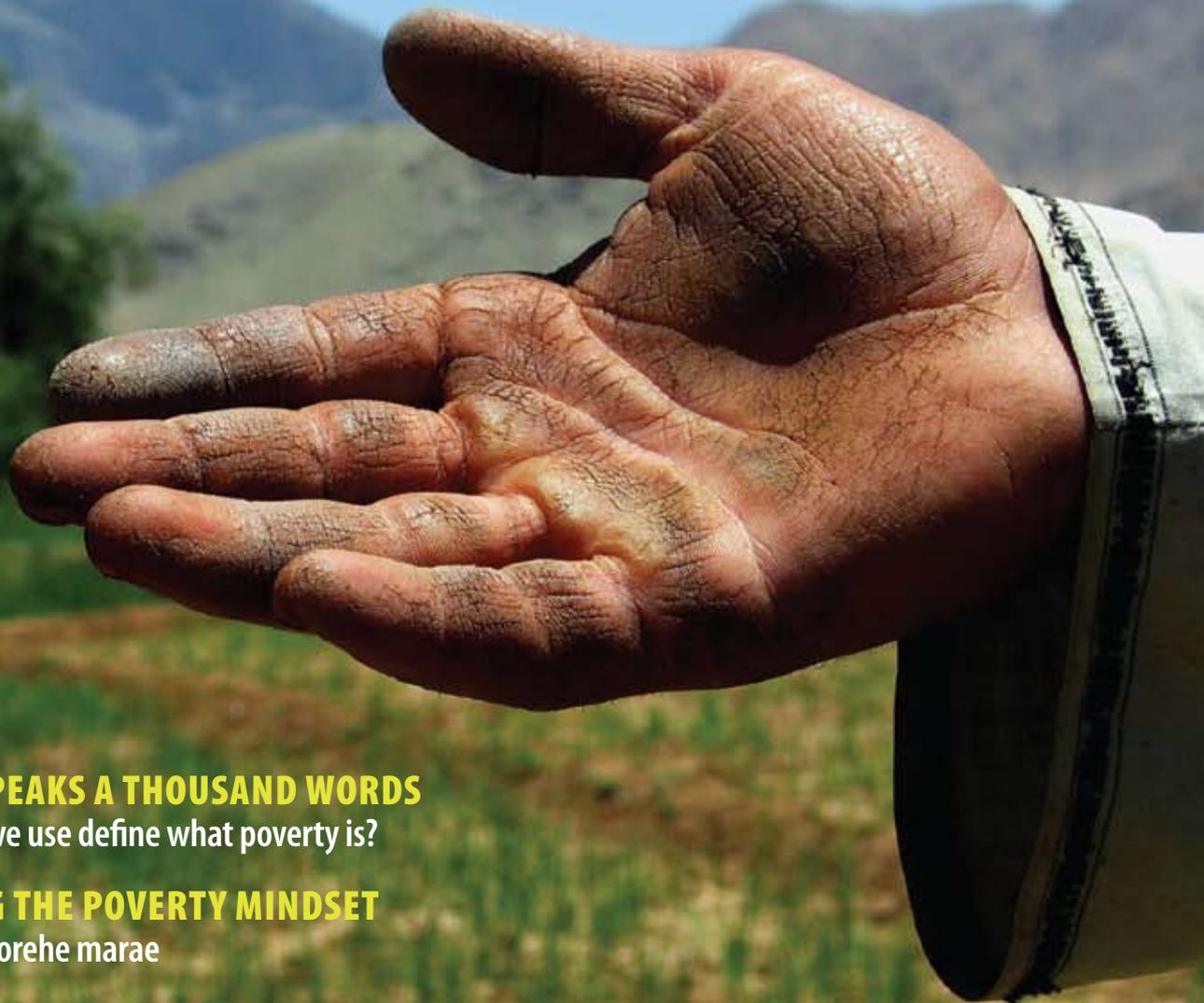


ME WHAKAPUTA KĒ I RUNGA I TE TIKA

JUST CHANGE

CRITICAL THINKING ON GLOBAL ISSUES
He whakaaro kaikini mō ngā take o te ao

what is
POVERTY?
HE AHA TE RAWAKORE



A PICTURE SPEAKS A THOUSAND WORDS

Do the images we use define what poverty is?

OVERCOMING THE POVERTY MINDSET

A view from Tukorehe marae

KA WHAKAPUTA KĒ KIA TIKA AI TE AO

C H A N G E F O R A J U S T W O R L D

We're making some changes around here...

Over the next 18 months, you'll notice some changes to Dev-Zone.

This summer, Dev-Zone is going to unite with our sister programme, the Global Education Centre, and become one organisation: Global Focus Aotearoa. But that's not all! Next year, we're going to launch an exciting new website – www.globalfocus.org.nz.

We want you to be able to make the most of our resources, and as one organisation – Global Focus Aotearoa – we'll be working together so you can. With our new website, we'll provide a seamless service that lets you quickly find and use the best resources in your area of interest.

All your favourite resources, like Just Change, will still be available (and still a great read). But all our resources will be in one place online, which means easier to find and use. You'll be able to easily choose which of them are most useful to you, and then use them!

For more information and a sneak preview of our new look and location visit www.globalfocus.org.nz

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Cover image: This farmer is one of over seven million people in Afghanistan that do not have enough to eat. Last year, 80% of rain-fed agriculture failed in drought-affected areas of the country due to a lack of rain, inflicting a heavy blow on the livelihoods of thousands of farming families. *Image: Pedram Pirnia.*

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Guest Editorial

He Whakaaro nā te Ētita Tāpae Wakaaro

What is Poverty?

A question asked by a villager.

The title of this editorial was the first slide in a presentation given by Dr Alice Pollard of the Solomon Islands at a recent symposium in Wellington. From the perspective of this villager, village life is good. Villagers live off the land, creating 'great things out of small things', they are happy with their lives and have strong, intelligent children who are curious about what surrounds them. Being from the Solomon Islands, Alice understands this questioning of the term 'poverty' from the local perspective.

I was enlightened to the perspective that life can be rich even if it is money-poor as an outsider living in Vanuatu from 1997-2003. One day I was led on a walk up the central ridge of the island of Maewo by the high chief of the area, Johnsteen Wari. I stopped to steady my breath several times along the walk; Johnsteen, at least 15 years my senior, strode on long, thin legs with no appearance of an aerobic workout. Two-thirds of the way up, we stopped near a waterfall gushing with cool, clear water and filled our cupped hands. After reaching the lookout, we were met and escorted by villagers to their small community nearby. We were greeted with locally-grown tropical fruits, fresh water and later, kava, a cornucopia that would seem exotic in Aotearoa New Zealand. To an outsider, this small community's simple dirt-floored structures, the villagers' implements and the clothing washed in river water may look like poverty. Yet, beneath this lies a different sort of wealth.

At the 2008 DevNet Conference, researcher Dr Iati Iati, a Samoan academic from the Centre for Pacific Studies at Canterbury University, said of people living in what we would term 'poverty': 'They grew up in these lives'. What these people grow up with as normal, we may see as poverty. Conversely, they may view our society as living in what to them looks like poverty; in their eyes we may have the 'things' that money can buy but may be lacking in knowledge of self-sufficiency,

of being able to provide and share with our communities and families what we truly need. This does not make light of the unjustness of absolute poverty – of the inequality that prevents some from fulfilling their basic needs – but we should acknowledge that poverty can be a matter of perspective. This should guide us in ensuring we start including all people in defining poverty before we start 'eradicating' it.

Our perspective is largely based on what we *think* is required for well-being. But how often do we question what it is we truly need? Real need may be different from what seems necessary to us as a result of progress – or of marketing.

The development industry strives to eradicate extreme poverty with aid and assistance, by 'helping' the poor to get more of what they 'need'. Perhaps if we looked more closely at our views of those needs, we might begin to explore our own image more critically. We might begin by seeing how, as Illich writes, through our 'unscrupulous benevolence, needs are imputed to others'. We might begin to see what they have that we don't.

The articles in this issue of *Just Change* ask the question 'What is poverty?', illustrating poverty from multiple perspectives. These viewpoints are explored and the issue shown to be so complex that defining poverty alone is a challenge in itself, let alone eradicating it. What is it specifically that needs eradicating? Who is to decide how it is done? Is there one answer? Is it just about providing aid or about ensuring parity by acknowledging the diverse perspectives of the people involved?

I challenge you to read these articles and consider what you thought poverty meant when you first opened this issue. One thing is clear: poverty goes far beyond economics.

Gayna Vetter completed a Masters in Development Studies at Victoria University in February this year. She has previously been a VSA volunteer in Vanuatu and Tanzania.

2. Guest Editorial/He whakaaro nā te Ētita Tāpae Wakaaro

Gayna Vetter

4. What is Poverty?

An overview of current definitions and debates on what poverty is.

FEATURES/NGĀ TUHINGA

6. Women in poverty: Revisiting the debates

Rachel Simon-Kumar

7. 'We need sons to go to heaven'

Chris Frazer

8. It's just a picture...

Rachel Tallon and Pedram Pirnia

ARTICLES/TUHITUHINGA

10. Thinking about poverty

Tony Binns

11. Poverty elimination: A distant dream in a society of dependency and domination

K. Prakash

12. Power and control: An analysis of poverty and development

Pip Bennett

13. Not all poverty alleviation is good poverty alleviation: The impact of blood selling in Henan province.

Anne Finamore

14. The poor 'r' us

Jonathan Sibley

15. Poverty of consumerism or a culture of humanity?

Linda Bremford

16. Relative deprivation: Poverty embedded in affluence

Nasir Khan

17. South Africa's poverty of trust

Annika Lindorsson

18. It's not just a physical thing: Poverty and mental health

Frances Hughes

19. Poverty measurements and the concept of well-being for disabled persons

Vardhani Ratnala

20. Demanding dignity: The human right to water

Olivia Rope

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES/NGĀ TIROHANGA AHUREA

21. Poverty: An indigenous Fijian perspective

Adi Elisapeci Samanunu Waganivalu

22. Daughters to Middle East and sons to North and East: Changing perceptions of poverty in Sri Lanka

Fazeeha Azmi

23. Rural poverty in Samoa: The views of the poor

Faletoi Tuilaepa and Sandra Martin

GRASSROOTS SOLUTIONS/HE RONGOĀ MAI I TE IWI

24. Overcoming the poverty mindset: A Tukorehe perspective

Fiona Kamariera and Sean Ogden

25. Buddhist aid: Pagodas reducing poverty in Cambodia

Arnaldo Pellini

26. Survival in Sudan: Local strategies for alleviating poverty

Nawal El-Gack

COMMUNITY/TE HAPORI

27. News from the Development Resource Centre, Take Action

28. Resources from the Dev-Zone Library

References used in the writing of these articles are available on www.dev-zone.org.



Photo: (c) 2001 Nrityanjali Academy, Courtesy of Photoshare.

6

Revisiting the gender debate

The link between gender and poverty is not as strong as we may think.



Photo: Dream Corps.

13

The impact of blood selling in Henan province

Not all solutions are good solutions, as these young men found out.



Photo: Nawal El-Gack.

26

Survival in Sudan

Community organisation goes a long way when dealing with the challenges faced by people in Sudan.

what is POVERTY?

HE AHA TE RAWAKORE

For those of us who have never experienced extreme poverty, how can we even begin to understand what this word means for those who are forced to live with it every day? But the question needs to be asked. And it is asked, frequently, in attempts to alleviate poverty. In order to achieve a state of well-being – whatever that may be for different people and cultures – we need to identify what is lacking and what the barriers are that prevent people from living the lives they aspire to.

DEFINING POVERTY:

International development organisations generally define poverty in three broad ways:

Economics-based: Definitions that assess poverty based on a country, household or individual's income or consumption levels underlie many of our assumptions about the causes of, and solutions to, poverty. This data is relatively easy to gather and may be compared across different contexts, but it is frequently criticised for failing to capture all the dimensions of what poverty means to different people and cultures, what it means for the environment, and also for ignoring wealth within the non-monetary economy (such as people growing their own food).

Needs-based: Basic-needs approaches set a minimum standard of living and assess poverty based on access to the items needed to attain this standard. What is considered a 'need' varies from country to country but normally includes, as a minimum, adequate housing, food, clothing and clean water. This approach acknowledges that income alone does not reflect a family's ability to meet needs.

Participation-based: Based on the experiences of people who are actually living in poverty, these measurements are highly subjective; they reflect people's reality and acknowledge the wide range of factors that influence being in, staying in and getting out of poverty.

ABSOLUTE VS RELATIVE POVERTY

Absolute poverty is based on a person's ability to buy certain basic necessities; those unable to obtain these necessities are considered to be below the poverty line. The World Bank's '\$1 a day' and the Human Development Index (HDI) are absolute poverty measurements that are used to compare poverty across different countries.

Relative poverty is based on a person's position in comparison to others in their society. It takes into account income inequality within countries and is often calculated as living below a percentage of the median income*. National poverty lines are a measurement of relative poverty.

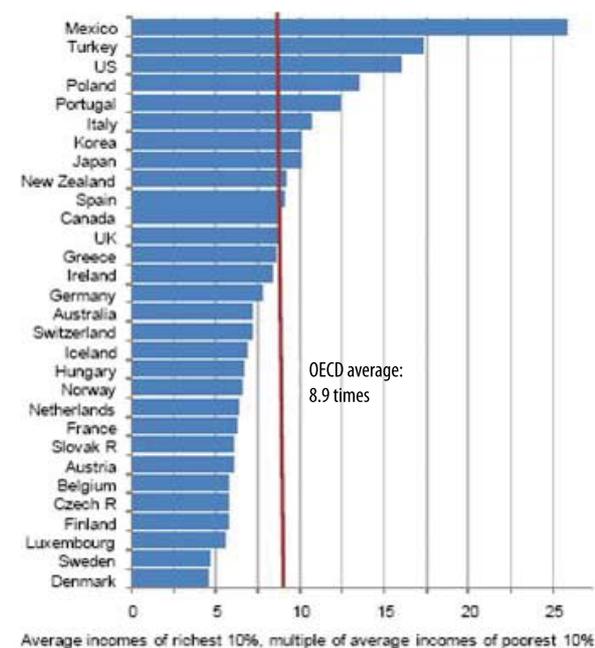
*The median income is the middle amount if all incomes were ranked in order.

The world's 9.6 million millionaires – comprising just 0.7 % of the earth's population – now control \$33.2 trillion in wealth, roughly a third of all the wealth in the world. Meanwhile, half of the world's population lives on less than \$2 a day (Boston Consulting Group, 2007).

