

## July 2013

# Mobilizing critical research for preventing and eradicating poverty

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## FOREWORD

*By Thomas Pogge and Alberto Cimadamore*

2013 is quite a relevant year for the present and future of CROP. We began the year with the implementation of the renewed contract between the International Social Sciences Council (ISSC) and the University of Bergen (UiB), which provided the institutional rules and operational resources for the programme activities in the short and medium terms. On the academic front, an entirely new *Scientific Committee* (SC) was elected as a result of the open call issued last year, and it held its first meeting in Bergen to –among other things – initiate a discussion on mid-term and long-term plans for the programme.

These and the other events highlighted in this issue have taken place as a part of the CROP's 20th anniversary celebration, the theme of which was "Past, present, and future of poverty research". We believed that revisiting the history of CROP would allow us to reflect upon our past and, in this way, learn important lessons that will carry us forward in the years to come.

A self-reflection on our own trajectory was done with valuable contributions from founders, sponsors, long-standing members of the network, the Secretariat personnel, and new members of the SC. All of us agreed that this is the ideal time to celebrate the fact that an institution born to provide high-quality, critical poverty research has been able to persist in its task for two decades. This was not spontaneous, but rather the result of a good idea with strong institutional roots in the mother institutions (the UiB and ISSC) and the commitment of key members of the network during all this time.

Our celebrations were cautious and modest, though. We are conscious that the main reason for celebration we would ever have is the eradication of our "object" of study, poverty. This objective was considered idealistic when CROP included it as a central element of its vision 20 years ago, and is still so today. However, the discourse has been changing, and today, even governments and international actors that are greatly responsible for a status quo that keeps an alarming number of people poor worldwide are currently speaking out about eradicating (extreme) poverty. (See, for instance, the Millennium Declaration and the recent UN-SG High-Level Panel Report on the post-2015 Development Agenda, signed by Susilo Bambang, Ellen Johnson, and David Cameron.)

This noticeable change in the discourse and the persistence of poverty justifies the effort towards the evaluation, and eventually the reorganization, of a poverty research organization. The SC and the Secretariat are working in this direction. The guidelines for a medium-term strategic plan were discussed with the ISSC and the UiB. The results will be processed and translated into a document that reflects CROP strategy for 2014–2020.

The readers of this issue will probably share with us the joy and anguish that is somehow always present in those conscious thinkers dealing with poverty research. They will also have a snapshot of CROP's activities during the semester, as well as of our desire to learn from the past to improve our future. We wish you all a good summer or winter, depending on the part of the world you are in.



## CROP 20<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

[June 9–11, Bergen, Norway]

In June CROP celebrated its 20th anniversary, and in honor of this milestone, a series of events were organized on the occasion of the annual meeting of the Scientific Committee (SC). Many scholars, fellows, and friends from different moments of CROP's history participated in these events. One of the central activities was the first meeting of the SC with its new membership. A workshop, three public events, and a special evening reception were also held at the Bergen Resource Centre for International Development (BRC).

### Meeting of the Scientific Committee

On June 9–10, the new members of the CROP SC participated in the meeting with Thomas Pogge, Chair of the SC, Heide Hackmann, Executive Director of the International Social Science Council (ISSC), Sigmund Grønmo, Rector of the University of Bergen (UiB), and Alberto Cimadamore, CROP Director.

The *CROP Annual Report 2012*, plans for the 2013–2014 period, as well as the long-term programme strategy to be presented during the upcoming *ISSC General Assembly*, were topics of discussion at the meeting.

The new SC discussed future activities and topics to be included in CROP's agenda and its members committed to a close collaboration with the Secretariat. In this context, SC member Professor *Etienne Nel* was appointed as editor of the CROP Poverty Brief Series. Nel succeeds Professor Bob Deacon, who was the first editor of the series. Both the SC and the Secretariat members expressed their gratitude for Deacon's substantial contributions during his time with the institution.

### Public Event: "Feminization of Poverty"

On June 10 a round table on the "Feminization of Poverty" initiated the series of public events held to celebrate CROP's anniversary. Sharon Bessel and Scott Wisor, both from the Australian National University, were the guest lecturers. They are part of the team working on a project closely related to CROP which aims to develop a new measure for poverty and gender disparities. This project is based on large-scale research including fieldwork in six different countries from Southern Africa (Angola, Malawi and Mozambique), South-East Asia (Indonesia and the Philippines) and the Pacific (Fiji). The event was moderated by Thomas Pogge, who is also the coordinator of the research team.

