quarter of the population in developing countries live in conditions of extreme poverty. According to CEPAL, the number of poor people in Latin America and the Caribbean has increased by 50% from 1980 to 1999. At a time when global awareness of poverty seems to be increasing and the cause of poverty eradication is moving up the global political agenda, there are two trends that tend to marginalise or question the role of the state in poverty reduction. One is the 'anti-statism' that attends the neoliberal, managerialist and communitarian agendas, each of which in their way is influencing approaches to poverty reduction. The second stems from radical and critical ideas associated with the 'anti-globalisation' movement: a complex alliance of disparate factions that challenge the global ascendancy of capitalism, liberal democracy, Western culture and neoliberal welfare theories.

The workshop should contribute to a deeper understanding of the current role of the 'nation-state', by focusing on the relationships of the state with other social and political forces at supra-national, national or sub-national levels. Latin America and the Caribbean should provide the main empirical reference. However, studies from other continents or papers with predominantly theoretical contents that can enhance comparative perspectives are welcome.

The papers should discuss one or more of the following questions:

- What are the ideological underpinnings and strategies of current policies and state reforms relevant for the struggle against poverty?
- To what degree, and how, are poverty reducing policies and reforms influenced by dominant national and transnational forces, and/or by recommendations from international organisations such as IMF, World Bank, WTO and the governments of the G-8?
- To what degree, and how, do national parliaments, civil societies and pro-poor social movements influence the policies?
- Which are the most visible impediments, private or public, to the effective implementation of poverty reduction programmes? What is the role of parliaments in the design, execution and control of poverty reduction policies, e.g. through the national and subnational budgets?

The workshop will be limited to 30 participants. Preference will be given to scholars from Latin America, but scholars from other areas are also invited. All participants will be expected to take part in the proceedings (in English, Portuguese or Spanish), either presenting or discussing papers. Participants bear the responsibility for their own funding. However, a limited number of travel grants are available. The grants will be awarded according to geography (researchers from Latin America and the Caribbean will be prioritized), and the relevance, quality and originality of the abstract/paper. Details on how to apply for travel grants will be forwarded to those authors whose abstracts are accepted for the workshop. As a rule, accommodation will be covered for all participants during the workshop.

#### **THE DEADLINE FOR ABSTRACTS IS 1 OCTOBER 2002**

The abstract should include the title of the proposed paper, a summary of the main theme or argument, and indicate theory, methods and findings of your proposed paper. It should not exceed 1 PAGE (A4). **IMPORTANT:** A brief CV along with a list of your most recent publications should accompany the abstract. Please state clearly your name, title, nationality, full postal and e-mail address, telephone and fax numbers. The abstract and CV should be sent (preferably by E-mail) to all three addresses mentioned below.

Participants will be notified by 1 November 2002 whether their proposals for papers have been accepted or not, and will then be given details of the format in which the papers should be prepared (the deadline for submission of the paper will be 15 January, 2003).

A background paper and more information about the workshop is available by contacting:

- *Helenilda Cavalcanti*, **FJN**, Instituto de Pesquisas Sociais (INPSO/FUNDAJ), Ministerio de Educação, Governo Federal, Rua Dois Irmãos, 92 - Apipucos, CEP 52071-440 Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil, Tel: +55-81-3441-5537, Fax: +55-81-3441-4201, E-mail: [helen@fundaj.gov.br](mailto:helen@fundaj.gov.br)
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**NEW BOOKS ON POVERTY**

*In the name of the poor*, edited by Neil Webster and Lars Engberg-Pedersen, has recently been published by Zed Books. The book shifts the debate around poverty reduction away from the role of the state and the market. Instead the authors argue for the importance of exploring and understanding action taken by the poor themselves.

*Poverty and Democracy*, edited by Dirk Berg-Schlosser and Norbert Kersting, Zed books. A major question addressed is whether the apparently ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor both within countries and on a world-wide scale can be reduced? What can be done by multilateral and bilateral donors and NGOs of the "North" and the "South" to provide meaningful assistance in these processes? For ordering information contact Zed Books, 7 Cynthia Street, London N1 9JF, UK, E-mail: [Sales@zedbooks.demon.co.uk](mailto:Sales@zedbooks.demon.co.uk)

**POVERTY REDUCING PLANS**

Several plans for poverty reduction have surfaced during the last few years. Some are national plans for poverty reducing efforts. Others originate in traditional donor countries and are written as their contribution to poverty reduction in the South. The last one out is *Fighting Poverty: Norway's Action Plan 2015 for Combating Poverty in the South*. A summary in English of the Plan can be downloaded from the CROP webpage. As soon as the full text is available in English it will be placed on the CROP webpage.

If any of our readers wishes to have his/her national poverty reducing plan published on the CROP webpage for closer inspection, scrutiny and comparison by other CROP members, you are welcome to send a copy to the CROP Secretariat.

**UNEP REPORT WARNS ABOUT WATER SHORTAGE**

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has just published the Global Environment Outlook 3 (GEO3) report, which close to one thousand researchers have contributed to. The report warns that within 30 years more than half the world's population may be without access to clean drinking water.

The report can be downloaded from UNEP's website at <http://www.unep.org>

**LIST OF CROP EVENTS  
2002-2003****June 2002**

19-22: *Poverty, Corruption, and Human Rights: Ethics of Citizenship and Public Service*. IDEA 6th International Conference on Ethics and International Development in collaboration with CROP, Honduras.

**July 2002**

7-13: *Issues in pro-poor policies in non-OECD countries*. Joint session with RC19 at the ISA XV World Congress of Sociology, Brisbane, Australia.

**November 2002**

4-6: *Poverty reducing strategies in the Caribbean - with particular emphasis on external actors and their impact on poverty formation in the area*. A joint CROP, CLACSO, Centro de Investigaciones Psicológicas y Sociales (CIPS), and Centro de Investigaciones de la Economía Internacional (CIEI) workshop, Havana, Cuba.

**December 2002**

9-11: CROP organises a special session on *Poverty Producing Processes* at the ISSC 50th Anniversary, Vienna, Austria. See below for details. Papers by invitation only.

**March 2003**

19-21: *The Role of the State in the Struggle Against Poverty*. A joint CROP, CLACSO and FJN workshop, in Recife, Brazil. See page 3 for "Call for papers"

**POVERTY PRODUCING PROCESSES**

Special session at The International Conference on "Social Science and Social Policy in the XXIst Century" organised by UNESCO and the International Social Science Council, Vienna, 9-11 December 2002.

Much of the academic and political attention concentrates around poverty reduction. That is an important focus. Less in focus are the poverty producing processes and the measures needed to stop or reverse those processes. Poverty production occurs on all levels and much of it is so embedded in ordinary ways of life that it has turned invisible. Other poverty producing processes are very visible but linked to strong economic and political interests that make interference difficult and at times even hazardous.

The session will bring out examples of poverty production, analyse them within a framework of conflicting interests and discuss policy options to minimise the harmful effects on poverty formation.

**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 increased 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, find the CROP webpage at <http://www.crop.org> The pages hold general information about CROP, news about past and ongoing activities, as well as the latest CROP newsletter.

**AT THE CROP SECRETARIAT  
YOU WILL MEET:**

**Elsø Oyen**, Scientific Director of CROP

**Kirsti Thesen Sælen**, Co-ordinator

**Inge Erling Tesdal**, Executive Officer

**Einar Braathen**, Programme Officer

**Asuncion St. Clair**, Research Fellow

**THE QUOTE**

*No one in this world can feel comfortable or safe while so many are suffering and deprived*

**Kofi Annan**

UN Secretary General