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Chronic Poverty
Research Centre

Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty

Research Brief

INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH BRIEF

The Intergenerational Transmission (IGT) of Poverty Theme at the Chronic Poverty Research Centre promotes research and discussion on the drivers, maintainers and interrupters of intergenerational and life-course poverty. This fifth Research Brief reviews the findings of several recently commissioned papers, drawing out their implications for understanding, explaining and developing policy against childhood, life-course and intergenerationally transmitted poverty. Details of these papers and where to find them online can be found at the end of this brief.

CONFLICT AND IGT IN NORTHERN UGANDA

Recent work by Bird and Higgins (2009) combines quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the relationship between conflict and IGT in Northern Uganda. In a new ODI/CPRC project brief and a forthcoming *Journal of International Development* article, Bird and Higgins link conflict, education and IGT poverty, with a particular focus on the extent to which education supports resilience (people's ability to 'bounce-back' from shocks).

The authors structure their study around three hypotheses:

- ▶ conflict and insecurity in Northern Uganda have resulted in limited livelihood options and deep income poverty;
- ▶ education is a 'portable' asset that helps people stay out of poverty during conflict and supports 'bounce-back' post-conflict (resilience);
- ▶ government and non-government education policies and programmes fail to address the education needs of conflict- and insecurity- affected populations.

To examine these hypotheses, Bird and Higgins use a Q-squared approach which combined quantitative analysis drawn from the Northern Uganda Baseline Survey, with qualitative research methods. The qualitative component draws on fieldwork in communities in Pader and Kabermaido districts, where conflict and insecurity have displaced many people and forced a significant proportion into poverty. **Life history interviews** revealed changes in poverty status over time. These were complemented by **stakeholder consultation**, and **key informant interviews** with government, donor and civil

society representatives at district level and in the capital, Kampala.

Bird and Higgins find that education is effective in providing people with resilience both during and after periods of conflict and instability. People with education have enhanced livelihood options and are able to better diversify their livelihood strategies compared to people with no education. These results suggest that building and maintaining assets, especially 'portable' assets such as education, is essential for resilience and poverty exits even in conflict affected areas.

Parents and youth can and do see these benefits, leading to significant demand for education. However, a number of factors mean conflict affected communities have limited access to education services. For instance, they have a limited capability to pay the costs associated with education (because their livelihoods have been disrupted, livestock stolen, assets destroyed). Further, there has been a slow rebuilding of public infrastructure and in many areas in Northern Uganda there is inadequate provision of pre-school/ nursery education. In these situations, universal policies (for example, Universal Primary Education) may be insufficient and there is a need to 'level the playing field' with policies that explicitly address the additional barriers faced by conflict-affected communities.

A number of policy recommendations emerge out of this research.

- ▶ First, the need to ensure security and support peace-building remain top priorities.
- ▶ Second, policymakers need to be careful about how they manage the tricky transition from the humanitarian intervention to sustainable development. Smart policies will not only rebuild and strengthen government structures, but also extend government presence into communities in positive ways.
- ▶ Third, while policymaking in conflict affected areas presents significant challenges, the lack of firm settlements and the potential benefits inherent in the emergence from conflict, provide an important window of opportunity in which policymakers can leverage change.
- ▶ Finally, there are already good models to be replicated (for example, those offered by the Norwegian Refugee Council). However, limited coverage means there is a need to expand opportunities for basic, non-formal and technical education.



EXITING CHRONIC POVERTY IN KENYA

We may have an increasingly good understanding of what drives people into poverty and what keeps people poor, but what combination of assets, capabilities and agency enables some people to move out of poverty, while others remain trapped? Can researchers discover insights into those positive adaptation strategies used by poor people in difficult situations that enable some people to improve their situation, while others remain poor?

This set of questions provoked the Chronic Poverty Research Centre to work in collaboration with the Kenya's Tegemeo Institute and Michigan State University in an effort to enable policy makers to design and implement interventions that can increase the number of people who permanently escape chronic and intergenerationally transmitted poverty. A team of Kenyan and international researchers analysed the multiple waves of a panelised household survey. This identified which households seemed to be downwardly mobile, long-term non poor, long-term poor and upwardly mobile. Households from each of these groups were selected for interview; one set was conducted with 85 household heads interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule to fill gaps in panel data, while a smaller sub-set were also interviewed using a life history approach. A smaller sub-set still were interviewed using family history methods. These household level interviews were complemented with community level focus group discussions which explored contextual issues.

This work is in the process of being analysed and written up and is likely to deliver findings to help us understand how to interrupt the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Q2 RESEARCH ON CHRONIC POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN TANZANIA

Tanzania is revising MKUKUTA, its national development strategy, in 2010. Together with the Economic and Social Research Council, REPOA and the National Bureau of Statistics, the CPRC has been conducting a Q-Squared project across Tanzania which seeks to inform the direction and priorities of the revision of MKUKUTA.