"We don't have accurate measures of poverty that really tell us about the gender aspect of poverty," affirmed Bessel at the beginning of her presentation. She examined various ways to measure poverty, and explained some of the methodological concerns that encouraged the team to develop the gender-sensitive *Individual Deprivation Measure* that she presented. The three pillars for the proposed measurement are a) gender-sensitivity, b) the individual as the appropriate unit of analysis, and c) working alongside the poor to develop the survey tool. As Bessel stated, "measure of poverty must reflect and be grounded in the lived experiences and priorities of the poor." Finally, she presented some of the main concepts included in the theoretical framework.

Following Bessel's presentation, Wisor explained the way in which the measures were tested in 750 households

in the Philippines. Subsequently, he summarized the dimensions and indicators chosen, the central findings, and future plans related to the project. In the survey, the average female score (for deprivation on the indicator) was slightly higher than the average male score. The female scores were higher for shelter, health, education, basic sanitation, decision making and personal care, freedom from violence, family planning, and respect in paid and unpaid work. Meanwhile, male scores were higher for leisure time. Explaining the findings, Wisor added that even if women are not significantly more deprived than men, this does not mean that there is not a great deal of injustice against women in the Philippines.

The next step for the project is to continue to test the survey tool in the other countries mentioned.

## Conference and Celebration

A public conference on the “**Past, Present, and Future of Poverty Research**” was held at the BRC to examine the contributions of CROP during the past two decades to the configuration of a distinctive field of scientific enquiry. The founder and first director of CROP, Else Øyen; Heide Hackmann, executive director of the ISSC; Sigmund Grønmo, Rector of UiB; and Thomas Pogge, the current Chair of the CROP SC, provided their views and highlighted the distinctive approach to poverty research initiated by CROP with the support of its sponsors.

Grønmo emphasized UiB’s partnership with CROP and the ISSC, as well as the importance of the programme within UiB’s scientific and international strategy. Grønmo pointed out future challenges CROP may face as an institution in trying to shape an agenda that will have a tangible impact. In this way he brought to the event some debates that were also discussed in the SC sessions. Øyen shared with the audience her experience in building a distinctive research initiative within a complex institution like the ISSC. She was able to connect with the audience very well, particularly as she spoke of the seminal process initiated in the early 1990s and the ideas behind the creation of CROP. Øyen explained that one of the main objectives was to

expand the use of scientific methods in the analysis of poverty, a field that was very much occupied by various opinions, preconceptions, and ideological views at the time. As such, CROP put forth a multidisciplinary approach that articulated a theoretically and methodologically novel means of tackling poverty alleviation. This distinctive approach focused on variables like the behavior, ethics, and values of the non-poor, which were not always present in mainstream explanations of poverty.

Following Øyen’s presentation on poverty research in the past, Pogge introduced his vision for the future, focusing on the Millennium Development Goals and their eventual replacement. He stressed the importance of analyzing the behavior and beliefs of the wealthy to understand the persistence of poverty, and asserted that one of the main drivers perpetuating unequal income distribution has been regulatory capture by the most powerful actors at the national and international levels. He illustrated the growing gap that separates the poor and the wealthy, and suggested an institutional reform of the existing rules that are disadvantaging the poor. As part of this reform, he elaborated on the creation of a Human Development Fund that would be financed by taxes on activities such as trade-distorting subventions, greenhouse gas emissions, arms exports to less-developed countries and reduced tax dodging by multinational corporations.

Else Øyen and Thomas Pogge, chair of CROP’s Scientific Committee.



Hackmann closed the conference by highlighting some of the main challenges for the future of social sciences and poverty studies. She argued that the complexity of the current “planetary and social crises” demands “an integrated science that works across disciplines and fields, across epistemic communities around the world and with (not for) the societies.” The current work of the ISSC is moving strategically in that direction, and poverty research has a relevant place in ambitious projects such as Future Earth and the World Social Science Fellows Programme, as was shown during the joint event recently organized by the ISSC and CROP (see related story in this issue, [page 5](#)). Therefore, she concluded, it is crucial for the Council that CROP continues to address poverty within the context of global change, a concept that is not always present in contemporary research.

After the conference, a musical event called “**Integration and Fusion**,” organized jointly with the Grieg Academy, took place at the BRC. Northern and Southern beats created the ideal atmosphere for a celebration that united CROP members, sponsors, and friends with the public and university authorities.