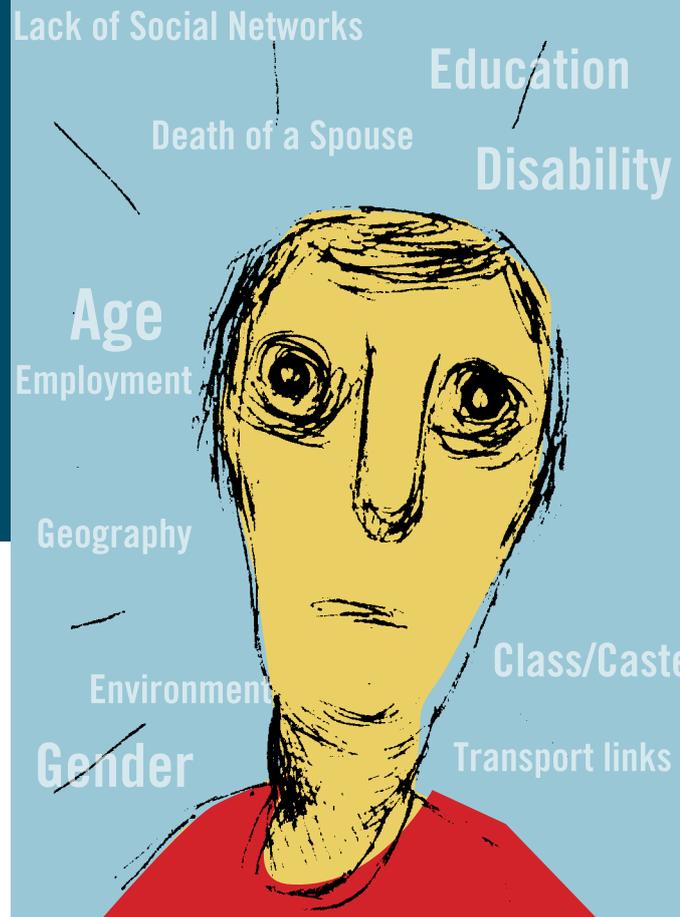
INEQUALITY

The act of defining poverty is a reflection of inequality: the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. Levels of inequality in a country give an insight into a country's capacity to reduce poverty. Statistics from countries such as the US that have high levels of poverty and inequality show that poverty is not just a majority world problem resulting from not enough wealth. Economic growth has to be inclusive for it to achieve real results for everyone in society, but the gap between the low and high paid has grown in most minority world countries, including Aotearoa New Zealand, in recent years.

THE GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR IN 2005



Source: Growing Unequal? OECD, 2008.



DOES MONEY = HAPPINESS?

Researchers, policy makers and politicians are now acknowledging that increased monetary wealth, beyond a certain point, rarely increases happiness. At low income levels, the relationship between per capita income and happiness is strong; above about NZ\$18,000 a year, the correlation is close to zero. Low levels of inequality are shown to be more closely related to the general happiness of a population than overall economic growth, signalling the need for targeted pro-poor growth.

POVERTY OF OPPORTUNITY

Poverty is not just about lacking things; it is also about lacking the opportunities that others take for granted, such as having access to employment opportunities and social services. Approaches such as Amartya Sen's capacity-based approach (see p.14) and development measures such as the Human Development Index have started to reflect this reality by including factors such as good health, education, political participation, family and social networks. With this approach, a person living in poverty changes from a passive subject into an active individual and measurements focus on the factors that enable or prevent a person from achieving an acceptable quality of life.

POWER AND CONTROL

Many people living in poverty define it as their lack of control over the factors that influence their lives.

The forces of poverty and impoverishment are so powerful today. Governments or the big churches can only manage them. So we now feel somewhat helpless. It is this feeling of helplessness that is so painful, more painful than poverty itself (Elderly man, Uganda, World Bank).

Powerlessness means that people are limited in the choices they make – when to sell their harvest; who to borrow money from; the impacts of corruption and exploitation. The effects of globalisation and international law in areas such as trade can further erode the control people have over their lives.

EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment – the ability of an individual to make choices regarding his or her life – has become a popular approach to development that aims to enable people to demand their right to a decent standard of living, to hold governments and corporations to account and deliver results that are meaningful to them, rather than dictated by an outsider.

ENVIRONMENTAL DEPRIVATION AS POVERTY

People living in poverty are often very dependent on their natural environment for food, fuel and shelter. The environmental impacts of western lifestyles are extending into the local environments of those who are already struggling to provide for their families. Dwindling fish stocks are now a reality in the Pacific and the impacts of climate change will be first felt by the poorest, living in high risk areas with little ability to move.

SO WHAT ARE WE AIMING FOR?

By defining poverty and well-being, we make judgements about what is lacking. Asking people what poverty and well-being mean to them highlights people's diverse experiences, including the needs that money can't buy, and the qualities of life that may be lost in our quest for economic wealth. Defining poverty through the voices of people living in poverty stresses that approaches to achieving well-being need to be both holistic and personal. This approach may make us question the priorities and values we have in the minority world. Is *our* current development path delivering what *we* actually need?

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS) AND POVERTY

Goal 1 of the MDGS is to 'Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger'. This is measured using a mixture of \$1 a day, inequality, employment, GDP and malnutrition statistics. The other seven MDGs reflect interlinked factors that influence poverty: education, gender, health, education and the environment.

POVERTY MEASUREMENTS

| | |
|---|--|
| Poverty line | Minimum income deemed necessary for a decent standard of living. The poverty line or threshold varies from country to country. It is higher in minority world countries. In Aotearoa NZ it is 60% of the median income. |
| US\$1 a day or 'extreme poverty' | Percentage of people living on under US\$1 a day (US\$1.25 per day at 2005 international prices). It is based on the poverty line of the 10-20 poorest countries in the world and adjusted to take into account the purchasing power of different countries. |
| US\$2 a day or 'poverty' | The World Bank definition of poverty. The median poverty line of all developing countries. |
| Gini Index or coefficient | A measurement between 0 and 1 or 0% and 100%; 0 indicates perfect equality. Easy to understand but it is unable to represent the point at which income inequality occurs. |
| Human Development Index (HDI) | Measures the level of development of a country by combining a variety of measurements including life expectancy, education and standard of living. The results rank countries into a hierarchical list. |
| Human Poverty Index (HPI) | Uses the same criteria as the HDI to measure human deprivation. |

POVERTY IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

The encompassing image of poverty in the Pacific is poverty of opportunity. People's talents, skills and aspirations are frustrated and wasted, denying them the opportunity to lead productive and satisfying lives. Poverty of income is often the result, poverty of opportunity is often the cause. (UN Human Development Report, 1999)

Poverty in the Pacific Islands is often described as poverty of opportunity rather than absolute poverty. The majority of people are able to meet their basic needs but may be severely limited in their access to services such as healthcare, education and work opportunities. People may suffer from a high level of vulnerability, with their basic needs threatened by environmental and economic factors.

The situation varies greatly between and within countries. In a rural area, a poverty indicator may be lack of healthcare; in urban areas

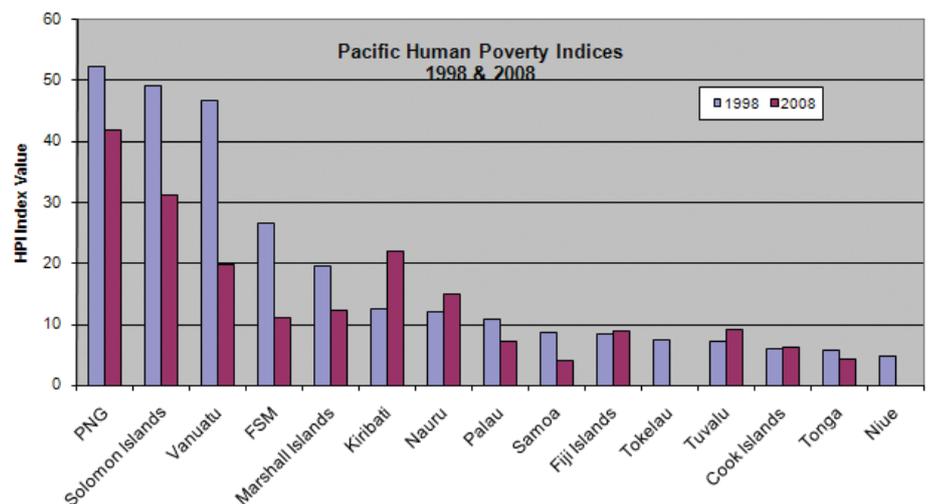
poverty may be indicated by lack of access to land and the food security it provides.

This poverty of opportunity has meant many Pacific Island countries see high levels of rural to urban migration and emigration to seek better opportunities overseas.

POVERTY IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Poverty in Aotearoa NZ can be seen most alarmingly in child poverty statistics. Despite strong economic growth between 2000 and 2004, the proportion of children facing severe and significant hardship increased by a third. Between 2006 and 2007, according to Child Poverty Action Group, 230,000 children were living below the poverty line.

Child poverty increases mirror changes in income inequality. Inequality has grown since the late 1980s, and Aotearoa NZ is now seventh worst out of the 30 OECD member countries in terms of its level of equality.



Taken from UNDP presentation at MDG symposium.



Indian women from slums and villages attend a workshop on AIDS, led by the Nrityanjali Academy. Photo: (c) 2001 Nrityanjali Academy, Courtesy of Photoshare.

Women in poverty:

Revisiting the debates

RACHEL SIMON-KUMAR challenges the perceived role gender plays in poverty, arguing that our assumptions are not always backed by the evidence.

For decades now, the 'feminisation of poverty' has been a priority in development. The over-representation of women in poverty statistics, highlighted since the 1970s, is used to convey the particular extent of deprivation faced by women in the majority world. Yet, into the first decade of the twenty-first century, the issue of women's poverty continues to be debated. True or truisms? Fact or fiction? The distinction between the myths and facts of female poverty are increasingly blurred. This article examines the recent research on three fundamental questions on women living in poverty:

- Are women over-represented among the world's poor?
- Are female-headed households the poorest of the poor?
- What kind of interventions better alleviate women's poverty?

WOMEN AND POVERTY

A much-quoted United Nations' figure informs us that of the 1.5 billion people living on US\$1 a day or less, 70% are women. On average, women's incomes are approximately half of what men earn. About 1.5 billion people are in 'vulnerable' informal employment; around 51.7% of these are women. In some regions like sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, UNIFEM reports that eight out of ten women workers are in vulnerable employment.

Figures like these lead us to *surmise* that women are over-represented among the world's poor. In reality, there is too little precise data and too much doubt to make this a statement of fact. Measurement of poverty is not an exact science and little poverty data is disaggregated by sex. For instance, recent data shows that the proportion of people living on less than US\$1 a day fell significantly from 31.6% in 1990 to 19.2% in 2004; however, there is no way of confirming how many of these are women.

Poverty data tends to be based on household consumption, income or expenditure, but for women, the experience of poverty is more multi-dimensional; deprivation is evident in the many ways that women are excluded and marginalised from social and po-

litical processes. The United Nations' Gender Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) are useful indicators of women's needs and they make the same point – poverty is not merely economic. To understand and change the economic dimension of poverty would invariably mean addressing gender inequalities in entitlements, rights, social capital, education, health, labour market and tradition. Dollar figures misrepresent the reality of women's poverty.

So, given the inadequacies of data, is there a feminisation of poverty? Recent research seems ambivalent on this issue. A ten-country study conducted in 2001 suggests that the link between women and poverty is 'weak'. Researchers concede that women are at a higher *risk* of poverty but this cannot be stated absolutely. Particular groups of women – depending on age, social status, and ethnicity – may certainly be among the poorest. However, there is also evidence that disparities between men and women are lessening in many countries.

FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS AND POVERTY

The use of female-headed households to project the gendered nature of poverty was

part-convenience and part-strategy. The need to showcase income impoverishment among women meant a search for the ‘most vulnerable’ – those women who head households. The rationale for depicting female-headed households as the face of feminised poverty sounds credible on paper and in policy proclamations: female-headed households are visible in statistics, it is reasonable to presume that they have fewer entitlements to resources, greater workloads and lower earnings, and these households play right into popular images of social pathology. But how true is this picture?

Sylvia Chant, a professor at the London School of Economics, challenges this proposition. She notes that studies in the last ten years have been unable to unequivocally establish a link between poverty and female headship. Women-headed households are just as likely to be found in middle or upper income groups as among the poor. Further, women-headed families are diverse in age, number of dependents, status, etc. – all of these factors have bearing on their income. The fact of being a woman-led household is simply not enough to claim that they are poor. In sum, as one study by Quisumbing notes, while ‘female-headed households might be slightly represented among the poor, there are more women living in poverty in male-headed households and fewer men living in poverty in female-headed households.’

TARGETING VERSUS BROAD-BASED PROGRAMMES

Measures to alleviate poverty among women have tried both targeted and broad-based approaches. Providing targeted programmes means focusing on particular areas of poverty or particular groups of poor women. From the 1970s, income-generating schemes and micro-credit programmes were a popular development strategy to increase women’s earnings and reduce poverty. Available data shows that some ten million women around the world accessed small loans in 1998.

Broad-based or multi-sectoral programming, on the other hand, is about getting gender equality issues onto a wider poverty agenda. Thus, gender inequalities in a wide spectrum of areas from education, health, legal rights and public expenditure would all be addressed as part of a broad-based approach. The World Bank’s *Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers* (PRSPs) are among the more visible in the effort to introduce a broad-based approach to the alleviation of gender poverty.

Which approach weighs up as a better option for poverty reduction? Both have pluses and minuses. Targeting can be ineffective, especially if projects are narrowly focused and do not consider the wider social contexts of women’s poverty. For instance, targeting can create animosity in small communities if only certain groups are ‘favoured’ for projects, and it can encourage dependency. Broad-based

programmes seem to hold great promise in theory, but in reality, evaluations of PRSPs across several African and Asian countries have shown a weak gender dimension.

So where does this leave us in our understanding of women’s poverty? At the very least, poverty among women is a complex issue and cannot be captured in simple slogans or catch phrases. The experience of women is very location specific and we should be cautious about making global claims. The case of Costa Rica (see boxed text) shows we should always question our assumptions; this is vital if we are to create solutions to poverty that truly meet people’s needs.

In Costa Rica, recent data showed female poverty was rising. This was despite Costa Rica’s GDIs and GEMs rating favorably and a history of government intervention in gender inequality. Research showed that the rise was because of an increase in female headship of households. It appears that the gender equality programmes had worked – women preferred independence and lower incomes to living in difficult relationships with men.

Rachel Simon-Kumar is a senior lecturer at The University of Waikato. She researches and teaches in the area of Gender, Policy and Development.

‘We need sons to go to heaven’

BY CHRIS FRAZER

Here in the twenty-first century, too many communities still view the birth of a son as an event to be celebrated whilst the birth of a daughter can evoke commiseration or, in some instances, harmful discrimination. Such discrimination arises from cultural traditions and norms of what it is to be born male or female, and in some instances, religious understanding that somehow places males above females.

In Nepalese society a vital role that may only be performed by a son is to officiate over his parents’ funeral rites. A widespread traditional belief is, ‘*Chhora bhaye sworga ko dhoka khulchha*’ (the door of heaven will be opened for us when we die if we have a son).

when asked what event she would change in her life if she were able, she responded, ‘I would be born a man.’

Within Nepal, as with many Asian countries, the preference for having a son is very strong. A son is viewed not only in terms of social status but also as a valuable financial asset, as he will be expected to provide for his parents in their older years. On the other hand, a young woman is expected to marry and move into their husband’s family home, therefore the birth of a daughter does not offer the same promise of future financial security.

It follows therefore that such ingrained beliefs play a significant part in perpetuating a continuing cycle of ill-being for many women in the majority world.

A woman living in a slum in Nairobi summed up the feminine face of absolute financial poverty: when asked by a development worker what event she would change in her life if she were able, she responded, ‘I would be born a man.’

While the focus of our discussions about disadvantage tends to be monetary, dimensions of well-being are far wider. Amartya

Sen offered a more holistic definition when he described well-being as the freedom of individuals to live a life that allows them to fulfil their capacities, to have sufficient available resources to be able to enjoy a healthy life, to have access to knowledge and to have the freedom to interact socially and contribute expression and thought.

