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WeD Parliamentary Launch 3 March 2004

"It was truly impressive to see so many internationally respected researchers gathered together to describe this new major project that is likely to have a real impact upon wellbeing in poor communities" commented **Professor Glynis Breakwell**, Vice Chancellor of Bath University, after the Launch at Westminster.

The Launch was attended by selected Members of Parliament and peers with identified interests in poverty, inequality and quality of life; senior officers of DFID and the Treasury; NGO representatives and members of the media.

Professor Ian Diamond, Chief Executive of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), opened the Launch and expressed his pleasure that the WeD group had won the ESRC competition to carry out this research. "It demonstrates the quality of research that is available at Bath and we are absolutely delighted at the partnerships that Allister has in his group, which go across the entire globe and will enable us to do something that we do not do enough of: cross-national comparative analysis to learn south/south as well as north/south. In every way I am absolutely delighted and privileged to be able to launch this research group."

Dr Allister McGregor, WeD Director, spoke of the extent of ill-being that still exists despite years of development spending. "Not only does ill-being persist, but both statistics and meeting real people in developing countries tell us that it is worsening for some." The gap between the rich and the poor is also increasing both within countries and between countries.

The WeD Research Group can contribute to the struggle against these trends. He says, "I believe our contribution can be good social science. We need better informed development interventions and research groups such as WeD can work to provide policy makers with a good social science basis for their decisions." He noted that, "There needs to be a complementary relationship between science and technology interventions and social science insights that can better ensure their translation into effective actions".

Allister talked about the pledge of governments around the world to eradicate poverty, their efforts to date and the impelling need to "get better at it" in the future. Describing the WeD research in local communities in all four countries, he argued that, "Yes, we do need to be able to think universally about development and universal solutions, but we also need to be informed by local realities, because it is these realities that



Professor Ian Diamond, ESRC, and Dr Ian Gibson, MP, both speakers at the Launch

sustain and reproduce poverty." Allister concluded by noting that WeD should be judged on "whether we can provide a way of better understanding well-being and ill-being and better inform policy debates and discussions that will actually make some difference for the people in the countries in which we are working."

Dr Ian Gibson, MP, Chair of the Select Committee on Science & Technology, in his address emphasised the need to establish communications between academics, policy makers and practitioners and felt that this would be one of the strengths of WeD. He praised the University of Bath for its initiative and the ESRC for supporting this research.

Poverty Studies in Peru: Towards a More Inclusive Study of Exclusion

Teofilo Altamirano, James Copestake, Adolfo Figueroa and Katie Wright

The Peruvian economy has grown in nine of the last ten years and looks the stronger of most of its neighbours. Peru has also experienced a transition to more open and democratic government. Yet throughout the country there are signs of discontent, manifest, for example, in prolonged strikes, social protest and high rates of emigration. Peruvians, it seems, have limited belief in the potential of liberal democracy in the current global context to deliver sustained growth in employment, incomes and wellbeing.

A new **WeD Working Paper – Poverty Studies in Peru: Towards a More Inclusive Study of Exclusion** by **Teofilo Altamirano, James Copestake, Adolfo Figueroa and Katie Wright**

(www.welldev.org.uk/research/working.htm) – surveys recent studies of poverty, inequality and wellbeing in Peru in an effort to develop a universal understanding, one that draws on the different disciplines of economics, anthropology and sociology.

Personal feelings of pessimism or optimism perhaps inevitably intrude on assessments of future prospects for poverty reduction in Peru. Many economists avoid this by adhering to a strict scientific positivism. But their neglect of the social context of economic behaviour makes them susceptible to the optimistic assumption that a benign modernisation (in the form of gradual economic integration) is inevitable.

Anthropologists have been more attuned to the experiences, ideas and feelings of poor and excluded people themselves. This has served as a reminder that material poverty can at least in part be offset by the quality of relationships – with the environment as well as other people – and by the strength of cultural identity. Meanwhile, sociological pessimism emanating from analysis of class structure continues to

clash with optimism borne from the rediscovery of individual and collective ingenuity in the face of adversity.

The paper proposes that the three disciplinary perspectives can be incorporated into a single framework centred on the concepts of inclusion and exclusion. In this framework, Peru is portrayed as a 'sigma' society, one characterised by a profound initial inequality in social assets. The self-interested actions of the main domestic actors block significant reforms, and the capacity of external development agencies to break the impasse can be counterproductive because of the sensitivity of the cultural and political issues involved. In contrast to the school of 'tragic optimism' the theory of social exclusion



Construction of a community school in the Mantaro Valley

described by these researchers can be summed up as 'constructive pessimism'.

T. Altamirano and A. Figueroa are WeD collaborators from Peru based at the Centre for Social, Economic, Political and Anthropological Research, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Lima. J. Copestake (Country Coordinator for Peru) and K. Wright are members of WeD at the Department of Economics and International Development, University of Bath.

Site Selection in

Joe Devine

“One of the most visible changes to occur in Bangladesh is the gradual urbanisation of the country.”