Sigmund Grønmo (UiB) and Heide Hackmann (ISSC).

## Workshop on “Poverty Research in Historical Perspective”

SC members, CROP fellows, and special invitees gathered at this workshop to reflect on the development of poverty research during the last two decades, and on the direction(s) poverty research might be heading in the next decade or so.

During the workshop there was an overall consensus among

attendees that poverty research has grown rapidly. Theories, methods, and access to new data to measure, describe, and explain poverty levels, along with new groups of experts, interested actors, organizations, and the mobilization of poverty-stricken groups, have fundamentally changed our understanding of poverty.

CROP has played an important role by being a pioneer in this field of thought, and by being a vehicle for linking researchers from different academic fields, traditions, and

cultures. Such versatility is still an important goal, and is also a vital asset for the current project.

Participants were invited to write a paper on how they have observed poverty research since they started in the field, including reflections on why the changes they note have occurred. They were also asked to reflect on where poverty research is likely to move in the next decade or so. A book proposal with the results of this workshop is currently under preparation.

## Public Event: “Poverty Research in Historical Perspective”

After the workshop, a second round table took place. On this occasion, Maria Petmesidou (Democritus University of Thrace, Greece) and David Hulme (University of Manchester, UK) shared with the audience their views on “**Poverty Research in Historical Perspective**,” with Norman Duncan (South Africa) acting as moderator.

Petmesidou started her presentation by identifying the major trends in the analysis of inequality, poverty, and social deprivation over the last 30 years. After a brief overview, she referred to the current “paradox”. On one hand, the debate on action following the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has opened a wide forum of

discussion on ambitious goals based on a global social contract. On the other hand we are witnessing a global consensus on austerity: prioritizing fiscal balances over employment, drastically reducing or eliminating subsidies, “rationalizing” safety nets through tighter targeting, and reforming pension and health systems. Finally, she stressed the challenges ahead for the post-2015 framework in addressing the current “fourfold crisis: financial, employment, food and environmental crisis.” The first remark was that the future agenda “needs to encompass, in an integrated way, issues of inequality and poverty in both developed and developing countries.” Some of the main issues to be considered here are the impact of the crisis on the job markets, the growing concentration of poverty in middle-income countries, and the need to link poverty-reduction goals with employment generation.

Hulme’s presentation focused on how the concept of poverty has waxed and waned in development thought since the end of the Second World War, and how these fluctuations have influenced development policy and action towards poverty alleviation or eradication. As a conclusion, Hulme raised the question of whether we are moving to a theoretical synthesis that can be characterized as “liberal institutional pluralism,” or whether there is an “uneasy policy compromise” as illustrated by the debate around the UN post-2015 Development Agenda. This agenda aims to combine “growth with sustainability and poverty reduction” but reducing inequality is not being seriously considered among the goals. “Is it intellectually viable?” asked Hulme, opening the debate that followed the presentation.

## WORKSHOP ON RELIGION, POVERTY AND POLITICS [February 21–22, Bergen, Norway]

CROP and the Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) organized this conference to explore ways in which poverty and social injustice are addressed by different religious actors and communities. Researchers from Ethiopia, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, South Africa, Sweden, USA, Zimbabwe, and Norway attended and presented papers in a two-day workshop (see [programme](#)).

While poverty and social injustice are glaring social facts in many societies, they are often conceptualized differently by different religious strands. The ways in which poverty and social injustice are understood may reveal not only fundamental differences between secular approaches and various religious interpretations, but

also the qualitatively different ways in which poverty is addressed. The question of poverty and social injustice might involve, for instance, withdrawal and isolation, non-action, or action against poverty through spiritual, ritual, organizational, and/or political means.

With an emphasis on how poverty and social injustice are understood, for example as caused by human, material, or spiritual conditions, the focus of the conference was on questions of interpretation, practice, and change rather than discourses on economic growth, democracy, and development. Of particular interest were the various forms and dynamics of convergence between the religious and the political perspectives, including the Catholic, Pentecostal, and/or Muslim religious communities and movements, as well as indigenous worldviews and cosmologies. A central concern was how mobilization among religious actors might generate new ways of conducting politics, for example on the basis of relational ontologies. By breaking with established

dualisms between what has been conventionally perceived as the secular and the religious, such mobilization might imply a shift in what it means to be a political actor.