Extreme poverty is not gender selective, but the negative impact of such deprivation is experienced differently between the sexes, with the scales of scarcity and social exclusion tipped more heavily towards women. The ‘invisibility’ that is experienced by a significant number of women in the majority world is a key determinant in what is termed the ‘feminisation of poverty’. For positive change to begin to take shape, women must be offered the opportunity to play an active role as decision makers in the solutions.

Chris Frazer is a social justice advocate at The Salvation Army’s Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit.

It's just a picture...

A picture can speak a thousand words.

RACHEL TALLON and **PEDRAM PIRNIA**

reflect on the power of images in representing poverty.

In today's visual culture images of poverty are part of global communication. Any photo in the public arena performs many actions with awareness-raising just one of them. For the photographer, the consumer, and the subject of an image of poverty, there are complex issues around power, representation and ethics which deserve greater attention.

THE POWER OF THE IMAGE

Taking a picture is not a simple act. The shutter clicks instantly, but everything else is affected by time in more complex ways. The people being photographed remain 'frozen in time' – it is difficult to change in the eyes of the viewer unless a follow-up photo is taken later. It is not a two-way interaction: the subject literally can't see their audience, nor gauge their reaction. And yet this situation happens all the time with images of poverty.

Photos are an individual's subjective interpretation of the world, and yet they are often used as objective evidence or as prerequisites for action. In the media, images are a commodity. An image of poor people or people needing assistance can be chosen for a number of reasons, but often they reveal more than they intend to about editorial and marketing bias as well as NGO agendas. Text or captions accompanying images can change the intended purpose of the image. Ethical questions concerning images of the poor are often conveniently shifted to one side and seen as moral nitpicking; after all, images of suffering are known to be effective fundraisers, but such a blinkered approach denies the critiques that arise from those who are represented.

Photography critic Susan Sontag argued that there is something predatory in the taking of a photo: it is a form of surveillance. The mood darkens when we specifically consider the representation of poverty. Images are used both to initiate action and for donors to visualise (and check) progress: has the donor's investment worked? Sontag also argues that 'concerned' photography has done at least as much to deaden conscience as to arouse it. 'Image fatigue' is a euphemism for the callous hardening of the soul to the suffering of others through over-exposure.



Many children from the majority world are probably unaware of how their unnamed faces that feature on NGO websites and publications are used to represent and signal so much more than just themselves.
Photo: Paul Lowe, Panos

The poor often do not have the luxury of controlling the public use of their image. A subject's rights to dignity, accuracy and the uses of their image are seldom considered as press deadlines and markets are privileged. Although we cannot generalise, it's probably fair to assume that most people like to have their 'best side' photographed, and to know that their image will be put to honest use and that it may even benefit their situation. Those who are suffering may actively seek publicity for their story to be told, in the hope for justice or action. However, is their story being told in the way that they intended when they agreed to be photographed?

'Are tear jerkers still the best way of raising money? If they are, then changes in the education system are needed not only in the poor countries, but also in the rich, where the emphasis must shift from the need to save souls to the need to form a balanced world with equal partners.'
Shahidul Alam

PANDERING TO THE MARKET

Images are powerful. Devoid of control by their subjects, images of poverty can unintentionally perpetuate stereotypes, represent entire ethnic groups or countries and even cause cynicism amongst potential donors. Those that construct and use the images are in a position of control over those represented. The represented become objectified and part of the media, government and NGO led 'humanitarian agenda'. Images of poverty can subconsciously reinforce the bi lateral (neo-colonialism thinly disguised) approach: (ac-

tive) Western helpers need to rescue (passive) locals, alleviating some of that 'white man's burden'. As early as 1977, Jørgen Lissner was criticising NGOs for use of strategies with images that flatter people into giving, allowing donors a 'Godlike feeling' when they see how their donations have been used.

The pressure to sell newspapers, to lobby government and to keep NGOs financially afloat can determine how images and stories about the majority world are used. The transitory, day to day and crisis nature of general media reporting of the majority world should be balanced by governments and NGOs. Where are the follow-up images after an event; images that show locals achieving progress on their own; are there any images that show NGO failure? It is argued that often NGOs organisational objectives come before the concern for how the majority world is represented in images. Many NGOs have come to be regarded as a source of authority on the issues and countries they work in. Are they providing longer-term, more balanced and critical views of issues than their media cousins?

THE VOICE OF THE REPRESENTED

The dilemma of short-term gain versus long-term damage is one that many NGOs grapple with. Ethically, it is the voice of the represented that is most worth listening to. UK journalist George Alagiah has voiced concerns that perhaps what is needed is not better trained Western journalists and photographers, but better use of local and indigenous photographers, alongside the mandate of seeking not to report just what the West want to see, but to report what the locals see and want the West to see. What does the West want to see? There is a concern that images of wealth and self-sufficiency of the majority world threaten a preconceived order of the universe that exists in Western minds.

'To take a photograph of someone is to participate in their mortality, their vulnerability.' *Susan Sontag*

Shahidul Alam from Bangladeshi online photo agency Drik Photography notes that Western media and NGOs often ask for images of floods, cyclones or slums. They rarely, if ever, ask for an image of a Bangladeshi sitting at a computer desk – an image of which he has plenty.

ETHICAL PHOTOGRAPHY

To take photographs of the poor or those suffering is a moral act; from issues of copyright, dignity, and rights of those in the image to the eventual uses of the image and the impact on the viewer. Usually an image is associated with text and this should be factored in to the overall use and consumption of the image. A conscious photograph of people at their most vulnerable should abide by a set of rules that privilege the subject: the powerless.

The representation of poverty through visual media, both by the general media, government agencies and NGOs, is an issue fraught with conflicting agendas. The feelings of the person photographed are often least considered. Images reveal agendas and a critical look at the use of an image is to consider how we see the 'poor people': as equal fellow humans, someone we must help, or even someone who could help us.

Rachel Tallon is the Schools Programme Manager at Dev-Zone's sister programme, the Global Education Centre. Pedram Pirnia is a senior policy and research officer at the Council for International Development.

Useful websites that look at representation through images:

- www.imaging-famine.org
- www.majorityworld.com
- www.drik.net
- www.panos.co.uk

Minimum standards of photography

Most organisations and government departments will have their own codes of conduct, both in terms of actually taking photos and how the images are then used in publications. The most important factor is to avoid exposing the identities of unknown vulnerable individuals.



A young homeless person sleeping on the street in Montreal.
Photo: Pedram Pirnia



Abdulahshah with his prosthesis. He has been begging near a local mosque for the past 6 years. Afghanistan 2002.
Photo: Pedram Pirnia

Here are some useful guidelines for photographing poverty:

- Most importantly, be alert, aware and discreet.
- Avoid 'in your face' camera angles. Be aware of close-ups that intrude into personal space.
- Be aware of how this photo might eventually be used and its potential impact.
- Ask your subject's permission, discuss with them how they like to be photographed and assess what they would be comfortable with.
- Be alert and aware of the principles of ethical photography every time you take a photograph – educate yourself and your colleagues.
- Respect the people you photograph. Give them dignity.
- Caption your photographs.
- And finally make sure that the copyright is cleared.

The camera can dangerously become our truth telling instrument – we need to put that mentality aside if we are thinking ethically. Understanding the world means being wary of singular and unchallenged perspectives, including visual ones. Every photograph is an individual's subjective evaluation of the world and we are responsible for controlling the meaning and significance of the moments we seize.



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Thinking about poverty

TONY BINNS argues that proposed changes to the Aotearoa New Zealand aid programme risk the effectiveness of the aid we give and puts us at odds with global efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

Over the past couple of months, the issue of poverty and development has been uppermost in the minds of those of us in NGOs and educational institutions who are concerned about the lives of disadvantaged people, both at home and overseas. What has prompted the recent debate here in Aotearoa New Zealand was the media announcement in early March that the Foreign Affairs Minister, Murray McCully, was reviewing the status of the seemingly effective semi-autonomous government aid agency, NZAID, and changing the focus of Aotearoa NZ's overseas development assistance (ODA) from poverty elimination to sustainable economic development. Recent cabinet papers have confirmed the loss of NZAID's semi-autonomous status and its change of focus. Instead of poverty alleviation its core focus will now be on sustainable economic development within a wider mission to 'support sustainable development in developing countries, in order to reduce poverty and to contribute to a more secure, equitable and prosperous world'.

When these plans were proposed they generated widespread concern and activity in key development organisations and resulted in the Don't Corrupt Aid campaign whose aims included ensuring that any reviews of NZAID were open to public debate and independent expert advice.

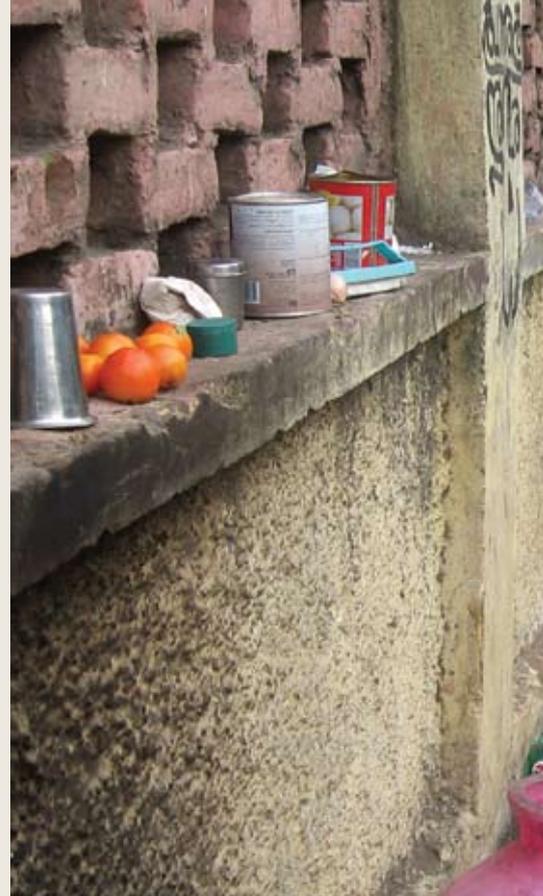
Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger is the first of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which, according to the OECD website, are the basis of all the work of its Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD). The Aotearoa NZ government has confirmed its commitment to the MDGs but its change of central focus risks the effectiveness of the aid programme in achieving this goal. The new focus on sustainable economic development also takes us out of step with the majority of other OECD countries at a time when the OECD is proudly reporting the highest ever level of development aid being reached in 2008, including a significant increase by Aotearoa NZ to a figure of 0.3% of Gross National Income (GNI). However, even with this achievement, Aotearoa NZ remains in the bottom half of the OECD's spec-

trum of member nations' ODA, and is still a long way short of the UN's longstanding target of 0.7% of GNI.

To me, switching to a focus on sustainable economic development from poverty elimination, smacks of a return to 'Thatcherism'. I can clearly remember the UK Conservative Party's doctrines of the 1980's and the dogmatic assertions of the so-called 'iron lady' that economic development would 'trickle down' from more prosperous regions into poorer areas and their communities. Numerous studies have revealed that 'trickle-down' rarely works, whether in a minority world context, or in the world's poorer countries. Instead, what actually happens is that the richer areas (and their inhabitants) become richer and the poorer areas become poorer, leading to increasing spatial and social inequality. Whilst economic development invariably does not lead to poverty elimination, I would argue that a central poverty focus in development strategies can lead to economic development. If people are well-fed, educated, healthy and optimistic about their future livelihoods, then they are likely to be better motivated and more effective participants in the workplace, whether in agriculture, industry or service provision.

Poverty elimination should concern us all, and attacking the underlying causes of poverty is as important at home as it is overseas. Aotearoa NZ by world standards is a relatively 'equal' country, yet virtually every day there are media reports of homelessness, unemployment and crime which are often closely linked to poverty. Whilst quality of life indicators such as life expectancy, child mortality and educational achievement are much more favourable in Aotearoa NZ than in sub-Saharan African countries, the existence of 'relative poverty' must be both appreciated and tackled. It is unwise to assume that these are majority world problems and that all is well at home. Strengthening community awareness of development issues both at home and overseas should, I believe, be given much greater priority and should be an important element of the school curriculum. Education about development should begin at home.

So where do we go from here? Minister McCully certainly needs to take time to seek advice from development organisations in charting a way forward for Aotearoa NZ's aid policy. Within Aotearoa NZ and among its population of only four million, there is an impressive reservoir of knowledge and un-



A girl and boy sleep on the footpath of a main street in Chennai, India. Photo: (c) 2007 Aravind Kumar, Courtesy of Photoshare.

Poverty elimination should concern us all, and attacking the underlying causes of poverty is as important at home as it is overseas.

derstanding about development issues that needs to be tapped, if we are to have an aid programme that helps those that need it most. Both the strength and diverse membership of the Council for International Development, for example, testify to the deep commitment which exists in Aotearoa NZ for improving the quality of life both at home and overseas. Poverty elimination is, quite appropriately, the key focus of the OECD countries, and there is a danger that the new focus of sustainable economic development will result in an increasing gap between the haves and the have nots.

Tony Binns is the Ron Lister Chair of Geography and a professor in the Department of Geography at the University of Otago.

Poverty elimination: A distant dream in a society of dependency and domination



Is poverty elimination possible in India?

K. PRAKASH believes it is a Herculean task.

In India, despite decades of poverty alleviation schemes, the pace of poverty reduction has been slow. Today, India is the country with the greatest number of poor and undernourished people, approximately 300 million people. Why? Is poverty elimination possible? Is it so difficult? If not, what are the timelines – is poverty elimination near or a distant dream? These questions have no definite answer.

In India, like elsewhere, economic growth and globalisation are seen as panaceas for society's ills, including poverty. A look at the history of India, however, does not reflect this reality. The growth of the economy over the past 60 years may have created a middle class, but it has been very slow and uneven in reducing poverty. Few understand that economic growth is not as effective for development and poverty reduction as a more equitable redistribution of wealth could be. Economic growth is necessary to the extent of creating basic minimum infrastructure such as adequately equipped schools, health-care centres and other essential social services but there are also downsides. Growth without limits and globalisation are destroying natural eco-systems and degrading the environment at a tremendous pace. This goes against the interests and the human rights of all of us – and it is the vulnerable and unfavoured who are most affected. Along with increases in production and consumption comes massive destruction of the environment, increased social and economic inequality and increasing relations of dependence and domination.

Over the years, the issue of poverty in India has become more complex. On one hand,

certain disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in India have always been dependent on the state and society for their basic needs: a functional education, healthcare, nutrition, water and sanitation, wages and employment. Some groups are also dependent in terms of creativity, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and the respect of others; factors considered essential for leading a dignified human life. For example, dalits, those traditionally working in low occupations, comprise more than one-sixth of the Indian population and are denied access to land, good housing, education and employment. Discrimination against them takes the form of physical, psychological, emotional and cultural abuse, affecting their dignity and self esteem. They are dependent on the state and society for their basic needs and the state and wider society have a high degree of control over their cultural and political freedom. All of these factors influence the quality of life they can lead.

On the other hand, the growing domination over these oppressed groups by selfish, elite classes of society using pressure group tactics to influence the social, economic and governing policies is a very important factor in deciding and sealing the fate of vulnerable people.

In our experience, groups such as the dalits that are affected by dependency and dominance emerge out of society due to various factors including caste, casual labour with low wages, gender, illiteracy and lack of education opportunities, remote settlements, migrant labour and household composition. Many of these people have suffered chronic poverty for generations. All such people have some common inherent sufferings such as lack of access to credit, inputs and extension services, and community and state resources

– particularly food, education and health. It is difficult for these people to find jobs, decent wages and favourable terms of employment, and the division of labour and the work burden is biased against them. They have little access to public decision-making, no protective legislation (even when it is available, it is ineffective), no platform to organise and claim rights, and no rights over the nature and quality of governance.