Building on methodological innovation developed in previous CPRC research (e.g. Bangladesh, Uganda and Kenya), this project seeks to understand the reasons for chronic poverty and for mobility into and out of poverty in Tanzania. We are particularly interested in why it is that sustained economic growth in Tanzania has led to so little poverty reduction and such a large proportion of households remaining bunched around the poverty line.

An inception workshop with key stakeholders and the research team was held at ESRF in August 2009. A team of nine researchers conducted the qualitative field work across six National Panel Survey clusters between September and December 2009. Focus group discussions were used to rank National Panel Survey households in each cluster and based on this ranking, ten households

were selected for extensive life history interviews (the male and female household head in each household were interviewed). These focus group discussions and life history interviews were complemented by key informant interviews.

This rich qualitative data is currently being analysed alongside analysis of Tanzania's National Panel Survey. A range of papers and policy notes will be published (on issues including agriculture, poverty dynamics, food security, governance and gender) to inform the review of MKUKUTA. The inter-generational transmission of poverty is a theme that will cut across all these papers as we seek to identify why, despite strong economic growth, poverty continues to be passed from one generation to another in Tanzania.



Like many poor households in Tanzania, this family suffers from hunger and food insecurity. Without assets and failing to obtain loans, families are unable to improve their livelihoods. © CPRC 2009

IGT AND INHERITANCE: POLICY AND PRACTICE

A recent paper by Cooper (2010) examines existing research, policy and programming literature on inheritance practices and the enhancement or prevention (through exclusion) of people's socio-economic opportunities in African policy contexts. Cooper reviews a wide range of sources that establish the linkages between IGT and inheritance. The majority of social and economic analyses that focus on inheritance have produced interesting new insights into how individuals and families organise their affairs to maximise economic gains. However, much of the published work concerning how inheritance systems affect people's experiences of poverty remains conjectural. Nevertheless, within the diverse set of laws and customs



that define the African context, Cooper makes a number of key points regarding the importance of inheritance systems:

- ▶ First, inheritance of land rights is critically important, as land provides much of the basis for shelter, food, and economic activities and is recognised as a primary source of wealth, social status, and power. This is particularly true in a number of African countries where land comprises such a large share of poor people's asset portfolios, particularly in rural areas, and inheritance is the major mode of land acquisition.
- ▶ Second, inheritance systems in Africa, whether they are matrilineal or patrilineal, are rarely simple, codified systems in which rules are uniformly applied. Rather, they are complicated by variation in the timing of asset transfers, and especially by the overlapping, and sometimes competing, application of statutory and customary law. Cooper finds that while Namibia, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania, South Africa, Senegal, Rwanda and Nigeria all have constitutions that explicitly prohibit discrimination in the application of law, including customary law, based on sex, the reality on the ground often fails to match these ambitions. Pointing to cases in Namibia and Uganda, Cooper suggests that in many African countries, legislation has had little impact because women do not know their rights under statutory law, and customary law continues to control the dispossession of property.

This review of existing work on inheritance systems suggest that there is certainly much to be done to ensure equitable inheritance systems in Africa. Therefore, Cooper turns her attention to policy considerations, reviewing what has been tried to date, and what might be regarded as successful, in influencing how inheritance systems operate to reduce IGT poverty.

Cooper suggests efforts to influence inheritance rights in Africa include three general spheres of practice:

- ▶ Legal reform, including both the signing and ratification of international agreements (for example the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women) and reforms to statutory law (constitutional and other) at the national level. Mozambique is often identified as a good example of progress in this sphere, having addressed gender discrimination in property ownership and inheritance laws by amending the country's constitution as well as land and family laws. In practice, it is critical to link statutory reforms to customary law, as the latter often remain the source of legitimacy in inheritance systems.
- ▶ Institutional implementation that creates effective enforcement mechanisms and is supported with adequate funding. Successful efforts also tend to include knowledge and capacity building with relevant stakeholders, such as land professionals, policy makers, judges and magistrates, lawyers, registrars,

police and even elders with power in customary contexts.

- ▶ Socio-economic empowerment including access to legal systems. Time, money and skills such as literacy remain significant barriers in many country contexts.

These three spheres of action are complementary. Reforms in one sphere will be significantly challenged and possibly ineffectual if changes in the other two areas are not made.

This research highlights a number of key points for policymakers. Ensuring equitable inheritance systems is not necessarily a strategy for maximising the economic potential of heritable assets. Yet, reforming laws and influencing their practice to ensure claims are upheld, can protect the property rights of some of the most vulnerable individuals, such as widows and orphaned children, who might otherwise find themselves stripped of their heritable assets and plunged into poorer economic statuses. Therefore, it makes sense that policy attention to inheritance focuses on upholding the rights of those most vulnerable to alienation from heritable property and consequent poverty, most notably women and children.