The workshop featured papers addressing these issues, as well as one or more of the following questions: How do religious actors, institutions, and/or organizations interpret and conceptualize poverty? How is poverty addressed by religious actors, institutions, and/or organizations? In what ways does religion impede or facilitate social, cultural, institutional, and/or structural change in societies where poverty is a severe problem? What features characterize the societal models formulated by religious institutions/organizations, and how do they envision these models and their own roles in the political,

juridical, and economic spheres of society? To what extent do religious actors, institutions, and/or organizations engage in advocacy with the secular authorities with regards to poverty-reduction policies and practices?

The presentations and discussions held at the conference, and the preliminary studies done by the members of the working group, have been instrumental in the development of the fully-fledged research proposal that was submitted to the Norwegian Research Council on May 29.

While awaiting possible funding for the research project, Cecilie Ødegaard and Hans Geir Aasmundsen, two members of the group, will edit a book based on the papers presented at the conference.



CROP Archive.

## SEMINAR ON SUSTAINABLE URBANIZATION

[March 25–30, Quito, Ecuador]

**First Seminar of the World Social Science Fellows Programme: Partnership with the International Social Science Council (ISSC) and the International Human Dimensions Programme (IHDP) for the launch of the World Social Science Fellows Programme**



Photo ISSC.

The first seminar in the World Social Science Fellows Programme took place in Quito, Ecuador in March 2013. CROP, the ISSC Secretariat, the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change (IHDP), and the Andean University Simon Bolivar (UASB) jointly organized this activity, which aims to foster the next generation of leaders in social science. This first event was focused on developing new interdisciplinary approaches to sustainable urbanization, and was hosted by the UASB.

Nineteen fellows from 14 countries (representing five continents), and three senior scientists, worked closely with special invitees during the one-week seminar. The leading

roles of the fellows during the presentations and debates, and the articulation of interdisciplinary dialogues, were two main features of the daily activities. After two and a half days of presentations by the fellows and lectures by senior scientists, the debate began. The debates focused on four larger themes that had emerged from the earlier activities: climate change and the city; vulnerability, poverty, and inequality; governance and planning; and alternatives. These thematic discussions that took root during the seminar will be continued by electronic means, and the organizers plan to publish the outcomes in due course.

For more information see: [www.worldsocialscience.org](http://www.worldsocialscience.org)

## CONFERENCE ON THE STRUCTURAL ROOTS OF POVERTY

[February 14–16, Yale University, USA]

CROP co-sponsored a conference on “**The Structural Roots of Poverty: Theory Meets Practice**”, which was organized by Academics Stand Against Poverty (ASAP) and Yale’s Global Justice Program. Illicit financial flows and tax policy, the United

Nations post-2015 Development Agenda, climate change, and global health were some of the main topics discussed during the three-day conference held at Yale University. Selected presentations made during this event will be published in a

volume in progress on **The MDGs and Poverty Reduction in the 21st Century: A Critical Assessment**, along with papers presented during a workshop organized in 2012 by CROP’s Scientific Committee.

## POVERTY, LANGUAGE, AND MEDIA

A new CROP–UiB initiative funded by the Research Council of Norway

At its meeting on March 20–21, the Research Council of Norway’s Latin America Programme decided to fund a project on **Poverty, Language, and Media (POLAME)**, to be developed jointly by CROP and the Foreign Language Department of the University of Bergen in collaboration with five Latin American universities.

The three-year project is a comparative case study on how agenda-setting media in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico convey and construct the notions of poverty. It will focus on ideologies and interests expressed in the notions/conceptions/definitions of poverty transmitted by agenda-setting media, in order to understand the theoretical and practical (in other words, policy) implications of the linguistic framing of poverty. In short, POLAME aims to:

- 1) Identify the linguistic expressions representing poverty in agenda-setting media in Argentinean, Colombian, and Mexican Spanish, and in Brazilian Portuguese;
- 2) Identify which notion or notions of poverty are conveyed through linguistic expressions in these countries;
- 3) Study whether explicit or implicit interests and ideologies can be identified when notions of poverty are conveyed;
- 4) Analyze the implications of the study for policy makers and other professionals and organizations working with poverty;
- 5) Build a web-searchable taxonomy of the language of poverty which could also be used for further research, applications,



Alberto Cimadamore (CROP) and Ana Beatriz Chiquito (Foreign Language Department, UiB). Photo: Uyvind Gjerstad.

and publications; 6) Publish a collection of articles based on the results of the project in Spanish and English. The taxonomy and the project database will have open access.