These factors do not operate in isolation; they interlock with other forms of inequalities to keep particular categories of people in a perpetually disadvantaged position. For example, the social positioning of women within the household as well as in public life in India makes many of the services listed above inaccessible to them.

There are other external factors, beyond their control, which increase the dependency of vulnerable groups, thus exposing them to risks and pushing them into vicious cycles of poverty:

- environmental risk (droughts, floods, and pests)
- market risk (price fluctuations, wage variability and unemployment)
- political risk (changes in subsidies or prices, income transfers and civil strife)
- social risk (reduction in community support and entitlements)
- health risk (exposure to diseases that prevent work).

Vulnerability is like a disease that influences household behaviour and coping strategies and is an important consideration in poverty reduction policies. With so many factors piled up against vulnerable people, poverty reduction strategies need to take account of the selection criterion of target groups; the design of integrated, indigenous and holistic schemes that understand the local settings; continual support to vulnerable people; and influencing policies while bypassing the dominant sections of society. This is not just a big challenge; it is a Herculean task for NGOs and other agencies working towards poverty reduction.

K. Prakash is the co-founder and president of *Development Logix* NGO in India.

Laborers in India remove dust from a rice crop after harvesting it from the paddy field. Photo: (c) 2005 Sk Jan Mohammad, Courtesy of Photoshare.



Power and control

An analysis of poverty and development

The Power and Control Wheel is used to help women analyse domestic violence; here **PIP BENNETT** shows how the wheel can identify some of the methods that are used to control the answer to what poverty is, and more significantly, what development is.

What is poverty? The common perception is that it is related to money and material things. But poverty can also mean lack of access to healthcare, education, or whether you have the ability to buy Christmas presents or go out each month. The answer really depends on who is doing the defining and who they are defining. The power to control the definition of poverty, and development generally, is something that can have a huge impact on majority world countries and their people – on what food people grow and have access to, social services that governments offer (such as health and education) and the access they have to the rest of the world.

The Power and Control Wheel is used in domestic violence situations to provide victims with the ability to identify types of abuse used against them and allows for the identification of the abuse itself. Just as the Power and Control Wheel has been used for the analysis of domestic violence, here I

discuss its application to poverty and development to identify some of the methods that are used to control the answers to what poverty, and development, are.

The wheel provides eight different techniques that abusers use to control their victims, ranging from using male privilege and emotional abuse to intimidation. Many of these are easily relatable to the control of the wealthy over the poor. The use of coercion and threats, economic abuse, isolation and undervaluing against majority world countries is common, not only to control the definition of poverty, but also to control the development of these countries. I have selected four key techniques that are most easily related to the control of poverty and development: economic abuse, privilege, isolation and intimidation.

The first of these is *economic abuse*. Two of the most common methods of economic abuse are the forced economic restructuring demanded of majority world countries to fit

the neoliberal model and, through this, the resulting negative impacts of free-trade on local production due to restrictions on support to local produce.

The use of *privilege* by minority world countries has become so common it is accepted as the norm. Minority world countries have had around 300 years since the industrial revolution to develop their systems to combat the social and economic pressures of development, and these are yet to be perfected. They have had the opportunity to use the resources of their colonies for their own economic benefit. Majority world countries have not had the time or the extra resources to mitigate the negative effects of development. While development no doubt has benefits such as improving rights, education and health, it can also create environmental degradation, rapid urbanisation and the breakdown of traditional support networks, and inequality. Minority world countries use their privilege in their funding and control of global organisations such as the United Nations, World Trade Organisation and the International Monetary Fund. This means that minority world countries control global institutions and strongly influence the development of international law.

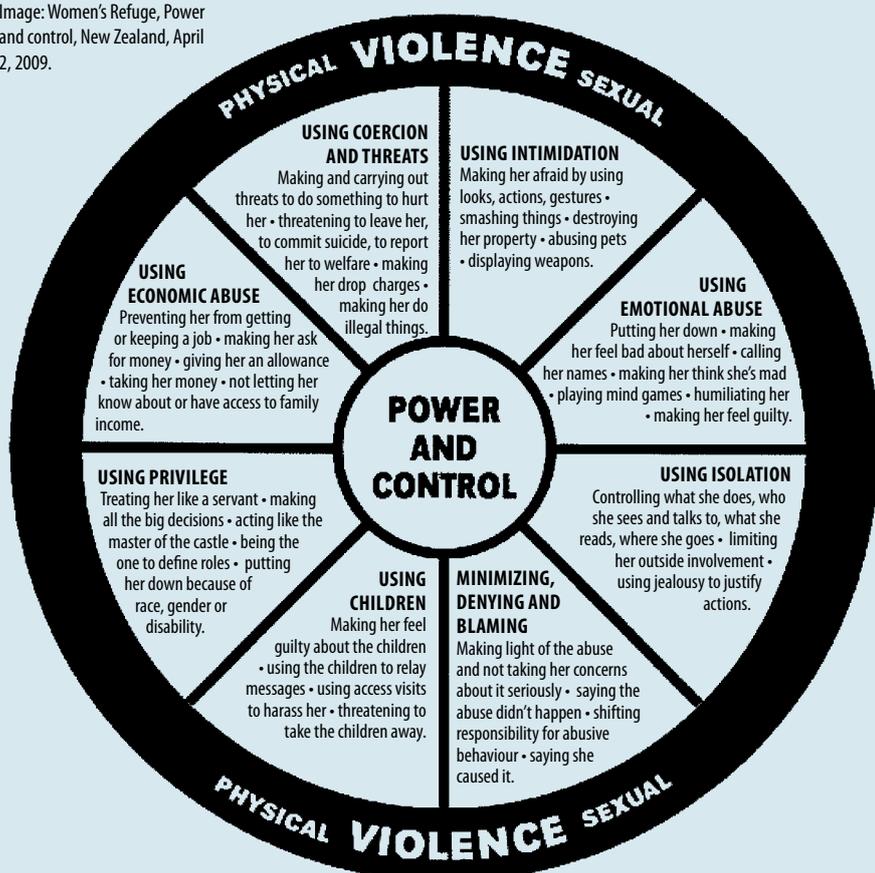
Isolation is used by minority world countries against the majority world to control various aspects of the development of a country and people's lives. This can be controlling what a country does (for example, its policy development and items traded), who the government associates with and where the citizens of the country can go. This can also mean controlling the relocation of refugees and controlling access to healthcare and medicines. These demands are usually made in return for aid and can determine whether a country continues to live in poverty.

Lastly, the pages of world news are often filled with examples of *intimidation*. The stockpiling, use and development of weapons technology is used to intimidate and force countries to comply with dominant ideologies – the punishment is warfare or the withdrawal of essential aid supplies and funds.

All of the above can be considered threats and methods of coercion to control poverty and those in it. As long as a country is strongly reliant on another, it can be argued that they are not free from poverty because their ability to determine and fulfil their own needs is continually undermined. Majority world countries may receive benefits from these relationships through increased income, but is this really successful development?

Pip Bennett is a postgraduate development studies student and Oxfam International Youth Partner, and is interested in youth development, women's rights and language revitalisation.

Image: Women's Refuge, Power and control, New Zealand, April 2, 2009.





Not all poverty alleviation is good poverty alleviation:

The impact of blood selling in Henan province

Farmers from a desperately poor village in China's Henan Province find a solution to crushing poverty – or do they? **ANNE FINAMORE** examines a grassroots attempt to break the cycle of poverty and deliver real hope for the future.

THE SCENARIO

A community of subsistence farmers in China's Henan Province discovers a way to lift themselves out of their hand-to-mouth existence – sell their blood! Who will buy it? The village headman of course; he is working for city entrepreneurs who on-sell the collected blood to hospitals. Government officials, if not directly involved themselves, turn a blind eye.

The system works well for a short time, but soon the farmers realise that selling more blood means more money for their families, so they cast about for ways to increase their contributions. Since only the plasma is required, not whole blood, someone suggests that by reinjecting the donors with the discarded blood solids, they recover more quickly and can thus donate more often.

Great! The bad news is that all the collected blood is mixed together (and not tested) before the plasma is extracted and the residue reinjected. In this way, whole villages in Henan province – already desperately poor – have now contracted the HIV virus.

REALITY VS RHETORIC

When this situation became widely known, authorities followed the time-honoured pattern of 'ignore and forget'.

Whole villages were literally locked up and the people left to fend for themselves.

When China joined the World Trade Organisation, farmers tried to demand compensation for contracting HIV through government-sponsored blood plasma collection programmes. These demands were quickly suppressed, while government spokesmen assured the world that the situation was under control.

Henan Province. Photo: Dream Corps.

The poverty situation in the villages went from bad to worse, as their blood was no longer in demand, and they had by now lost all other means of making a living.

DESPERATE TIMES

Years passed. By now, orphans and the elderly made up the majority of the population in many villages. In a last-ditch attempt to obtain relief, some of the young men escaped and made their way to large cities. There, huddled in tiny groups, they made contact with foreign Red Cross agencies.

Perhaps now they could get their problems addressed? Sadly, no! The Red Cross funding guidelines allowed for nothing more than free condom distribution, lectures on their use and brochures advocating 'safe sex'. Small packets of tissues with the AIDS red ribbon emblem were also handed out.

A RAY OF HOPE

One of the translators for a particular agency saw the foolishness inherent in this top-down approach. She contacted a philanthropic foreign university lecturer and arranged a meeting with the young men.

The meeting began with the question, 'What is your greatest need?'. The answer was that the group needed an office – later expanded to a support centre – where HIV and AIDS refugees could meet, exchange information and receive help.

BEAUTIFUL LIFE

As a result of finding suitable premises, the grassroots group has gone from strength to strength. Membership is free and all are welcome. All the office furniture and decor have been sourced by the young men themselves. They are online to other groups overseas, and hold various classes and activities for their members.

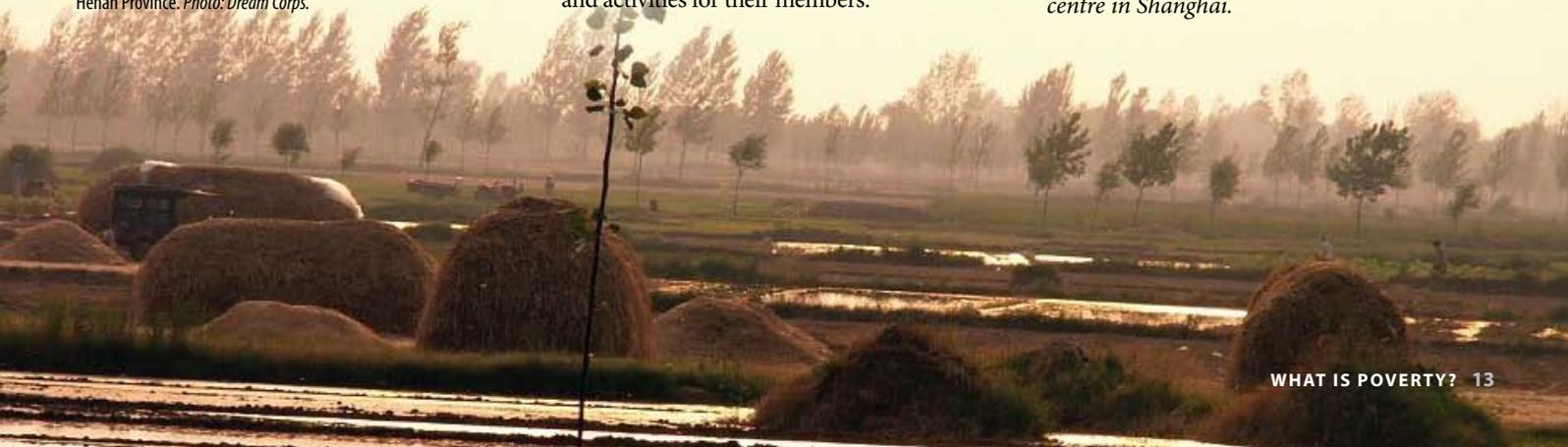
At present there is a weekly English class, and a sympathetic banker gives them financial advice. An art class is also running, with a view to holding an exhibition and sale when there is a sufficient body of work. The more able members who may have access to some anti-retrovirals (of dubious quality) try to keep as healthy as possible by playing badminton at a local school court or by walking.

If a member is sick or in some other trouble, a call to the Centre is usually enough to find a babysitter, some rudimentary medical help or a hot meal. All the administrators and helpers are volunteers, and a roster system ensures that the phone is mostly attended.

There is no government funding and the stigma of the disease is so bad that the Centre is precluded from open fundraising efforts. This year, the ongoing rental of the Centre is becoming more and more precarious as the economy downsizes, even as the calls for help from members escalate. Those who can work do so, but lack of a proper education and language skills relegate them, for the most part, to low-level jobs from which they are easily retrenched. The situation is far from ideal.

Despite the challenges they face, the young men remain resolute and optimistic. They've come a long way in the past few years, and they're not going to let a little recession stop them now!

Anne Finamore arrived in China in March 2003 after completing an MBA at Queensland University in Australia. She stayed for six years, during which time a colleague drew her attention to the plight of displaced HIV and AIDS victims. She has recently returned to China having spent time in Australia raising funds to ensure the continuation of the support centre in Shanghai.



The poor ‘r’ us

There is poverty and then there are ‘the poor’. **JONATHAN SIBLEY** argues that our desire to classify poverty means poverty interventions are more a reflection of us than what is actually needed.

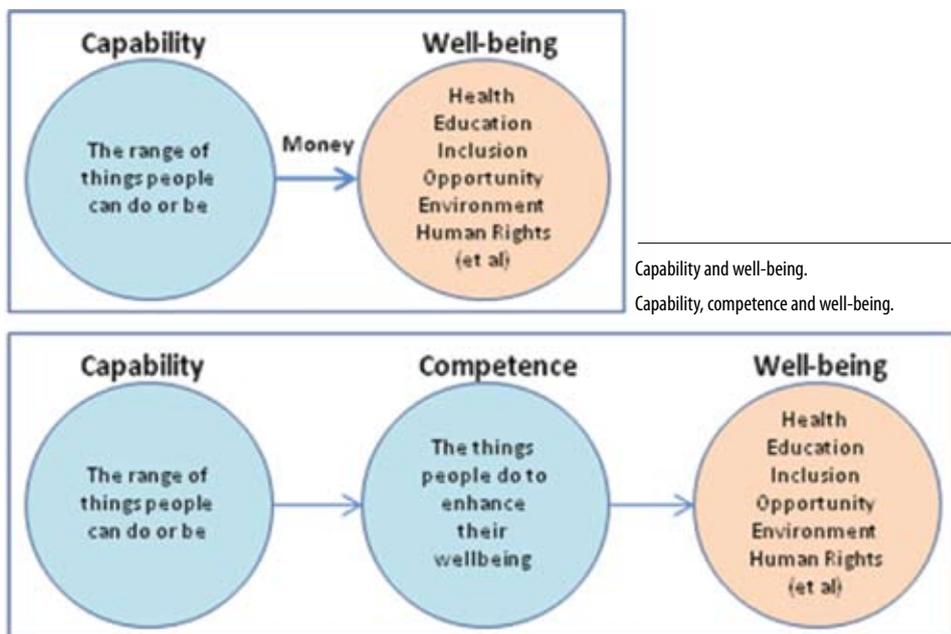
In the past 30 years, writers such as Nobel prize-winning economist Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum have forced us to broaden our understanding of poverty beyond the idea of a lack of money. We no longer measure poverty merely in terms of income per capita; we now measure education, life expectancy, human rights and focus on well-being. We have expanded our development interventions from programmes focussed solely on increasing income, to a range of interventions focussed on capability and ‘functionings’ (defined by Sen as the various things a person may value doing or being). Yet, our discourse remains overwhelmingly biased toward money as the key between capability and well-being. Even Sen’s model continues to centre on money. He sees inadequate capability as often being evidenced by an *economically* driven absence of choice. In persisting with this approach, capability is not only linked to money, but is directly linked to the perceived primary outcome of exercising *economic* choice: well-being.

