

WORKING GROUP REPORTS: SESSION 2
THE REALITY OF POVERTY, INEQUALITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN ETHIOPIA

Instructions

- Appoint rapporteur
- Any comments on how to improve the paper
- Identify (and evaluate) relevant ongoing studies

Group 1

- The data in the paper is out of date; the WeD programme must be serious and careful about the sources and quality of the data used
- It is important to pay attention to policy regimes and good governance to break the cycle of poverty; the programme needs to identify 'entry points'
- The study of poverty needs to be carried out from various perspectives, including types of livelihood
 - formal/informal
 - sedentary/pastoral
 - rural/urban
 - mainstream/marginalised
- There is a need to study the rich to better understand the poor

Group 2

- Between 1995 and 2000 the poverty head count ratio (poor/total population) has declined, but the absolute number of people in poverty has gone up
- Different elements of the 'modernisation' drive underpin the thrust of the three regimes (Imperial, Derg, EPRDF) in attempts to address problems of poverty and under-development
- Different baskets of indicators of poverty are lumped together; there is a need for disaggregation on the basis of specific categories, for example poverty-line based measures, social status, access to services etc
- Inequality in Ethiopia is almost nil – who calculated the Gini coefficient in the comparative table?

Ongoing studies:

- Several M Sc theses in Economics
- Some M Sc theses in SOSA and RLDS

Group 3

- There is a need to consider local conceptions and understandings of poverty
- Poor people in Ethiopia are involved in a collective culture in which interdependency is very high; need to explore social networks
- The relations between household size and poverty need further investigation
- Access to resources is very important; need to look at livelihood options and how government actions may constrain them – e.g. migration
- Fatalism is an important cultural element – people are satisfied with what they have and lack a profit motive and a desire to accumulate
- Past and current Government policies have left a legacy of dissatisfaction and worries:
 - villagisation
 - resettlement
 - collectivisation
 - market changes e.g. coffee, chat
 - land policies
- Methodology – need some discussion of the inter-relation between quantitative and qualitative research
- No theoretical preference is given
- What about culture of poverty theories?
- Relevant research – FSS on environment and on domestic violence

Group 4

- The paper covered a wide set of issues; it is difficult to comment in detail without having read it
- There are some issues of concern which are:
- Ethnicity/Region: even in regions that are considered ethnically homogenous there are social tensions due to resource scarcity and parochial views

- How relevant is it to understanding poverty to look at the approaches of the various governments?
- It would be better to focus on understanding the definitions, views and notions of poverty of the poor; they have their own perceptions and measures as to how to deal with poverty
- Given the variety of perceptions of poverty how can we develop a common ground to understand and address poverty?
- There is a need to make an in-depth literature search: e.g. IFPRI – AAU, IFPRI – ILRI, NGOs, Government organisations
- Also to search for studies on poverty-related issues: e.g. environmental studies, credit, land issues, etc