



GLOBAL COOPERATION March 2006

In this edition
International Forum on the Social Science Policy Nexus
Response to the last Global Cooperation from Sierra Leone
Regional Agencies working to resolve conflicts
SAGE publications email alerting service
New Publications from UNRISD
32nd International Conference on Social Welfare

International Forum on the Social Science Policy Nexus

Report by Denys Correll. Over 2000 participants from all continents attended the Forum in Buenos Aires in February. The aim was for policy makers and researchers in the social sciences to exchange experiences and forge new relationships.

ICSW representatives attended the Forum and found the content most illuminating. In particular the ICSW representatives attended the series of workshops sponsored by the UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The papers were of extremely high quality and I recommend the papers that were presented. They can be found at [http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/events.nsf/\(httpAuxPages\)/3F6FFB5CE301B036C125713A0035C195?OpenDocument&category=Conference+Details](http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/events.nsf/(httpAuxPages)/3F6FFB5CE301B036C125713A0035C195?OpenDocument&category=Conference+Details)

The following is my own interpretation of what speakers said so I apologise in advance if I have misinterpreted any point.

The Director of UNRISD, Thandika Mkandawire in his customary erudite style addressed the subject of targeting and universalism in poverty reduction. Under universalism the entire population benefits from social benefits as a basic right. Targeting involves some kind of means-testing to determine who is deserving of social benefits.

Universalistic policies were more evident in the 1960s and 1970s. Since then the trend in developing and developed countries has been towards targeting. The flight from universalism has been promoted with the use of words that imply an absolute correctness of the policies. “Efficient use of resources” “budget constraints” etc. But to be clear, the move from universalism reflects a change in ideology.

The 1980s saw the Right setting the new ideological directions. Mrs Thatcher will long be remembered for her statement that there is no such thing as community. The language of rights and equality were banished.

The move to new Right policies in the North was reflected in the South. Unfortunately for universalism the South was under attack from at least two angles. Many countries were overcome by the forces of corrupt nationalism that emptied the treasuries. And secondly, external ideological forces linked neo-liberal policies to poverty reduction. Thus these unfortunate countries were plunged into an experimental ideology which did little for poverty reduction. A key part of the ideology was to move costs outside of government budgets. Budgetary restraint became a mantra. Governments or Oppositions that did not bow to the new ideology were portrayed as irresponsible financial managers.

Thus we moved back to concepts of philanthropy, deserving poor and individualism. Surely we were hearing echoes of the 1834 English Poor Law. “No able-bodied person was to receive money or other help from the Poor Law authorities except in a workhouse and conditions in workhouses were to be made very harsh to discourage people from wanting to receive help”

Mkandawire moved the discussion into the impact of donor country ideologies on the principles of aid. Targeting was transferred as a concept to be used in the provision of aid. Thus the focus ceased to be on development but rather poverty reduction. The World Bank highlighted the differences by proposing two policies which were contradictory. It proposed “pro poor” policies during growth and adjustment periods. The Bank referred to well targeted transfers and safety nets. But in contradiction it proposed the concept of “the rising tide raises all boats”

One of the regrettable aspects of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which has received little attention is the emphasis on poverty reduction rather than development. Governments and many civil society organisations championed the MDGs but without understanding they were focussing on a minimalist response to development.

After an extensive and one of the best analyses of the problems of targeting Mkandawire concludes “Many studies clearly show that identifying the poor with the precision suggested in theoretical models involves extremely high administrative costs and an administrative sophistication and capacity that may simply not exist in developing countries”.

(I am afraid my summary does little justice to the full paper. I urge those interested in social policy to read the full paper).

Another paper of interest was by Jimi Adesina of Rhodes University of South Africa. He concluded his presentation with six imperatives for rethinking social policy in sub-Saharan Africa. First it is difficult to achieve poverty reduction without improving the productive capacity of economies. “Social policy is not a gratuitous favour done to citizens but an investment in development and social cohesion”. Second it is important to rethink social policy in its nation-building functions. Third it is important to move away

from targeting and means-testing in social policy. Fourth, is to reconstitute policy making capacity of the state, as part of the wider public domain. Fifth, is the reconstruction of social consensus with visionary leadership. Sixth, social policy making needs to be sensitive to the gendered nature of the labour market.