CAPABILITY AND WELL-BEING

This linking of money to well-being in our definitions of poverty leads to the great divide: those who have money and those who don’t. Those who have money have choice and can achieve a self-determined level of well-being. Those without money do not have choice and cannot achieve a minimum level of well-being. Importantly, those who have money get to draft the definitions. As Robert Chambers states, ‘our common meanings have all been constructed by us, non-poor people’.

This approach is exclusionist, invisible and colonial. Poverty becomes a means of classification. ‘The poor’ are invisible and unknown. They are ‘the other’. We would never consider collectively categorising ourselves as ‘the rich’. To do so would be dehumanising. Yet we have no hesitation in classifying those whose affluence does not meet our benchmark as simply ‘the poor’.

We classify with the best intent. Yet our definitions lead us to interventions which have, all too often, little chance of success. If we develop capability interventions to achieve measures of well-being we ourselves have determined, we all too often fail and we fail those who we seek to assist.



We need a different approach. We cannot use money as a bridge between capability and well-being. And we cannot impose measures of well-being based on our own criteria of an acceptable life. There are of course commonalities in those things most people, when asked, consider as important. But who are we to assume priority? Rather than commencing with capability and well-being, we should instead commence with competence.

our common meanings have all been constructed by us, non-poor people

Why? Capabilities do not represent *doing* something; they represent the *ability* to do something. For example, I know about keeping enough money in a bank account, I know how to use a bank account and I have a bank account. I therefore have capability – but I’m not actually doing anything. If I use a bank account to manage my money to enhance my well-being then I am doing something. I am engaging in the competent management of my money. It is this competence, rather than the capability which permits it, that enhances my well-being.

CAPABILITY, COMPETENCE AND WELL-BEING

Competence is the enactment of capability. Competence creates a bridge between capa-

bility and well-being. Inadequate well-being results not from inadequate capability, but from not ‘doing things’.

It is here we should begin. Not with global measures of well-being, nor with interventions to increase capability that we determine will enhance well-being, but by asking people – individuals, households and communities – what it is they need to *do* to enhance their well-being to a level they consider appropriate. In adopting this approach, we shift from global approaches derived from collectively conceptualising ‘the poor’, to a situated focus on people, grounded in their particular circumstance and based on an acceptance that people know what they need to do. They may not know the capability they require (the specific training or development intervention required), but they, and only they, can link specific aspects of their well-being to specific activities.

We can no longer categorise by employing collective nouns. We must begin with humility and acknowledge our limitations, our lack of competence. We must acknowledge that ‘the poor “r” us’.

Jonathan Sibley is completing doctoral studies at Massey University. His research is focussed on adult financial competence and household well-being in rural communities in the Pacific. He is currently a member of the faculty at the Central Queensland University Melbourne Campus and an adjunct research fellow of the university’s International Education Research Centre (j.sibley@mel.cqu.edu.au).

Poverty of consumerism or a culture of humanity?

LINDA BREMFORD dares to challenge one of the cultural assumptions that both creates and defines poverty.

Human poverty can be said to be the deprivation of physical conditions including food, clothing, shelter and safe drinking water, and the opportunity to learn, grow and live in peace in society.

Currently, the most common method used to define poverty is income-based. A person is considered poor if his or her income level and resources fall below some minimum level needed to meet a standard of living considered acceptable in his or her society.

A materialistic consumer society survives by insisting that no standard of living is ever high enough. The marketing arm of a consumer society insinuates itself into every corner of our lives, constantly moving the finishing line, exhorting people to work faster, harder and smarter in order to buy more, acquire more knowledge, possessions, acquaintances, experiences and so on.

In the belief that we will finally reach this elusive 'finishing line', we allow ourselves to be used up, worn out and exhausted, along with exhausting the land and the natural resources we depend on.

Cultures with economic wealth and technological power rampage though the world, seeking new resources to slake this desire for more, while reducing others to a state of real – not imagined – poverty and need.

Not only do such powerful cultures have an insatiable desire for resources, they have also infected other cultures with consumerism. The path paved by the Coca Cola bottle that is transported to other cultures may soon be followed by other perceived 'needs'.

Plain water is a *clear* example of how our consumerism shows itself.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the water from our tap is more strictly regulated for safety and purity than commercially bottled water. Tap water meets every real, physical need we have for water. Yet, in 2005, Aotearoa New Zealanders spent NZ\$26.5 million on bottled water. Every year over NZ\$165 billion is spent worldwide. The United Nations estimates that if given just a sixth of that money for one year – NZ\$25 billion – they could cut in half the number of people without access to clean water. Drinking bottled water is a choice, not a necessity, yet it is one we make despite its implications.

Some people say that any situation where humans plunder their own environment is a symptom of madness. Yet rather than point a finger of blame at others or ourselves, we could stop, be still and ask, 'Why?'

Why do we allow ourselves, and even choose, to be manipulated in this way, and choose to forget that we are depriving others?

Some will answer, 'To be happy'. Could we then ask again, 'Why? Were we born unhappy? Is anything else in nature so chronically unhappy?'

To ask such a question requires steady, honest self-observation. This can be painful. It denies the 'quick fix' solutions that seem to fascinate humans. Rather than deeply consider a question, we often seek someone who seems to have a solution that is working for them.

It takes courage to stop, look at one's own life and ask, 'Why do I demand that the earth and its resources make me happy? Do I believe the vested interests of the consumerist culture that scream at me 'you are unhappy'? These forces are also working on my children. Is this what I want for them?'

In our hearts, we know that acquiring 'things' or abstemiously giving up 'things' never leads us to a constant, steady state of continual ease. The next question might be, 'if consumerism doesn't work, why do we cling to this culture?'

These are hard questions to ask. Can one person asking these questions really make a difference? The answer is yes! Human history has had many such heroes. Yet when they have gone, too often their message remains only in books. Unless a new 'culture' forms around them during their lifetime, a culture where people are functioning daily in a selfless way, their work can be lost.

This new culture could be seen as our truest culture, a culture of humanity. Creating it would demand that we begin to direct our love and attention to that which is greater than ourselves. In this process, we would have to abandon our self-saving, self-seeking desires for our own individual survival.

Should this strong, selfless culture come to be seen as normal and natural, and should consumerism come to be seen as dubious and unnatural, our children could grow up understanding and accepting that in the culture of humanity, resources are allocated according to real and true need.

This single change of attitude – *understanding and accepting that resources are allocated according to need* – would strike a powerful blow at the root cause of poverty.

Yes, the task is great, but that does not mean we should not attempt it!

Linda Bremford has worked for VSA and with the Multicultural Services Centre, teaches Literacy and ESOL, and is currently developing a work experience project for migrant women in Wellington.

THE WORTH OF GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT?

Our gross national product ... counts air pollution and cigarette advertising, and ambulances to clear our highways of carnage. It counts special locks for our doors and the jails for those who break them. It counts the destruction of our redwoods and the loss of our natural wonder in chaotic sprawl... Yet the gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play... It measures neither our wit nor our courage; neither our wisdom nor our learning; neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country; it measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile. *Robert F. Kennedy*



Relative deprivation: Poverty embedded in affluence

The measurement of poverty may have expanded to include the capacities of people and communities but as **NASIR KHAN** argues, high income does not necessarily equal high capacity and vice versa. The results hold risks for us all.

The widening of poverty definitions to include dimensions such as social capital, capabilities and freedoms has added much value to our understanding of poverty. But despite this multidimensional focus on poverty, the imbalance between incomes and the opportunities available to people has received only scant attention. This neglect is alarming and the resulting relative deprivation may have terrible results.

To grasp the significance of this imbalance, consider the following classification of societies:

| | High opportunities | Low opportunities |
|-------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| High income | Welfare state | Violence/terrorism |
| Low income | Corruption/ underground economy | Less-privileged societies |

The two extreme cases of high income-high opportunities and low income-low opportunities are not so relevant to this discussion. Our focus is the two cases of income-opportunity disparity.

HIGH INCOME-LOW OPPORTUNITIES

In this situation, the opportunities available to people remain constrained despite having a reasonable income. The case of immigrants in minority world countries is a good illustration. A certain level of income is ensured for most legal immigrants through measures such as minimum wage legislation, but there may be few opportunities to translate this income into the fulfilment of needs when compared to the opportunities enjoyed by wider society. This is because access to social, economic and political opportunities is based more on group affiliations through factors such as race, religion or language, rather than income. The result is income-rich relative deprivation. The involvement of immigrant communities in recent violence in the US and elsewhere, such as the killing of 13 people by an immigrant in New York in April, 2009 and the Virginia Tech massacre may provide some measure of the repercussions.

Such situations can also be a reflection of global economic imbalances and the resulting resentment. In a world fragmented on the basis of caste, colour and creed, opportunities

are often guaranteed by virtue of group membership. Access is based on group affiliations rather than income levels; once denied direct access, people seek other ways to access these opportunities. They may use their excess income to finance ethnic, religious and class conflicts to remove barriers between income and opportunities. Violence and terrorism are often signs of this underlying problem: Al-Qaeda is one such gory signpost.

LOW INCOME-HIGH OPPORTUNITIES

This is symptomatic of societies where development interventions have created new opportunities. However, general income levels remain low as funds are not channelled effectively and the alien development models that have been introduced have concentrated incomes in certain sectors of the population. In these situations, people can see development happening around them but cannot take ad-

vantage of it. As a consequence, when people are unable to raise their incomes through legal means to take advantage of opportunities, they are forced to think about other options. Corruption and underground economies are two mechanisms devised to extend their access to opportunities. A generally weak institutional set up, with specific reference to the judicial system, facilitates this adaptation process. There is no need to indicate specific cases for this malady. The prevalence of corruption and black economies in those majority countries where development enterprise has made deep inroads presents a vivid picture!

Both these forms of relative deprivation are a serious enough threat on their own. However, the threat expands with the prospect of a union between the two. It is a union increasingly made possible by enhanced flows of information. Resources produced through corruption and underground economies in one part of the world can now be easily transported to find resonance with distressed people lamenting the lack of opportunities elsewhere. Little wonder then at the simultaneous rise of terrorism with the wave of globalisation. What we have witnessed might be just some of the early results. Other, more serious effects might be brewing, as relative deprivation still thrives in a variety of forms. The world would be naïve to believe that terrorism could be eliminated by the use of force. As long as relative deprivation is fed by the prevailing imbalances, both terrorism and violence will be nurtured.

The cure is a balancing exercise, one that must come from the right direction. It would be as ridiculous to advocate limited development interventions and lower opportunities as it would be preposterous to argue for the curtailment of income levels. Action from the right direction entails departing from one size-fits-all solutions. What could deliver in income-deprived groups might exacerbate the situation in their opportunities-deprived counterparts. For those suffering from income-rich relative deprivation, a viable solution might exist in creating opportunities and breaking down social and cultural barriers. For those lacking in income, a more equitable distribution of wealth and the strengthening of institutions could do the trick. However, these are only suggestions. The imminent perils associated with relative deprivation call for in-depth research, both to understand the problem and to find a solution.

Nasir Khan is currently studying for a PhD at the Centre for Development Studies at the University of Auckland.



Sculpture by Luis Sanguino celebrates the diversity of New York City and the struggle of immigrants. The figures' expressive poses emphasise the struggle and toil inherent in the experience of the immigrant or dislocated person. Photo: Mary Harrsch.



Although newly elected President Zuma's corruption charges were dropped due to a technicality and not because of lack of substance, he now vows he will crack down on corruption and fraud in government.
Photo: Kristin Augustine.

South Africa's poverty of trust

ANNIKA LINDORSSON proposes that the poverty of trust created by corruption in South Africa is a major barrier to poverty eradication.

South Africa has an excellent Constitution and *Bill of Rights*, along with many good pro-poor policies; yet, despite significant economic growth in the last decade, nearly half of the country's population is still living in poverty. Economic development and poverty reduction efforts should bring about positive change for the people who need it most, right? But this has not been accomplished in South Africa.

So what has gone wrong? I believe that a lack of good governance, and specifically, high levels of corruption, have something to do with it. Although good governance alone will not end poverty, without good governance we are inviting fraud, bribery, corruption, and crime, all of which work against

reducing poverty. Continued poverty is likely to breed more corruption. More corruption further deepens poverty. And so on.

Corruption is not just a monetary problem; it impacts generations to come and their resilience in the face of future challenges. Corruption's reach into one sector compounds its effects in another.

For example, if construction or engineering contracts are awarded because of who you know and not what you know, chances are that infrastructure and technical capacity will fall behind, or even fall apart, simply because the skills required are not there. The human cost of such shortfalls may only become evident many years later when inappropriately built houses, dams and bridges collapse.

In the education sector, if resources are not used as intended, South African students, who are already displaying very low levels of literacy and numeracy, will not be able to sufficiently develop the future human capital the

country needs to deal with the results of corruption in other sectors such as the construction industry. The need for quality education is vital to stop the cycle of corruption. It would help the majority of the workforce out of the unskilled and low-paying jobs that pay so low, they force people into bribery, theft, and crime to supplement their income.

Crime has hit South Africa hard. And the South African police force is seriously struggling with finding the financial means and skills to effectively ensure citizens' safety. Incompetence and corruption within the force are not properly addressed. As a result, there is little public trust in the police. Instead it seems that what you can trust – if you are a criminal – is that the chances of being caught are slim.

In response to the lack of trust in public law enforcement, individuals and businesses have turned to private security companies. Many of these companies do a great job; others, unfortunately, find that the information they can access about when their customers are at home, when they are out, when their alarm is set and so on, is just too tempting to resist.

As you can see, not only does corruption cause financial poverty, it also causes the poverty of skill, capacity, security and trust, which in turn creates a culture of disbelief, hopelessness, suspicion, and negativity – none of which are helpful for poverty elimination.

Although I felt disappointment at the South African National Prosecuting Authority's failure to prioritise accountability and transparency by deciding to drop their corruption charges against the then president-to-be Jacob Zuma, I am still inspired and motivated by the many positive steps South Africa is taking to overcome the problem of corruption. The bottom line is, corruption is caused by *people*, just like you and me, and as such, corruption can be eradicated if the people take pride and responsibility in ourselves and our actions. In doing so, we can address the many types of poverty that we have seen are symptoms of corruption. This needs to be a fundamental part of any poverty reduction effort, because when we address corruption, we can establish a trust in the government, in the systems and in each other. We can create a feeling of unity, togetherness and human solidarity, and an environment where we are willing to *invest in each other*. This, along with strict adherence to good governance and well managed poverty reduction programmes, should help in ensuring positive change and development that becomes genuinely pro-poor.

Annika Lindorsson migrated to South Africa in 2007 and now runs an environmental design business with her husband.