What policies will accomplish this goal in each country context remains a matter of debate. Given insufficient empirical data about the actual practices of inheritance systems in different African countries, Cooper concludes by suggesting priorities for a new research agenda that would investigate real-life experiences of inheritance to assess how different systems actually work, and be used to inform policy elsewhere.

In another forthcoming CPRC working paper, Cooper (2010) begins to address a number of the gaps revealed in the literature detailing how inheritance systems affect the IGT of poverty. Five country case studies, including Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Ghana and Mozambique, delve into the ways in which inheritance is being practiced to enhance or prevent socio-economic equity and opportunities in specific country contexts. Key points addressed by the papers include:

- ▶ An analysis of the current political and policy contexts of inheritance law and practice;
- ▶ Identification of potential change opportunities (including actions, partners, approaches) to enhance socio-economic equity and opportunities in the law and practice of inheritance; and
- ▶ Documentation of cases of success and failure and lessons learned in attempts to influence inheritance laws and practice.

These objectives primarily attend to questions of: access to statutory law in countries which have statutory law to govern inheritance; shifts in the application of customary inheritance systems; and where possible, implications of exclusion from inheritance.

NOTICE BOARD

Recent and forthcoming conferences and workshops:

- ▶ [UNICEF-GPIA International Conference 2010](#) - Adolescent Girls – Cornerstone of Society: Building Evidence and Policies for Inclusive Societies. The New School, Theresa Lang Center, 55 W. 13th Street, NYC, 26-28 April, 2010
- ▶ [CRFR International Conference 2010](#) - Changing Families in a Changing World John MacIntyre Centre, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, UK, 16-18 June, 2010
- ▶ [Ten years of poverty: what have we learned since 2009 and what should we do 2010-2020?](#) - An international conference to celebrate ten years of chronic poverty research. Manchester, UK, 8-10 September 2010.
- ▶ [Society for Longitudinal and Life Course Studies International Conference](#) - Clare College, Cambridge, England: 23rd - 24th September, 2010

PUBLICATIONS

Since our last newsletter, several papers with a focus on issues relating to the intergenerational transmission of poverty have been commissioned and published by CPRC.

- ▶ Behrman, J.R., Murphy, A., Quisumbing A., R., and Yount, K. (2010). '[Mother's human capital and long-run nutritional status on child human capital in Guatemala](#)' CPRC Working Paper 160. Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre.
- ▶ Bird, K., and Espey, J. (2010). 'Power, patriarchy and land: examining women's land rights in Uganda and Rwanda' in Chant, S., (ed.), *International Handbook of Gender and Poverty: Concepts, Research, Policy*. UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- ▶ Bird, K., and Higgins, K. (2010, forthcoming). 'Conflict, education and the intergenerational transmission of poverty in Northern Uganda'. *Journal of International Development* (forthcoming, end 2010).
- ▶ Cooper, E. (2010). '[Inheritance and the intergenerational transmission of poverty in Africa: Policy considerations](#)'. Chronic Poverty Research Centre, Working Paper 116. Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre.
- ▶ Cooper, E., (2010, forthcoming). 'A Study of Equity, Exclusion and Opportunities for Pro-Poor Change in the Policies and Practices of Inheritance Systems in 5 African Countries.' Chronic Poverty Research Centre, Working Paper. Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre.
- ▶ Bird, K., and Higgins, K., (2009). 'Conflict, education and the intergenerational transmission of poverty in Northern Uganda'. ODI/ CPRC Project Brief No 23, August 2009. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- ▶ Bird, K. and Prowse, M. (2009). '[Vulnerability, poverty and coping in Zimbabwe](#)'. CPRC Working Paper 136. Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre.
- ▶ da Corta, L. and Price, L. (2009). '[Poverty and growth in remote villages in Tanzania](#)'. CPRC Working Paper 153. Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre.
- ▶ Pakpahan, Y. M., Suryadarma, D. and Suryahadi, A. (2009). '[Destined for destitution: intergenerational poverty persistence in Indonesia](#)'. CPRC Working Paper 134. Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre.
- ▶ Rose, P. and Dyer, C. (2008). 'Chronic poverty and education: a review of the literature'. CPRC Working Paper 131. Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre. Available at: http://www.chronicpoverty.org/uploads/publication_files/WP131_Rose_and_Dyer.pdf
- ▶ Harper, C., Jones, N., McKay, A., Espey, J. (2008). '[Children in times of economic crisis: past lessons, future policies](#)'. Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre.
- ▶ CPRC (2008). 'Inception Report: Conflict and the Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty in Kaberamaido and Pader Districts in Northern Uganda'. Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre.

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The **Chronic Poverty Research Centre** (CPRC) is an international partnership of universities, research institutes and NGOs, with the central aim of creating knowledge that contributes to both the speed and quality of poverty reduction, and a focus on assisting those who are trapped in poverty, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty
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