Bangladesh is a highly dynamic country that has experienced over the years profound demographic, economic, social, political and cultural changes. Alongside these changes there have been marked improvements in key areas such as overall growth and economic performance, and some basic human development indicators. Any optimism derived from these improvements, however, is tempered by the fact that inequality seems to be increasing and poverty levels stubbornly persist, and in some cases worsen. The objective of WeD Bangladesh is to explore the processes that produce these outcomes, as well as to understand the ways people construct and then value their sense of wellbeing.



One of the most visible changes to occur in Bangladesh is the gradual urbanisation of the country. This is evidenced in the real increase of urban populations as well as the gradual coverage of new areas by urban growth. The expansion of the country's capital city, Dhaka –

– epitomises this process. One of the consequences of this transformation is that there is a much more obvious sense of connectedness and integration in the country. The WeD research programme in Bangladesh posits that this generates complex patterns of benefit and disadvantage.

The WeD research in Bangladesh consists of detailed studies of six communities selected through a two-stage process. First we chose two districts distinguished by their distance from Dhaka. The first district (Manikganj) is close to and enjoys very good communication with Dhaka while the second (Dinajpur) is quite distant from the capital and the communication is much more restricted. In each of the two districts, we chose one urban site (within the main district town) and two rural sites. One rural site was chosen close to the main district

town and the other far from it in a remote area. The themes of proximity and remoteness were used therefore to capture the sense of connectedness and integration. All six sites are distinct from each other, reflecting the rich diversity that permeates life in Bangladesh today.

J. Devine (Country Coordinator for Bangladesh) is a member of WeD at the Department of Economics and International Development, University of Bath.



Urban slum dwellers living over open sewers in Dhaka.

'Coping with Hunger and Poverty in Ethiopia' has been released as the first WeD Briefing Paper. It can be found at www.welldev.org.uk and at the WeD Ethiopia website www.wed-ethiopia.org.

This briefing is based on the WeD Ethiopia Working Paper *Hunger, Poverty and 'Famine' in Ethiopia: Some Evidence from Twenty Rural Sites in Amhara, Tigray, Oromiya and SNNP Regions*.

See:-

www.wed-ethiopia.org/working-paper1.pdf

COPING WITH HUNGER AND POVERTY IN ETHIOPIA:

New Insights from Twenty Villages

Alula Pankhurst and Pip Bevan

Twenty years since the Western media first brought to the world's attention the widespread famine in the Horn of Africa, new research reveals the increasing significance of food aid in the lives of many people in Ethiopia yet a feeling in many places that 'food insecurity' has increased.

In the summer of 2003 a team led by Alula Pankhurst and Philippa Bevan interviewed people in twenty villages across the four main regions of Ethiopia. The research provides valuable new perspectives on Ethiopians' day-to-day and year-to-year struggles with hunger and poverty:

- ☪ Comparing the major Ethiopian famines – 1973, 1984/5 and 1994/5 – in terms of mortality, only four of the twenty villages were never affected. The 1984 famine was perceived to be the worst, affecting fourteen places, compared with four in 1973 and six in 1994.
- ☪ But without food aid, many more villages would have been affected in 1994, and southern areas were affected for the first time. This suggests that famine, often assumed to be largely in the North and East, is spreading, particularly in the South. Bad weather struck villages in both North and South between 2000 and 2002, and the latter was generally a difficult year. However, the prospects in mid 2003 seemed more hopeful at the time of the research.
- ☪ Nine of the twenty villages have experienced chronic food insecurity and are dependent on food aid, in one case going back many years, in others beginning around 2000. A man in Harerghe said: *"Survival: if there was no food aid, we would all have been dead or we would have become labourers."*
- ☪ Despite the importance of food aid, and the fact that it is usually provided as 'food for work', people report negative effects, including long-term dependency, laziness and reduced self-reliance. A man in Dodota, Arssi said: *"For those lazy fellows who depend on the food aid, it has a negative aspect. Hard-working farmers want a permanent aid to pull them from this type of life forever."*
- ☪ What's more, food aid may arrive late or it may be insufficient and far-away. A man from Bako reported that food aid in 1983-4 was too late; in 1994 it was insufficient to go round and was looted; and in 2003 it was limited and targeted to the most needy.
- ☪ The people and communities affected by hunger and poverty have a considerable understanding of the processes involved and are very actively engaged in struggles to survive and prosper. Many interviewees mentioned the causes of increasing food insecurity, including natural factors like the weather and animal and plant diseases, and human factors like population growth.
- ☪ Differences in opinion among interviewees and hesitation to attribute deaths to 'famine' suggest that preoccupation with famine deaths in the media may no longer be useful. Instead, the focus should be on strategies for coping with hunger and the links between food insecurity and poverty.

A. Pankhurst is a lead WeD collaborator from Ethiopia based at Addis Ababa University. P. Bevan is Country Coordinator for Ethiopia and is based at the University of Bath.

