



Chronic Poverty
Research Centre

Background Paper for the Chronic Poverty
Report 2008-09

Chronic Poverty and PRSPs A desk study

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What is Chronic Poverty?

The distinguishing feature of chronic poverty is extended duration in absolute poverty.

Therefore, chronically poor people always, or usually, live below a poverty line, which is normally defined in terms of a money indicator (e.g. consumption, income, etc.), but could also be defined in terms of wider or subjective aspects of deprivation.

This is different from the transitorily poor, who move in and out of poverty, or only occasionally fall below the poverty line.

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Abbreviations

AGPRS (Pakistan)	Accelerating Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy
APR	Annual Progress Review
CPRC	Chronic Poverty Research Centre
CPRGS (Vietnam)	Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EBRP (Bolivia)	La Estrategia Boliviana de Reduccion de la Pobreza (Bolivian Poverty Reduction Strategy)
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
IDP	Internally-Displaced Person
IEC	Information, education and communication
IFI	International Financial Institution
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
JSA	Joint Staff Assessment
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NPRS (Cambodia)	National Poverty Reduction Strategy
NSAPR (Bangladesh)	National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction
NSGRP (Tanzania)	National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty
NSSD (Albania)	National Strategy for Socio-Economic Development
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product
OVCs	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PARPA (Mozambique)	Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty
PEAP (Uganda)	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
PMES (Uganda)	Poverty Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessment



PRGF	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility
PRGS	Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy
PRS, PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PRSC	Poverty Reduction Support Credit
PSIA	Poverty and Social Impact Analysis
SDPRP (Ethiopia)	Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program
SMEs	Small and Microenterprises
SWAp	Sector Wide Approach
VSAD (Sri Lanka)	Vision and Strategy for Accelerated Development

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Summary

As many as 420 million people live in chronic poverty worldwide, with limited prospects of escape, and at risk of passing their poverty on to younger generations. As the main focus of poverty reduction activity in poor countries, the PRSP approach has the potential to make a major difference to chronic poverty. This paper examines the ways in which PRSPs treat chronic poverty and their potential to make significant impacts on it. It is an initial input to a larger piece of work and is intended to inform the Chronic Poverty Research Centre's (CPRC) primary research on chronic poverty and PRSPs to be carried out in 2006.

Many recent reviews have sought to assess how well PRSPs tackle certain themes, such as, HIV/AIDS, gender, child wellbeing, rural development and forestry. This paper does not attempt to do the same for chronic poverty - firstly, chronic poverty is too broad - almost all aspects of a PRS affect it. Secondly, a desk study cannot illuminate the all-important questions of implementation; only locally-informed analysis can do so. Instead this paper has two purposes:

- to summarise what can be gleaned from a desk study with regard to the treatment of chronic poverty in PRSPs, focusing in particular on poverty analysis and monitoring; and key areas of policy and action likely to impact on chronic poverty
- to contribute to defining the agenda for the Chronic Poverty Research Centre's forthcoming primary research on how far PRSPs are contributing to reducing chronic poverty. This will focus largely on questions related to implementation and how it can more effectively reduce chronic poverty.

Our focus in this paper was to obtain a good overview of how chronic poverty is treated in a range of PRSPs, rather than undertake in-depth analyses of particular contexts; this will be done in the primary research.

Framework

An emphasis on chronic poverty implies bringing analysis of change (or lack of change) over time into focus. This means distinguishing between the long-term, intergenerationally poor, and seasonally or transitorily poor. This does not imply a hierarchy of need, but identifies a conceptual difference as to who the poor are and presents different kinds of challenges requiring particular kinds of policy and programmatic support. The paper assesses the extent to which PRSPs attempt to analyse poverty from the perspectives of duration and depth, and the implications this has for policy.

In reality, the chronically poor are often invisible to policy makers, reflecting both the difficulties of reaching certain groups and regions in surveys or information gathering exercises, and because the process of recognising disaggregated need is itself subject to the social processes that exclude and exacerbate poverty differently in the first place, rendering certain people's needs a blind spot in the design of development policy and the delivery of public services. Reaching the chronically poor is not simply a matter of implementing current policies more fully, if the ways in which they are conceptualised are blind to specific poverty related needs.



Poverty analysis

Only four of the 17 PRSPs examined analyse long-term, persistent or chronic poverty, and despite wide-ranging commitments to children, only three PRSPs explicitly or implicitly mention intergenerational transmission of poverty. Most, by contrast, differentiate extremely poor or destitute people from other poor people, and many present quantitative data indicating the depth and severity of income poverty. Partly this reflects the absence of relevant panel data, which is being remedied over time in many poor countries. However, very little qualitative information on long-term poverty is also included, suggesting that chronic poverty is not yet sufficiently embedded on policy makers' 'radar screens' as a key problem.