The proposed research project intends to go well beyond the state of the art in Latin America by contextualizing the use of notions of poverty or social representations using multidisciplinary analysis, and will relate these notions to relevant contemporary theories of poverty as well as to the discourse and practice of poverty eradication. Quantitative and qualitative research methods will be instrumental in hypothesis testing and theory development. The resulting knowledge will have implications for policy and social change by allowing for the identification of factors impeding the social understanding of poverty, which will in turn promote effective design, implementation, and long-term political support of anti-poverty policies.

## DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY SCIENCE: THE CHALLENGE OF TRANSDISCIPLINARY KNOWLEDGE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

[May 13–15, Bergen, Norway]

Workshop organized by the Department of Health Promotion and Development (HEMIL), UiB Global, and CROP

Twenty researchers from 14 countries participated in a workshop on “**Development and Sustainability Science: The Challenge of Transdisciplinary Knowledge for**

**Social Change.**” The 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development set as a top priority the transition to “the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.” The required transition calls for a new form of collaboration, one which transcends the traditional boundaries of human activities and scientific disciplines.

Development practices have been largely compartmentalized, with economic, agricultural, health promotion, poverty elimination, human rights, environmental, and other “helping” communities working in parallel, despite the fact that the problems they seek to tackle are inextricably linked. This is also true of academia, where we see related disciplines working mostly in isolation and in ignorance of one another’s potential to contribute



solutions across the silos. It could be argued that the compartmentalization of disciplines (and thus their inability to cross-connect) is a cause of the failure to provide clear scientific responses to the questions of (extreme) poverty eradication, and sustainable and equitable development.

The workshop held in Bergen promoted a transdisciplinary approach to extreme poverty eradication and sustainable development, to construct methodological and scientific solutions to address some of the most critical issues faced by humanity in the 21st century. The event was followed by a public round table at the Bergen Resource Centre for International Development (BRC), which had as its main speakers Jane Springett (University of Alberta, Canada), Stanislas Bigirimana (Africa University, Zimbabwe), and Enrique Delamónica (UNICEF, Panama).

The organizers plan for the workshop to lead to a book on the subject. They believe that its publication will be a practical first step in forging new international collaborations between UiB and other national and international institutions that interact within the *Worldwide Universities Network*.



Camilo Perez-Bustillo.



Maria Petmesidou.



Enrique Delamónica.

## VISITING FELLOWS

During the first semester of 2013, CROP was visited by three of its fellows, who carried out research and dissemination activities. UiB's Strategic Programme for International Cooperation in Research and Education (SPIRE) funded the accommodation for Professor Camilo Perez-Bustillo from Mexico (for three months) and Professor Maria Petmesidou from Greece (for one month).

Perez-Bustillo used this opportunity to work on a planned publication. During his stay, he was very active in participating in the related dissemination activities at UiB Global, the Bergen Resource Centre for International

Development (BRC), the Rafto Foundation, and other research environments and organizations in the region. Topics discussed include human rights, migration, and Mexico's current political and social situation.

Petmesidou held a seminar aimed mainly at UiB graduate students and researchers, and a public lecture at BRC. She discussed with CROP and other researchers in the network the possibilities for a collaborative application for funding for a comparative project related to Mediterranean social policy issues. She used her research time to prepare an article which is intended to be published in the CROP Poverty Brief series. In addition, she participated in the workshop on **“Development and Sustainability Science: The Challenge of Transdisciplinary Knowledge for Social Change,”** and in the series of events to mark **CROP's 20th anniversary** (see related stories, [page 2](#)).

CROP was also visited by Enrique Delamónica, UNICEF Regional Advisor for Latin America. He developed a research agenda with the Secretariat, and participated in the international workshop on **“Development and Sustainability Science,”** as well as other related public events (see related story, [page 6](#)).

## THOMAS POGGE'S LECTURE AT THE BERGEN SUMMER RESEARCH SCHOOL

[June 18, Bergen, Norway]

**Food as a global development challenge was the cross-cutting theme of the Bergen Summer Research School (BSRS) 2013**

During the two weeks spanning June 17 to 29, the Summer School gathered an international group of research students and scientists to explore the complex and interconnected aspects of

food as a global development challenge in an interdisciplinary atmosphere.