Conferences/Workshops Attended by WeD

Development Studies Association Annual Conference 2003

Two sessions at the Conference were dedicated to the presentation of papers by WeD Group members from Bath. These papers are available on the DSA web site at <http://www.devstud.org.uk/publications/papers.htm>

The presentations were:–

Bereket Kebede *Administrative Allocation, Lease Markets and Inequality in Land in Rural Ethiopia: 1995–97.*

Allister McGregor *The Social and Cultural Construction of Wellbeing in Developing Countries.*

Laura Camfield *Using Subjective Measures of Wellbeing in Developing Countries.*

Pip Bevan *Studying the Dynamics of Inequality, Poverty and Subjective Being: Getting to Grips with 'Structure'.*

Sarah White *Beyond the 'Of Course' of Culture: Approaches to Health and Healing in Bangladesh.*

Ian Gough: *Quality of Life and Human Wellbeing: Bridging Objective and Subjective Approaches*

The WeD Working Paper Series can be found at www.welldev.org.uk/research/working.htm

Social Impact Indicators in Microfinance.

In December, **James Copestake** (WeD Bath) presented a paper (see below) at a conference on 'enterprise development impact assessment' at the University of Manchester. Shortly afterwards he spent a week in Washington D.C. meeting with staff from a range of donors and micro-finance organisations (including the World Bank, IADB, USAID, Plan, Grameen Foundation, FINCA International, DAI and SEEP). Considerable effort is currently being applied to harmonise the list of "social impact indicators" that the micro-finance industry uses to monitor and manage its social performance (e.g. in relation to Millennium Development Goals), and to complement already established standards for financial performance assessment of microfinance.

For further information see www.lmp-act.org

J G Copestake, (2003) *Simple standards or burgeoning benchmarks? Institutionalising social performance monitoring, assessment and auditing of microfinance* IDS Bulletin, Vol.34, No.4:54–65.

Ian Gough was a fellow at the Hanse Wissenschaftskolleg (Institute for Advanced Study) at Delmenhorst near Bremen in Germany from October 2003 to February 2004. His official research programme title was *The New Social Policy in the Developing World*, and he has given several talks on the this topic in Germany.

He also visited Canada for one week in October as Hooker Distinguished Visiting Scholar at McMaster University, Canada. He was jointly invited by the Departments of Political Science, Social Work and Sociology, and the Institute on Globalisation and the Human Condition, and gave three public lectures:

- Rethinking needs and well-being: objective and subjective approaches
- East Asia: the limits of productivist regimes
- Comparing welfare regimes in developing countries

Just before leaving for Germany, Ian delivered a plenary lecture *Welfare regimes in development contexts: a global and regional analysis* to the EURESCO Euro-Conference on Institutions and Inequality in Helsinki.

Published Books

In February a new joint volume was published by Cambridge University Press, the result of collaboration by several members of the WeD team: *Insecurity and Welfare Regimes in Asia, Africa and Latin America: Social Policy in Development Contexts.* by I Gough and G Wood, with A Barrientos, P Bevan, P Davis and G Room (pp. xix+363).

Review

The Equity Dialogue – This newsletter published by the Poverty and Health Programme of ICDDR,B– Centre for Health and Population Research, Bangladesh and the Bangladesh Health Equity Watch (BHEW) aims to provide a forum for exchanges on equity, poverty and health. The first two issues which are available online at www.icddr.org, include equity aspects from the BHEW survey and other studies, which illustrate inequalities in health care status, access and utilization by socioeconomic status and place of residence in Bangladesh. A feature on the devastating Bengal Famine of 1943–44; Seebohm Rowntree's groundbreaking basket of goods approach to poverty line determination; and summaries of recent equity related studies.

Paul Spray (DFID) – centre – in conversation with Prof Ian Diamond (ESRC)– left – and Tony Worthington MP at the WeD Launch held at Westminster.



Key Dates

The **2nd International Conference on the Ethiopian Economy** will be held in the first week of June 2004 in Addis Ababa. WeD will present four papers. P. Bevan *Conceptions and Responses to Child Malnutrition, Illness and Death in 20 Ethiopian Rural Villages*; A. Pankhurst on *Conceptions and Responses to the HIV-AIDS Crisis in 20 Villages from the Wellbeing and Illbeing Dynamics in Ethiopia (WIDE) Project*; D. Getachew on how the Agricultural Led Industrialisation Policy is viewed from the villages; A. Gebre and M. Getu *Dilemmas of Poverty, Inequality and Wellbeing in Two Pastoralist Sites of Southern Ethiopia.*

WeD will host an important international workshop on 'Researching Wellbeing in Developing Countries' at the Hanse Institute for Advanced Study in Delmenhorst near Bremen, Germany in July. Leading international researchers, from a range of disciplines including social theory, development studies and psychology, and from all continents, will interrogate and help develop the WeD research programme. It will be co-hosted by WIDER, the United Nations University Institute in Helsinki, and by the Hanse Institute. The results will be published in a book.

Members of WeD Bath involved in microfinance will be participating in the **Imp-Act Conference 27–29 September at Bath University.** It is the final global workshop of the Imp-Act programme, bringing together representatives from more than 20 countries.

To view the WeD Newsletter on-line see the website at www.welldev.org.uk/news/news.htm

To receive details of future editions on-line contact Jane French j.french@bath.ac.uk (Dissemination Coordinator)

Editor – Bereket Kebede.

Please send contributions and comments to b.kebede@bath.ac.uk