It's not just a physical thing: Poverty and mental health

Photo: Pedram Pirnia

Poverty has a significant impact on mental health and well-being; yet these connections are often ignored. In this article, **FRANCES HUGHES** discusses some of the connections and introduces one Pacific initiative that is working to ensure mental health issues are recognised.

For centuries, people have understood the relationship between poverty and poor physical health. This remains the target of numerous interventions at national, regional and global levels.

The impact of poverty on *mental* health, however, is less well-known and is often regarded as secondary to physical health. In reality, there is a close relationship between all aspects of health and its determinants – including poverty.

People with mental illness are more likely to live in impoverished conditions – they may have little or no family support; are more likely to be unemployed; and may be increasingly vulnerable to drug or alcohol abuse. Access to health services may be limited by cost, by stigma and by a lack of appropriately trained health professionals.

It is often hard for mental health services to attract funding. For example, information published by the World Health Organization (WHO) indicates that ‘most middle and low-income countries devote less than 1% of their health expenditure to mental health’. In addition, mental health initiatives do not readily attract sponsorship from private or corporate donors; such initiatives rarely have the appeal of public health initiatives such as the provi-

sion of clean drinking water or vaccination campaigns.

Because people with mental health problems are more likely to be affected by poverty, they are also more vulnerable to a range of factors, including:

- changes in income
- the effects of natural disasters and civil unrest
- the impacts of social changes such as prostitution and child labour.

IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH IN THE MAJORITY WORLD

The WHO has a number of initiatives to address mental health issues in majority world countries. These initiatives form part of the mental health Gap Action Programme (mh-GAP), launched in October 2008, which is directed at enhancing services for mental, neurological and substance use disorders.

THE PACIFIC ISLAND MENTAL HEALTH NETWORK (PIMHNET)

PIMHnet has been involved in mental health services in the Pacific since 2005, and was launched by the WHO in March 2007. It is currently funded by NZAID.

Its objective is ‘to facilitate and support co-operative and coordinated activities among member countries, to contribute to better health outcomes for people with mental illness’. Many of its 18 member countries have low incomes, and there are significant constraints to initiating or improving mental health services. One such constraint is the lack of information about the prevalence of mental health problems in the region, which reflects the lack of attention that this area of health has been accorded by Pacific nations’ governments.

PIMHnet member countries are encouraged to make mental health a national priority, and to identify ways in which mental health needs can be met with existing resources. There is a strong focus on using existing primary health services to deliver mental health services. For example, a training initiative has recently commenced in Vanuatu, using psychiatrists from Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia to train health workers in basic mental health skills.

A recent review of PIMHnet, undertaken for NZAID, concluded that:

a very successful project has been implemented and the interventions so far have been implemented well, measured at this early stage primarily in outputs delivered. The achievements are significant given the short period of time that the project has been in place and the number of countries that are now benefiting.

MAKING MENTAL HEALTH A PRIORITY

Aid agencies, governments and the international bodies charged with addressing poverty need to recognise and address the relationship between poverty and mental health issues. Initiatives such as PIMHnet appear to be effective in achieving low-cost, rapid and sustainable improvements in mental health in majority world nations, particularly where a considerable number of the population live in poverty.

Dr. Francis Hughes is a facilitator for the PIMHnet initiative. For more information, go to http://www.who.int/mental_health/policy/pimhnet.

most middle and low-income countries devote less than 1% of their health expenditure to mental health



Musharifa, a girl with intellectual disability from Coorg, India. Photo: Leonard Cheshire Disability.

Poverty measurements and the concept of well-being for disabled persons

VARDHANI RATNALA argues that for disabled people, 'poverty measurements' should not just measure financial independence or their ability to meet basic needs, but also their ability to lead a normal life.

The World Bank focuses on three aspects of well-being:

- **Poverty:** whether households or individuals have enough resources or abilities to meet their current needs.
- **Inequality:** the unequal distribution of income, consumption or other attributes across the population.
- **Vulnerability:** the probability or risk of being in poverty today, or falling deeper into poverty, in the future.

People with disabilities constitute around 10% (650 million) of the world's population. The UN agencies and the World Bank estimate that 20% of the world's poorest people are disabled and, in majority world countries, almost 80% of the disabled live on less than one dollar a day.

While these estimates reflect reality to a certain extent, they are not adequate to capture the concept of poverty among the disabled. Current poverty measurements – whether it is the US\$1 or US\$2 per day of the World Bank, the country-specific poverty lines or other measurements – are restricted to measuring income, expenditure and consumption in terms of calorific intake or ownership of tangible assets.

For disabled people, poverty goes beyond these measurements. It includes various other aspects like discrimination, socialisa-

tion, the ability to access services and public places, inclusion, and societal perception. These all play a key role in determining a disabled person's poverty status. In majority world countries, disabled people usually lack access to aids or appliances, healthcare, education, livelihoods, and other resources. This lack of access can lead people to discriminate against disabled people, and to exclude them from society. Therefore, it is imperative that in order to cater to this vulnerable group, poverty among the disabled must be adequately measured.

Let us look at two scenarios which help differentiate poverty between the disabled and non-disabled.

SCENARIO ONE

The wealth status assigned to a family might not be applicable to a disabled person within the family.

A family might be classified as 'above the poverty line', but the disabled person within the family might lack access to education, employment, healthcare and/or socialisation opportunities, all of which make him or her vulnerable. In most cases, the disabled person would not be an earning member and therefore would not have any savings or assets in his or her name. They are dependent on their family.

In this case, the wealth status assigned to

the family is not applicable to the individual disabled person. As a result, their vulnerability is not adequately captured.

SCENARIO TWO

A disabled person with income above US\$2 per day is considered poor.

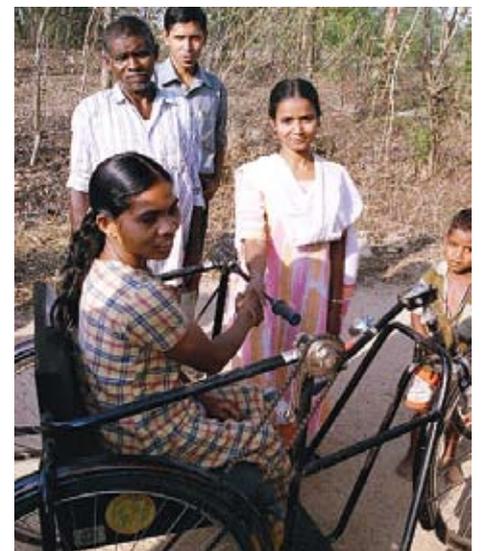
People with disabilities – including those who earn sufficient to meet their needs – are often regarded within their communities as the most disadvantaged. The community may perceive disabled people as dependents on their family who are not capable of getting married, cannot participate in social events like other people, and therefore, cannot live independently. Families with disabled persons may be considered within their communities as poor, compared to families without disabled persons, even though the financial status of the two families might be the same. However, these dimensions of poverty are not captured in current poverty measurements.

The concept of poverty for the disabled is most often culturally defined and is therefore, relative in nature. The above two scenarios reflect the inadequacy of current poverty measurements in capturing the reality for people with disabilities. Today, a person's poverty status plays an important role in their access to subsidised assistance like pensions, scholarships and food provisions from the government and also in receiving development services from NGOs or government.

Therefore, it is essential that the current poverty measurements look at ways to capture all aspects of vulnerability faced by people with disabilities in order to adequately reflect their poverty status.

Vardhani Ratnala is a development professional from India with nine years of experience in the social sector. Currently, she is working as knowledge manager in the South Asia Office of Leonard Cheshire International, a disability organisation based in the UK.

Wheelchair user in the community, India. Photo: Leonard Cheshire.





Essential truths about water. Photo: ©2007-2009, Wesley Furguiele, All Rights Reserved.

Demanding dignity: The human right to water

OLIVIA ROPE looks at the right to one of life's necessities – water – and argues, through examination of a Fijian case study, that privatisation threatens poor people's access and may create yet another indicator of poverty.

While many Aotearoa New Zealanders don't blink an eye at turning the tap on, in some parts of the world water is a luxury people struggle to afford.

A staggering 1.1 billion people don't have access to safe drinking water and around 42% of the world's population – 2.2 billion people – live without means of sanitation. About 1.6 million deaths a year are estimated to be caused by unsafe water.

Water is as fundamental to life as air. The World Health Organisation states that the amount of water deemed 'sufficient' to meet basic drinking water and sanitation requirements is between 20 and 50 litres of water per day, per person.

The founding document of human rights, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, states that everyone has the right to an adequate and healthy standard of living. This implicitly recognises that access to water is an inalienable human right that governments must guarantee their citizens.

But in our part of the world there is a tug of war emerging between providing access to water and the idea of water as a business opportunity. Fiji has started to take steps towards the privatisation of water, through the corporatisation of water and the establishment of the National Water Authority, designed to make Fiji's water profitable.

This move is alarming human rights advocates. Corporatisation is the first step to-

wards privatisation, and the ordinary people of Fiji may have even less access to water. The vulnerable and poor are particularly at risk.

Privatisation of water services in Fiji began under the previous SDL (Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua)-led government which introduced the *Water Authority Bill*. The bill sparked outrage from the NGO community and even the Fiji Human Rights Commission, a body whose independence and willingness to speak out has been questioned due to their support of the 2006 coup. The current government continues to implement this move towards privatisation.

In a 2007 Government sanctioned committee, established to decide the future of Fijian water, five out of nine members were prominent private sector affiliates. No civil society or consumer representatives were included or consulted.

With 51% of Fijians living in rural areas and only about half of the rural population having access to water sources adequate for drinking, we should be asking how privatisation will improve the situation for them.

History has shown that privatisation further compromises the ability of citizens to enjoy the right to equal, affordable, and physical access to water. In the Bolivian city of Cochabamba, privatisation sparked huge protests that shut down the city for four days, eventually forcing the government to put water back into the hands of the government. In

South Africa, where the right to water is enshrined in the Constitution, a public-private partnership for water services has failed to secure the right to water for the most vulnerable citizens.

The international community – and international law – seems to accept that water can be treated as an economic good. But water is different from other consumer goods: it is essential, scarce, and non-substitutable. We need water to live, and using it as a profit making enterprise that puts it out of reach of some people, would be a human rights violation.

Water companies using Fijian water as a commercial good have no allegiance, legally or otherwise, to the welfare of Fiji's poorest citizens. If the many examples of privatisation from the majority world are anything to go by, the benefits of privatisation are unlikely to reach Fijian citizens living in abject poverty. Without an incentive to service low income communities, for-profit companies are more likely to service those communities able to pay for their services. When they do supply low income communities, they may adopt unduly onerous, discriminatory, or predatory practices. In South Africa, on top of severe water price increases, lower-income areas have faced higher charges due to their need for basic water infrastructure. Water cut-offs due to non-payment of bills have affected many and even resulted in a cholera outbreak in one area.

In violation of the right to water, this latest move by the Fijian Government shows a failure to prevent third parties – including companies and the National Water Authority – from interfering with citizens' rights. No one should be able to take away a person's right to water, least of all a government already failing to provide internationally accepted standards of essential services.

To avoid a human rights crisis, the Fijian government must listen to the outcry of local communities and civil society. Wide consultation and transparency on the future of Fiji's water is imperative. The Fijian government must not put economic gain ahead of the welfare of its people – particularly when it involves a resource as fundamental as water. It must stop this process of privatisation before it is too late.

Olivia Rope, advocacy assistant at Amnesty International Aotearoa NZ, completed her masters in International Public Law, and wrote her thesis on the Human Right to water and Privatisation of Water Services at the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands.

Poverty: An Indigenous Fijian perspective

Much has been written about poverty by experts and academics; in this article, **ADI ELISAPECI SAMANUNU WAGANIVALU** gives us a glimpse of how rural Indigenous Fijians view poverty.

When first asked what poverty is in Fiji, my initial reaction was, 'Poverty – what's that; we don't have poverty at the rural village? Well at least from our perspectives as Indigenous Fijians'. Was I being ignorant? No. As a child, I loved the outer islands. We had lots of space in the village green to play, we walked in the bush, picked fruit and played hide and seek. We swam at the nearby beach, read by the rocks and tried fishing with lines rolled up on a stick with small hooks which we baited and threw out to sea.

This is the Fiji I remember: lush bushes, the sound of waves against rocks, the idyllic blue ocean set against the sunshine or moonlight. I find it hard to connect this to the descriptions I hear now of a country that is plagued with poverty.

Over time, the Fiji I remember has changed. People from the islands started flocking to big cities in search of a better life. They uprooted themselves and their families, ready to take on any kind of menial job as long as they were living around the city. Meanwhile, those villagers that elected to remain in the village continued with their subsistence farming.

A recent TV3 documentary on Fiji stated that 'Fiji now has a squatter population of around 110,000 people and it is increasing by at least 10% every year'. One Fijian woman interviewed said 'For me... I think of my kids. That is why I came to Koroipita and from there they started to get educated in schools.'

This is the reality in Fiji now, a far cry from what I grew up with. For the average Indigenous Fijian living in a rural village, who survives on the land and does not have to pay rent, poverty is not an issue. They see it

'Poverty – what's that; we don't have poverty at the rural village? Well at least from our perspectives as Indigenous Fijians.'



Mums/ladies group from a rural village in Vuna Taveuni where I come from. They're sitting in the village green under a tree having a little debrief. Photo: Adi Yalava Regu.

as something that is more applicable to low income families in urban areas as their lives are dictated by the money they earn from casual labour or weekly wages. These earnings have to pay for rent, basic staple foods, bus fares, electricity bills, health services and educational needs. We only need to look at the coup d'état culture that has plagued Fiji for more than a decade to understand the desperate situation many families are in. With the current political instability and the credit crunch, more and more families in urban areas are faced with a dilemma – return to their rural village or continue their lives in squalor conditions within the city belts?

We are witnessing Fiji at its worst. Poverty is on the rise and there is more to come, especially to those living in urban areas who are struggling to support their families.

For people in rural villages, which make up an integral component of an Indigenous Fijian way of living, life is different. At least people in rural villages are still able to get up in the morning and go to their plantation or farm to get food to feed their family. These villages represent kinship and strong traditional values, which are important elements of the communal Indigenous Fijian culture. In villages where livelihoods are based on

subsistence farming, people rely on the sale of their root crops for basic commodities such as sugar, milk, butter and bread. Their diet varies depending on how innovative the women of the house are. There are various ways of ensuring families get a good breakfast of grated tapioca mixed with coconut milk and made into little pancakes or simply tapioca porridge with coconut cream. Lunch is always light, with a heavier meal for dinner, except for Sunday lunch or when visitors are expected and the meal table is laden with varieties of fresh food from the farm or fish and shellfish from the sea. This is possible at the rural village level – but not in the city, where people buy food with wages rather than relying on locally-grown produce.

I believe that Indigenous Fijians living in the rural villages are better off than those urban dwellers earning a meager income to support their families.

Adi Elisapeci Samanunu Waganivalu is studying part-time towards a double major in political science and international relations and law. Now residing in Aotearoa NZ she still has very strong ties with Fiji. She is a founding trustee of the community group Luvei Viti (Children of Fiji).

Daughters to Middle East and sons to North and East: Changing perceptions of poverty in Sri Lanka

The way people perceive poverty is in a state of constant change and people respond to such changes differently. In this article, **FAZEEHA AZMI** presents stories of three people from three generations of a major resettlement project in Sri Lanka – with three different ideas of what poverty means.