In other papers, speakers discussed regional perspectives in social policy and equality. I had one criticism of the programme. The organisers claimed that the Forum included academics, policy makers and NGO partners. There was little evidence of input by NGOs.

At the end of the Forum there was an agreed joint declaration. The declaration stressed the need for creating permanent and innovative spaces of dialogue, strengthening existing ones, generating new networks – in particular at regional level – and establishing a free-flowing dialogue. The declaration in English, French and Spanish can be found at www.unesco.org/shs/ifsp/declaration

Response to the last Global Cooperation from Sierra Leone

The last issue of Global Cooperation highlighted issues of great importance in the fight for social development for the poor and vulnerable.

I will like to add that in achieving total eradication of poverty in Africa especially Sierra Leone that is one of the most poorest country as revealed by the United Nations Development Index which put Sierra Leone second to last. We must try to advocate for economic and social rights.

Our National Constitution of 1991 entitled Fundamental State Principles, highlights the Government commitment to address economic and social issues which include the fundamental amenities to human livelihood. But no one can take the Government to court for not providing what is promised in the Constitution.

Eradication of poverty and the livelihood of all human beings rest on the achievement of economic, social and cultural rights.

Yours Sincerely

Wurie MT Barrie

Regional Agencies working to resolve conflicts

The Friedrich Ebert Foundation has released two new briefing papers which are available on the Foundation's website. One is called "Regional Governance Architecture and Security Policy" and the other is called "The struggle for peace: Rethinking intervention and conflict management, the role of regional organisations". www.fes.de/globalization

SAGE publications email alerting service

Make sure you know what articles are being published in International Social Work by signing up to the SAGE Contents Alerting Service today. You will automatically be emailed the table of contents of the Journal as each new issue is published. This service is free and automatic. All you need to do is register.

For more details, please visit: <http://isw.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

New from UNRISD

Public Sector Reform in Developing Countries: Capacity Challenges to Improve Services

This book critically examines some of the most topical and challenging issues confronting the public sector in developing countries in an era of globalization.

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BF3C2/setLanguageCookie?OpenAgent&langcode=en&url=/80256B3C005BCCF9/search/C9EBAB9BE0AD16E0C1257132004BE9D4?OpenDocument>

Occasional Paper Gender Policy 11: Feminized Migration in East and Southeast Asia: Policies, Actions and Empowerment

This paper discusses the causes, processes and consequences of feminized migration in the context of East and South East Asia's expanding global capitalism, increasing feminization of the economic means for family survival, and rising civil activism both in local communities and transnationally.

<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BF3C2/setLanguageCookie?OpenAgent&langcode=en&url=/80256B3C005BE6B5/search/13E2A11D5A515831C125713800463031?OpenDocument>

32nd International Conference on Social Welfare 16th to 20th July 2006. Brasilia, Brazil. Theme: Social Inclusion: facing poverty and social inequality. The website is now in Spanish, Portuguese and English.

Sunday 16th July

Opening in the afternoon

Monday 17th July Plenary: Poverty and social inequality on Waste Century

Symposiums: 1. Work and its transformations; 2. Poverty and Inequality - Challenges for education; 3. Social Inclusion

Tuesday 18th July Plenary: Ethics and solidarity for a more equitable world

Symposiums: 1. Human Rights today; 2. Ethics and Media; 3. Ethics and Silent Violence

Wednesday 19th July Plenary: World commitments for human and social development

Symposiums: 1. Government and Social Welfare; 2. Objectives for this Millennium - victories and challenges; 3. The organization of civil society and their action

Thursday 20th July - Field Visits

For up to date information and registration go to <http://www.cbciss.icsw32.org/>

International Federation on Ageing 8th Global Conference on Ageing Denmark 30th May to 2nd June 2006 Visit the Conference website www.global-ageing.dk

Editor: Denys Correll

ICSW Contact Details

Website: www.icsw.org Email icsw@icsw.org

Global Office:

International Council on Social Welfare

C/O NIZW International Centre

P.O. Box 19152

3501 DD Utrecht

The Netherlands