Pogge, chair of CROP and Leitner professor of philosophy and international affairs at Yale University, gave one of the keynote lectures. He offered a critical view about international efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals, which tend to artificially lower estimates of the number of poor and hungry people. As new development goals are about to be formulated, Pogge underlined the importance of learning the lessons from the original set of goals: measurement of progress must be left to an independent expert

group rather than to politically exposed agencies like the FAO and the World Bank; and the definitions and methods must not be changed during the measurement period.

Pogge also took part in a round table discussion on **“Global Change, Food Security and Ethical Challenges,”** where participants discussed the responsibility of powerful states, intergovernmental organizations, international corporations, and individuals to achieve a more sustainable, equitable, and harmonious world where basic needs are met for all human beings. More information on the BSRS can be found [here](#).

## PUBLICATIONS

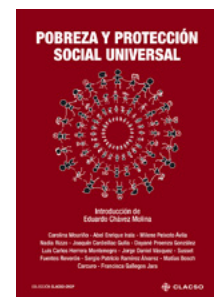
### CLACSO-CROP SERIES ON POVERTY IN LATIN AMERICA

#### POVERTY AND UNIVERSAL SOCIAL PROTECTION

CLACSO-CROP Series, CLACSO, Buenos Aires, March 2013.

Several governments in Latin America have abandoned their previous normative orientation towards market-based solutions, in favor of giving the state an increased role in promoting welfare and a better income distribution. Twelve young researchers on the CLACSO-CROP Programme provide a critical analysis of this situation, with a clear focus on the various systems of social protection in the Latin American and Caribbean region. This publication can be downloaded for free from:

[www.crop.org/viewfile.aspx?id=458](http://www.crop.org/viewfile.aspx?id=458).



#### POVERTY, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Guillermo Castro Herrera (coord.) CLACSO-CROP Series, CLACSO, Buenos Aires, March 2013.

Extreme inequality in income distribution, increasing environmental deterioration, and the harmful effects of climate change combine to create an acute situation that demands urgent measures and structural changes. Case studies from Nicaragua, Cuba, Honduras, Haiti, Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Chile are presented by 12 young CLACSO-CROP fellows in this recent publication, which is also available online from:

[www.crop.org/viewfile.aspx?id=459](http://www.crop.org/viewfile.aspx?id=459).



## CALENDAR

### September 25–27

SEMINAR and CONFERENCE to inaugurate the three-year POLAME project on “**Poverty, Language, and Media in Latin America,**” organized in partnership with UiB’s Foreign Languages Department. Medellín, COLOMBIA.

### October 18–20

CONFERENCE on “**Human Rights and Economic Justice: Essential Elements of the Post-MDG Agenda,**” organized in collaboration with Academics Stand Against Poverty (ASAP) and the Global Justice Program at Yale University, USA.

### November 28–29

PANEL on “**Poverty, Language and Media,**” jointly organized with UiB’s Foreign Languages Department as part of the NOLAN Conference. Oslo, NORWAY.

### February 2014, 19–21

International workshop on “**Child Poverty, Public Policies, and Democracy,**” jointly organized by CROP, Equity for Children, FLACSO, and IJ-UNAM. México DF, MEXICO.

## CROP POVERTY BRIEF

### POVERTY & THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs): A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT AND A LOOK FORWARD

The spirit of the Millennium Declaration led to one of the most visible and unified global campaigns to address poverty in the history of development cooperation. This resulted in large numbers of initiatives worldwide that had the MDGs as a point of reference. While there are many merits that we can attribute to the MDGs, the core commitments laid out in the Millennium Declaration have been lost along the way. A recent brief published by CROP argued – among other things – that these commitments need to be reinstated as the point of reference when assessing the individual MDG outcomes. A full version of the brief can be downloaded from: [www.crop.org/viewfile.aspx?id=453](http://www.crop.org/viewfile.aspx?id=453).



### CURRENT TRENDS IN POVERTY REDUCTION LATIN AMERICA: THE ROLE OF LABOUR MARKET AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

by Roxana Maurizio

Latin America experienced six years of sustained economic growth from 2003 to 2008. This performance was accompanied by positive social, labor market, and income distribution indicators. Less inequality and higher incomes resulted in lower rates of poverty and extreme poverty, and a decrease in the number of poor people. These improvements are in stark contrast to the situation in the 1980s and 1990s. Nonetheless, the reduction in poverty and inequality is not a simple consequence of economic growth, as this brief shows. A full version can be downloaded from: [www.crop.org/viewfile.aspx?id=452](http://www.crop.org/viewfile.aspx?id=452).