The Accelerated Mahaweli Development Project (AMDP) is the biggest resettlement project ever implemented in Sri Lanka; it covers one third of the country and since the 1970s more than 140,000 families have been resettled. The project aimed to improve the living standard of the settlers by granting them land for agriculture and homes in the AMDP settlements. In some ways, it has been successful – AMDP has expanded the amount of land under cultivation, provided employment opportunities and contributed to domestic hydropower production. However, after three decades it is evident that while some settlers have been able to realise their aims, others have not.



Kumari with her sisters, mother, niece and nephews in her half-built house. Photo: Fazeeha Azmi

KUMARI (30 YEARS OLD, SECOND GENERATION AMDP SETTLER)

I, along with my two sisters worked in a garment factory in Colombo. After our marriages, we decided to migrate to Lebanon to work in a factory. Our husbands did not have permanent jobs. If living is only about eating, what we earn is enough for us. But it is not so. We wanted to build our houses and lead a good life. Our mother looked after our children.

Kumari's story highlights how women tend to make livelihood choices not only to survive, but also to improve the quality of their family's life. Migration to Middle Eastern countries and Export Process Zones around Colombo for employment gained momentum at the end of the 1990s in this settlement. In response to poverty and deteriorating living conditions, a number of women from poor households in the settlement have opted to migrate.

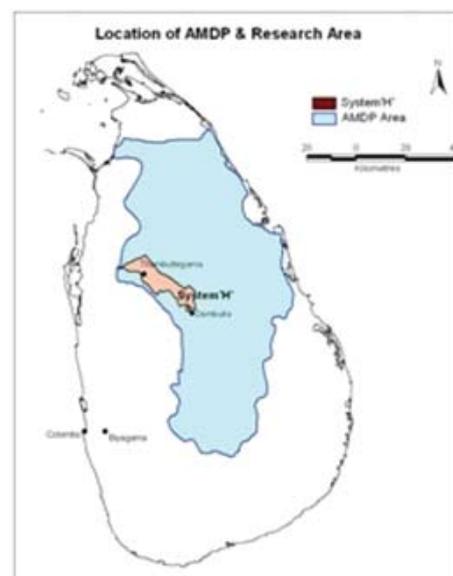


Gunawathie with her son in front of her home. Photo: Fazeeha Azmi

GUNAWATHIE (63 YEARS OLD, FIRST GENERATION AMDP SETTLER)

These days I could find some work in another village in a vegetable garden...If I don't go on time, I will not have work for the day and will have to come home empty handed. We will have nothing to eat. I have to look after my son, who is 36 years old and sick. He earned well when he could. Someone who is jealous of his progress has done a hooniyama [a supernatural act] to him. So I have to do everything. I have seven children, but nobody to take care of me. My only worry is my sick son. Who will look after him if I die? It is my Karume [fate]. I am poor and old. When you become old, you become poorer here.

Gunawathie's story tells of struggle, fear, desperation and frustration. She doesn't have a regular income as she doesn't have regular work. Her only aim is to earn enough each day to feed herself and her son. While this story shows dimensions of poverty, it also shows how Gunawathie has redefined her life to adapt to unexpected circumstances and to make a living.



The Accelerated Mahaweli Development Project (AMDP) is the biggest multipurpose development project implemented in Sri Lanka and covers one third of the country.

NAMAL (21 YEARS OLD, THIRD GENERATION AMDP SETTLER)

As I could not find an employment, I decided to join the army. I was 18 years old then. I had to look after my parents and younger brothers. Now we don't have land for agriculture. It was handed over to my elder brother. He is not helping us after he married. Besides, we cannot live a life like our grandparents. Their attitude was 'one has enough to eat and drink; that is enough'. How can we remain like that today? People have to build homes, save money for the future, spend on education...I see poverty is not only about enough food but a decent life.

I met Namal when he was on leave from the army; he did not want to pose for a picture. Namal joined the army basically for economic reasons. But his story also reveals that his livelihood choices were not only for survival but also to fulfil many other desires in his life. Thus, how people perceive poverty is also an important factor in livelihood choices.

These three stories show that the settlers' perceptions of poverty are linked to changing social ideas and increasing links with the outside world. Second and third generation settlers have managed to secure different livelihood activities outside the settlement – women in Export Processing Zones and Middle Eastern countries; men in the war areas of the North and East of the country. Meanwhile the first generation becomes vulnerable as they miss out on these livelihood opportunities.

Dr Fazeeha Azmi is in the Department of Geography at the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

Rural poverty in Samoa: The views of the poor

A detailed study of rural poverty in Samoa by **FALETOI TUILAEP**A and **SANDRA MARTIN** asked rural poor people to describe their own situation. In this article, Faletoi and Sandra share some of the insights they gained.

As might be expected, the rural poor in Samoa do not view poverty as not having enough food to meet their daily needs. The abundance of natural resources – the land and the sea – provide sustenance for them and people have access to these resources through their social system of sharing and cooperation. During natural disasters – such as cyclones or pest and disease outbreaks – there may be periods of temporary food shortage, but there are social safety nets that stop this situation from getting worse. While there is no food poverty in the traditional sense of not having enough calories to meet needs, the rural Samoan poor do speak about a special type of ‘food poverty’. They say that not being able to provide ‘special foods’ when these are needed to meet social obligations is part of being poor.

Rural people also associate being poor with lack of household assets and community facilities. Families that don’t have a freezer, bathroom, flush toilet, water tank, radio or perhaps a TV may see themselves as poor, and community facilities may be seen as inadequate when there is no tap water supply or electricity, and no sealed roads, schools or medical facilities.

A central feature of being poor in rural Samoa is not having the means to meet social obligations. Such obligations can include being unable to fully contribute to special village social and ceremonial occasions such as

the taligamalo (received and given) occasion, village development projects such as schools and churches, family obligations including maliu (funerals), saofai (bestowal of matai titles), faaipogoga (weddings), church obligations such as meealofa faalelotu (church offerings), and other social occasions.

The poor themselves also associate their poverty with lack of income and savings, and lack of income earning ability. They mention not being able to get a well-paying job, not getting remittances from family members overseas or being unable to access an entitlement to a monthly pension. Some people say that a lack of income-earning assets and an inability to save money keeps them trapped in poverty. For example, families with no car may struggle to earn money from farm activities, and families that have to use savings to meet social obligations and to educate their children may find it difficult to move out of poverty.

SO WHAT CREATES POVERTY IN RURAL SAMOA?

Rural people identify a number of events that they associate with being poor or becoming poor. The first of these are personal (family) circumstances, such as chronic illness, being unable to work, or having a spouse who is in this situation. The death of a spouse, especially when a person is reliant on the spouse for livelihood support, can also push people into poverty. Rural people also say that the need

to meet a series of social obligations in rapid succession, such as multiple funerals and the bestowal of matai titles, can push people into poverty. Pigs, chickens and cattle can be required for funerals and this loss of livestock and savings can make it difficult to save or earn income down the track.

External events can also be a key contributor. Cyclones cause loss or damage to houses and these houses then have to be replaced or repaired. Crops can also be destroyed, which reduces income earning ability, and at worst, creates temporary food shortages. Tidal waves can destroy small businesses, such as tourist beach fale, and can create real hardship. Sometimes it can be difficult to recover from such events, particularly when they are followed by further disasters, such as outbreaks of agricultural pests and diseases, such as occurred with taro leaf blight. Economic fluctuations – particularly in the current global recession – can lead to low market prices for major export crops and make it difficult for people to move out of poverty or remain out of poverty. Rising costs for imported goods can have a similar impact.

Although this article reports how poor people in rural Samoa see their own situation and the reasons that lead to this, the wider study includes their views on a number of other relevant issues, such as safety nets, constraints to moving out of poverty and strategies used by the poor to get out – and stay out – of poverty.

Dr Faletoi Sauvi Tuilaepa undertook this PhD research on rural poverty in Samoa at Lincoln University on a NZAID Scholarship. He is now based at the University of South Pacific, Apia, Samoa. His supervisor, Dr Sandra Martin, is Director of LUCID (Lincoln University Centre for International Development) and Associate Professor at Lincoln University.

Photo: Dev-Zone



Overcoming the poverty mindset:

A Tukorehe perspective



For **FIONA KAMARIERA** and **SEAN OGDEN**, brother and sister from Ngāti Tukorehe Iwi in the Horowhenua, poverty is a state of mind.

Some people say that Māori culture is going through a renaissance; no, the reality is that we have managed to take a shuffle back from the cliff, but the cliff is still there. We are still in danger of losing everything in the next generation. Poverty can be defined as a lack of wealth, but it isn't just economic wealth: it is cultural wealth and family wealth – whanaungatanga – that gives us sustenance. We could be materially the poorest people in Aotearoa (New Zealand) and have great wealth if we have cultural pride. But the fact is that many of our people are poor. Now we have to drag the runaway poverty train – cultural poverty, language poverty and whanaungatanga poverty – further back from the precipice.

DRAGGING BACK THE POVERTY TRAIN

People are poor because they think poor: they live with a poverty mindset. A hundred years ago, the marae was the hub from which families gained their sustenance; now our families are in survival mode and their priority is to put food on the table. Many of our people feel disconnected from their marae; they are alienated from their land, they have lost the ability to grow their own food, and they have lost connections with family.

We need to lift our people out of the poverty mindset. If you're constantly telling yourself, 'We're poor, we don't have people wealth, land wealth or cultural wealth', you will be stuck in

that mindset. The work we do is to uplift our people; to raise the consciousness of Tukorehe.

The principles of Whakatupuranga rua mano (Generation 2000), a vision of building leadership for the next generation, are key for us:

- The people are our wealth
- The marae is our first home
- The preservation and maintenance of the language is key.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Powerlessness is part of the poverty mindset. When people feel that they can't effect change amongst those who have the power, they turn on each other. So we work to reconnect our people, and at the same time, we build external relationships. Right now, a multimillion dollar development company plans to build in this area. We have evidence to show that the development will directly affect the aquifer, the water ways, archaeological sites and the quality of living for everyone here. We can't take them on financially, but we're focusing on overcoming our powerlessness by forging internal and external relationships. We maintain relationships that previous generations created with other Iwi, and now we have a *Memorandum of Partnership* with the Horowhenua District Council. That means we can sit at a table with the Council and put our point of view forward before cases go to the Environmental Court. We still can't match the development company financially, but we can step up and say:

No. We're not going to act poor. We may be financially poor, but we're wealthy in other ways. And look out, because we're not going to lie down.

OVERCOMING THE POVERTY MINDSET

We run programmes focused on reconnecting with our sources of wealth. This means connecting with our whenua (land) through our wetland restoration project and environmental management courses, connecting with healthy sustenance by changing the kind of food we eat at the marae and looking at growing our own food, and connecting with our people through events, online communities, and language and cultural courses. Our young people are taking part in language and tikanga marae courses, and we run a Kaumatua programme that encourages our elders to take their rightful places as leaders on the marae. The Kaumatua course is very important for us, because our elders are sometimes forgotten, yet they are the bridge between what used to be and what is going to be, and they need to lead us there.

The Kaumatua course has given our people strength to deal with some challenging times. In 2007, our marae hosted the tangi for Baby Jhia, the two year old who was shot in a gang-related drive-by in Whanganui. There were tense moments when Black Power members arrived at our marae and we weren't sure if they would respect the way we do things, but we got through it because our Kaumatua were able to stand strong and say, 'This is Tukorehe. If you don't like it, you can leave'. The gang members took off their patches and respected our marae protocol. That was an empowering moment to be Tukorehe.

LOOKING FORWARD

We do this work because we know that we are contributing to change – not only for our lifetime, but also for the lifetimes to come. It's about knowing that this place is going to be here for at least the next hundred years. I am sure that it will. Now we need to keep working with our next generation to ensure that it will be here for a hundred years beyond that. In doing this, we are confident that we will overcome the poverty mindset.

Fiona Kamariera and Sean Ogden are from Te Iwi o Ngāti Tukorehe. To find out more about Tukorehe, go to www.tukorehe.iwi.nz.

Since 2002, more than 10,000 indigenous plants have found a home at Te Hakari wetlands restoration project thanks to people associated with Te Iwi o Ngāti Tukorehe. *Image: Te Iwi o Ngāti Tukorehe.*



Buddhist aid: Pagodas reducing poverty in Cambodia

Pagodas – the centre of the Buddhist faith in Cambodia – represent a powerful vehicle for social change. **ARNALDO PELLINI** tells the story of the Pagoda Association of Botum, a pagoda that has survived a devastating totalitarian regime to become a source of real poverty reduction in the community.



Botum pagoda is located in the village of Botum Lech, in the province of Kampong Thom (central Cambodia). Photo: Arnaldo Pellini

BEGINNINGS

In 1952, one year before Cambodia gained independence from France, an abbot named the Venerable Theng Gna and 12 *achars* (laymen) established the Pagoda Association of Botum.

The original statute of the association reads:

We are calling this endeavour 'Buddhist Aid' which is meant, first of all, to construct the Vihear [sermon hall] of the Pagoda of Botum. The merits of this religious contribution will certainly be our future treasure which will accompany us to pass the 'cycle of reincarnations' towards Nirvana.

The association was managed and financed by the community. All eleven advisors and the association president were *achars* from the pagoda and surrounding villages; following tradition, Venerable Theng Gna did not hold any position of responsibility. The association received no funding from the Provincial Office of Education; yet, by 1959 villagers had provided sufficient funds, cash and in kind, to begin construction of a primary school. The school in Botum pagoda was one of only three primary schools in the district at the time.

WAR

In 1970, Cambodia's civil war reached Botum. The area came under control of Khmer Rouge troops who ruled Cambodia through a radical form of agrarian communism, forcing people to work in collective farms or forced labor projects. Between 1975 and 1979, the regime caused the deaths of almost two million people.

The activity of the association suffered. People stopped repaying their loans and making contributions. Venerable Theng Gna and other monks were forced to disrobe, dress in civilian clothes and work at collective farms with the other villagers. The Khmer Rouge outlawed all forms of associations and the *achars* of Botum pagoda risked their lives to hide the association's important docu-



ments and statutes in sealed bamboo sticks which were buried under their houses. They only dug them out in 1979, when the Khmer Rouge regime finally ended.

REBIRTH

With the regime over, Theng Gna (now an *achar*) attempted to recreate the association. However, he was met with three obstacles: the government had established solidarity groups in charge of community activities and reconstruction in every village; people had no money and payments were made with rice; fighting continued and made the area unsafe until the beginning of 1996. Despite this, the association officially restarted on 24 December 1988. The community nominated a School Association Committee, and 122 people contributed a total of 6.449 Riel (NZ\$51 at that time) to create initial capital. A second collection of contributions took place four months later and more contributions were made before 1992. A second school association linked to the pagoda was created in the nearby village of Kantong Rong in 1992. The number of association members has increased considerably in recent years to reach 678 members in Botum and 462 in Kantong Rong.

Although the loans provided by the associations are normally very small, their repayment with interest has allowed each association's capital to grow. This has also increased the number of families that can access loans. With the revenue from loan repayments, the

CAMBODIA: QUICK FACTS

- 1 million people lived in ancient Angkor, the world's largest pre-industrial civilisation
- 95% of Cambodians are Buddhist
- 62,470 monks and monk students are part of the 3,731 pagodas across Cambodia
- 2 million people were killed during the Khmer Rouge regime
- 10 million landmines were laid – 6 million landmines are thought to still be in the ground today
- Cambodia is ranked 133rd of 177 countries in the United Nations Human Development Index.

School Association Committee of Botum has been able to buy new tables and chairs for students and to repair walls and bookshelves.

Currently, in addition to the two school associations, a cash association and rice association are also active in the Pagoda. The link between members and the association committees is based on trust, respect and religious norms. The main motivation for individuals to become members of the association and contribute to the starting capital is in fact the willingness to earn 'merits' for a future life.

The experience of Botum shows that pagodas represent a space where community initiatives can be promoted. It confirms that community self-help initiatives that follow traditional values and establish a committed leadership can develop in the absence of external NGO or government assistance – they can even survive a war.

Arnaldo Pellini is a research fellow at the Overseas Development Institute in London. He has worked in community development for the last eight years in Nepal, Cambodia, and Vietnam.



Survival in Sudan: Local strategies for alleviating poverty

Sudan is often associated with negative stories of conflict, natural disasters and poverty. However, in this article **Nawal El-Gack** describes innovative village survival strategies – achieved with little to no help from outside agencies – that have allowed people to survive and prosper.

POVERTY IN NORTH KORDOFAN

Sudan's North Kordofan state has suffered a 35 year drought. Three-quarters of rural people in the state live in poverty, a state they describe as a lack of land, livestock, commercial goods and other assets. Opportunities for work are limited; access to public services such as education, health, water and transportation is poor; and there is a lack of effective partnerships between local communities, government authorities and development organisations.

Despite these challenges, some villages in North Kordofan have achieved internal development with little to no support from government and international organisations.

DEVELOPMENT FOR THE COMMON GOOD

When people in North Kordofan need to achieve something for the common good, they have developed traditions and practices that involve the whole community. People band together to establish schools, water pumps, mosques, houses and farming operations, and they also participate in various activities to help individuals who serve the community. They donate or allocate land and organise communal projects called *Nafir*, where people come together to carry out a project. An example would be communal farm labouring undertaken to support teachers or local midwives. During the rainy season, people also co-operate to achieve many farming chores such as planting, weeding and harvesting.

Participation in community affairs is organised and managed by local associations. These grassroots organisations discuss various community development issues, such as school

construction or maintenance, provisions of equipment or activities related to drinking water. They also organise social events.

SURVIVAL STRATEGIES IN HAJ-ABDALLA

Some villages in North Kordofan have managed to survive droughts and hardship through cooperation and solidarity between the members of the community. One such village is *Haj-Abdalla*. During a massive famine in 1984, the people decided not to move outside the village and formed 'an emergency committee' that included the *Sheikh* (village headman), religious leaders and influential members of the community. This committee suggested that every household should declare what they had; grain, animals, fodder, money or gold. The committee then divided the village into three areas headed by sub-committees, and the people in each area cooked and ate together. The members of the communities who now lived in the towns organised themselves and arranged to send continuous support to the village. This lasted for seven months until the crisis was over.

In 1998, a fire destroyed 65 houses in the village causing 40% of the families to lose their assets including grain, plants, animals and shops. Again, people worked together and donated whatever they had to rebuild the 65 houses and provide food and clothes for the sufferers.

Neither the government nor the relief agencies helped the village during these disasters: the survival strategies came from within the community.

LEARNING FROM LOCAL PEOPLE

Local people in Haj-Abdalla use highly complex strategies to survive in a harsh environment. They have adopted traditional methods for storage and food processing as well as social practices. Before development agencies propose new strategies for dealing with poverty, they should learn to recognise the worth of the strategies used by the villagers of Haj-Abdalla and others like them that have allowed these people and their communities to survive.

A poverty timeline

The Sudanese case shows that economic growth does not necessarily mean better standards of living for the majority of the population.

1950s: Sudan becomes independent and is perceived to be one of the wealthiest countries in Africa, due to its high level of natural resources. Civil war between North and South begins, and continues on and off for more than 50 years.

1960s: The economy begins to face difficulties; inflation rises.

1970s: The 'May Regime' adopts a socialist development plan to achieve social development goals; the economy stagnates.

1980s: The government adopts Structural Adjustment Programmes imposed by the International Monetary Fund, including trade liberalisation, currency devaluation, privatisation and removal of subsidies on food, education and health services.

1990s: The government adopts a massive privatisation programme, resulting in a dramatic increase in the cost of living and poverty levels, especially in rural areas. After the discovery and export of oil in 1999 the country achieves high economic growth but widespread poverty, highly skewed income distribution and inadequate delivery of social services remain serious problems.

2000s: The degree of poverty is measured by Ibrahim (2003) to be extremely high – 82.7% and 83.1% for rural and urban populations respectively. The government introduces the Capital Development Fund in 2006, which aims to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Nawal El-Gack is a lecturer in the Institute of Development Studies at Massey University.

Above left: Outcomes of a good rainy season.

Above right: People identifying the symptoms and causes of poverty.

Below: During the rainy season, young people come back from the cities to farm. Photos: Nawal El-Gack.



News

from the Development Resource Centre

Dev-Zone has been particularly active around Aotearoa New Zealand recently. We've held film screenings and seminars at all seven Aotearoa NZ universities, and in conjunction with Fairtrade Fortnight and Trade Aid we've visited Nelson, Picton, Napier and Masterton. Along with these visits, promotion of the Responsible Tourism Code for the Pacific is expanding: the Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau will be promoting the Code and you will soon be able to see the Code in airport publications around the country and in Jason's travel guides for the Pacific.

We farewelled Cindy Munn after five years as the Schools' Programme Manager. She was instrumental in establishing a number of new initiatives with global education and we wish her all the best with her future career. Ricky Prebble has completed his first edition of *Global Issues: Environmental Challenges in the Pacific*, and the second issue of *Small World*, our new magazine for primary schools, is out now. Two new resources have been produced for secondary schools: an updated version of 'Our Changing World' and a new CD Rom, 'Resistance!', which includes case studies on eight protest movements around the world.

For the community and youth team, it's all about Just Focus at the moment. We have a fantastic new website www.justfocus.org.nz, which is bigger, brighter and bolder than before. You will still find all the original content, but with loads more information and some exciting new features. We have selected ten talented, enthusiastic young writers for the 2009 Just Write Team who come from Northland all the way down to Invercargill. The team met in May for an action packed training weekend and have already started writing articles for *Tearaway Youth Magazine*, *Actv8 Magazine* and the Just Focus website.

Meanwhile planning is in full swing for 'Films from The Global Edge', a series of film events presented by Media that Matters (MTM) Aotearoa. Happening in May and June across five town centres – Waitakere, Hamilton, Wellington, Nelson and Christchurch, these are not your average film screenings. MTM showcases a collection of short films made by young people, it's free and there will be food, prizes and performances by local musicians.



Letters

Dear Editors

I have been a huge fan of Just Change magazine for the past five years. Your recent issue has once again emphasised the importance of poverty alleviation through access to health. The issue has particularly intrigued me as I am currently involved in a capacity building project for development workers who are engaged in water, sanitation and hygiene projects in developing countries. At present, over 1 billion people of the world lack access to clean water while 2.4 billion lack access to basic sanitation. Former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan once talked about the importance of access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene education:

We shall not finally defeat AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, or any of the other infectious diseases that plague the developing world until we have also won the battle for safe drinking water, sanitation and basic health care.

As the last issue of Just Change showed, access to health is based on so many factors. You can't even tackle one health issue in isolation. Thank you for giving an insight into just some of these issues. Keep up with your work.

Kyi Kyi, Canada

I am a very new and happy member of the Dev-zone website! I found out about Dev-zone from the Amnesty International annual meeting over the weekend. What an amazing resource! I am thrilled to have been able to sign up. I already have an important question regarding DVDs with screening rights. We have a small independent theatre here in Nelson that runs gold coin movie nights and our local Amnesty group has thought what a great opportunity to have a series of film showings in our region. Can you tell me whether we would be able to use your films for this purpose?

Fiona, Nelson

Kia ora Fiona,

We have the screening rights to a number of the films in our catalogue. A full list can be found on the library section of our website. If the gold coin donation is used to help pay for the venue and not to make a profit, you can show a film we have screening rights for. For large screenings we recommend that you contact the film's director to let them know you will be showing the film.

Marion, Dev-Zone librarian

TAKE ACTION

Stand up take action against poverty – 16-18 October 2009. Stand up and join in the events that show world leaders you care about poverty and want them to take urgent action to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

www.standagainstopoverty.org

As part of Amnesty International's new Demand Dignity campaign, write a letter to the government of Peru urging them to take action on preventable maternal mortality.

www.amnesty.org.nz/action_centre

Join Every Child Counts to support the eradication of child poverty in Aotearoa NZ. www.everychildcounts.org.nz

Sign Oxfam's In My Name petition to ask the New Zealand government to meet their Millennium Development Goal commitments to halve global poverty by 2015. www.oxfam.org.nz/index.asp?s1=What%20You%20Can%20Do&s2=Take%20action

Support the work of organisations in your local community working to reduce poverty, such as the Salvation Army's food banks.

www.salvationarmy.org.nz

Picks

Resources from the Dev-Zone Library

He rauemi mai i te kohinga a Dev-Zone

DVDs

Killing poverty: Life V

London: Television Trust for the Environment (TVE), 2005.

Director: Rob Sullivan, DVD; PAL; 26 mins

In 2002, President Kibaki came to power in Kenya promising to end the corruption endemic in the previous regime. But how much have things really improved? This film follows the fortunes of a family afflicted by AIDS and talks to ministers and anti-corruption officials who suggest that the Government needs more international aid to help it stamp out corruption.

Life and debt

New York: New Yorker Video, 2003. Director: Stephanie Black. DVD; 86 mins

Jamaica is the land of sea, sand and sun ... but it is also a prime example of the complexities of economic globalisation on the world's majority world countries. This film examines the relationship between Jamaican poverty and the practices of international lending agencies.

Struggling for a better living: Squatters in Fiji

Fiji: Citizens' Constitutional Forum Ltd, 2007. DVD; 50 mins

According to the latest estimates 12.5% of Fiji's population today is living in over 182 informal or 'squatter' settlements around the country. This film explores the problems squatters face in their daily lives and the issues of human rights that their situations present.

Slums and money

London: Television Trust for the Environment (TVE), 2009.

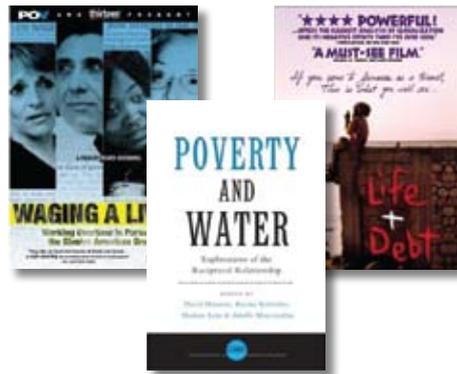
DVD; 45 mins

This film looks at some of the debates around market driven solutions to poverty. Presenting the views of both sides it looks at the pros and cons of open markets and urbanisation and importantly the views of the ordinary people whose stories actually illustrate the debate.

Waging a Living

USA: Public Policy Productions, 2005. Directors: Roger Weisberg and Pamela Harris. DVD; 85mins

This film follows the lives of four hard working individuals as they strive for their piece of the American Dream but find only low wages, dead end jobs, and a tattered safety net in their way.



Books and Journals

Poverty in a Changing Climate

Thom Tanner and Tom Mitchell (eds), *IDS Bulletin* vol.39 no. 4, 2008

Adaptation is now a central strand of climate policy and this issue of the bulletin argues that adaptation will be ineffective and inequitable if it fails to learn from and build upon an understanding of the multi-dimensional and differentiated nature of poverty and vulnerability.

Elite Perceptions of Poverty and Inequality

Elisa P. Reis and Mick Moore (eds). *Zed Books*, 2005

This book looks at the attitude of majority world elites to poverty. The authors argue that a key factor in solving poverty is convincing these elites of both the reasons why reducing poverty is in their own and the national interest.

Flat world, big gaps: Economic liberalization, globalization, poverty & inequality

Jacques Baudot and K.S. Jomo (ed). London: Orient Longman, Zed Books Ltd and Third World Network, 2007

Many mainstream economists have claimed that globalisation creates worldwide growth, and that economic liberalisation will lead to economic convergence and lower inequality. This book analyses how economic liberalisation has affected inequality, poverty and development in recent decades.

Knowing poverty: Critical reflections on participatory research and policy

Karen Brock and Rosemary McGee. London: Earthscan, 2002

This book focuses on the use of participatory research in poverty reduction policies, and presents a series of participants' reflections on recent and ongoing processes.

The new poverty strategies: What have they achieved? What have we learned?

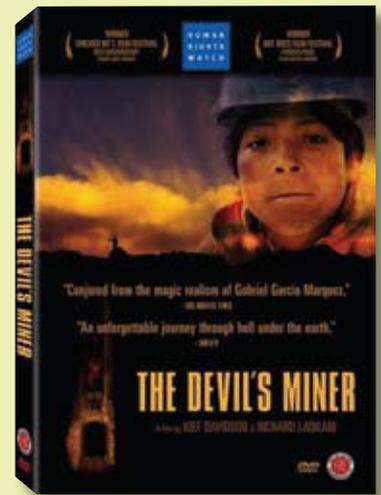
Ann Booth and Paul Mosley (eds). Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003

This book examines the shift by international development agencies to a primary or exclusive focus on poverty reduction. It looks at what the 'new poverty strategies' have achieved.

Poverty and water: Explorations of the reciprocal relationship

David Hemson, Kassim Kulindwa, Haakon Lein, Adolfo Mascarenhas (ed). London: Zed Books, 2008

For the international community to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, governments must step in to protect the rights of the poor. This book explains the links between poverty and access to clean water and provides a view on political reform which could end big business' exploitation and help to shape a more equitable world.



The Devil's miner

USA: Urban Landscape Productions, 2005. Directors:

Keif Davidson and Richard Ladkani. DVD; 82 mins

This film portrays the story of 14-year-old Basilio Vargas and his 12-year-old brother Bernardino, who work in the ancient Cerro Rico silver mines of Bolivia. Raised without a father and living in extreme poverty with their mother and six-year-old sister on the slopes of the mine, the boys assume many adult responsibilities.

Skeptical's Guide to Global Poverty

Dale Hanson Bourke. Colorado Springs: Authentic Publishing, 2007

This guide provides answers to the challenging questions many people have about the poor, ranging from how poor people feel to ways governments keep their people poor; the book discusses various aspects of poverty and its affects.

Voices of the poor: Can anyone hear us?

Deapa Narayan et al. Washington DC: Oxford University Press, 2000

This book provides a detailed picture of the life of the poor based on the accounts of over 40,000 poor women and men in 50 countries. It accompanies two other volumes 'From many lands' and 'Crying out for change'.

World Poverty and Human Rights

Thomas Pogge. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2008

Just 1% of the national incomes of the high-income countries would suffice to end severe poverty worldwide yet the minority world will not risk transferring this wealth or altering the structures that perpetuate it. Thomas Pogge seeks to explain why this is so.

The end of poverty: Economic possibilities for our time

Jeffery Sachs. New York: Penguin Press, 2005

Sachs explains why over the past two hundred years, wealth has diverged across the world and why the poorest nations have not been able to improve their position. He explains how to work out a country's economic challenges and suggests a set of solutions to inter-linked economic, political, environmental and social problems faced by the world's poorest societies.

The Working Poor: Invisible in America

David K. Shipler, New York: Vintage Books, 2005

In a land of plenty, the "forgotten America" struggles to survive on minimum wages with no benefits where a minor obstacle can lead to a downward financial spiral. This book looks at the lives of the working poor in the US.