The building blocks of chronic poverty analysis are, however, apparent in most PRSPs. All indicate the multi-dimensional nature of poverty, implicitly or explicitly acknowledging the multiple disadvantages facing chronically poor people. Several PRSPs discuss the persistence of particular aspects of poverty, in particular chronic malnutrition and food insecurity, and also unemployment. All identify groups who are particularly vulnerable to poverty, on the basis of livelihoods and occupations, social exclusion, geographical location or as a result of specific shocks such as illness or conflict. Most identify a wide range of causes of poverty, both structural maintainers of poverty, and specific shocks which propel people (deeper) into poverty.

However, the depth of causal analysis varies even in later or second-round PRSPs, and in some cases, is only informed by limited social analysis. Though governance issues are discussed in all PRSPs, the details of political analysis are also generally absent. These twin biases, reflecting the dominance of economic analysis in thinking about poverty reduction, and the technocratic character of many PRSP processes serve to limit the depth of causal analysis. Potentially this also limits the range of thinkable policy options. In that tackling chronic poverty may require innovative policy thinking based on strong analysis, the quality of analysis in PRSPs is of policy significance, not simply of academic interest. This points to a continued role for those concerned about chronic poverty to engage with PRSP processes.¹

Policy choices

Of the PRSPs examined, only Bangladesh's NSAPR explicitly aims to reduce chronic poverty. How far it matters whether chronic poverty is specifically identified and addressed by particular policies, and how far pro-poor general policies can improve the situation of chronically poor people is a critical question for the next phase. We surmise that it does matter, that where chronic poverty is not an explicit concern, it can only be addressed by happy accident, and that systematically tackling chronic poverty will require more deliberate action. Explicitly and deliberately attempting to reduce chronic poverty may be particularly important in contexts where 'mainstream' policies are not 'lifting all boats on a rising tide' (Mkandawire, 2005). However, this needs to be established by examining the empirical record of PRSPs and other anti-poverty policies.

¹ Indeed, the fruits of CPRC's engagement can be seen in Uganda's PEAP and Bangladesh's NSAPR.



These PRSPs contain a range of positive examples of commitments to tackling the manifestations and causes of chronic poverty, though they are not identified as such. Undoubtedly, any individual PRS could do more to tackle chronic poverty, and some PRSPs are much more nuanced than others. However, all strategies attempt to strengthen the livelihoods of poor and vulnerable people, usually based on analysis of where poverty is concentrated – geographically, sectorally and socially. Most plan to focus some resources on particularly poor regions, often through multidimensional programmes to address spatial poverty traps. All aim to promote broad-based or pro-poor growth though it is not always clear that sectoral strategies genuinely flow from this orientation. A few PRSPs explicitly attempt to prevent the intergenerational transmission of poverty via interventions in nutrition or education; several others contain actions in these and other areas that could help prevent poverty being passed from one generation to the next.

All these PRSPs make some attempt to improve the situation of structurally vulnerable social groups, though some are much more comprehensive than others, and all try to tackle vulnerability induced by drivers of poverty, such as natural disasters or conflict, in some way. The growing emphasis on vulnerability, inclusion and social protection (forming specific pillars in many cases) is encouraging with regard to reducing chronic poverty. Most PRSPs attempt to address severe poverty and social exclusion through a combination of directly targeted programmes, mainstream services and sectoral action and an enabling context. However, many targeted programmes are small-scale and likely to be underfunded in relation to the scale of need. Furthermore, there is very little attention to the barriers to addressing social inequalities – it seems to be assumed that social mobilisation campaigns will be sufficient. Experience does not bear this out.

The commitments made in these PRSPs are not negligible. The packages of policies outlined in these PRSPs ought to make a difference for many chronically poor people – most are likely to enhance access to essential services, and many will make a difference to livelihoods. Whether, as packages, they are ‘good enough’ for chronically poor people must be determined in context, and will be an important issue for the next phase. It is possible that in some countries, macro or sectoral policies will undermine rather than strengthen the livelihoods of certain groups, creating or perpetuating poverty. This review found limited distributional analysis of policy options. Only three of the countries in this sample had planned PSIAs, considerably fewer than the upbeat conclusions of the World Bank and IMF 2005 review of PRSPs would suggest. This may simply reflect the sample of PRSPs chosen. Nonetheless, poor and vulnerable people should be the core constituency of PSIA concerns; if strategically chosen and conducted in a sufficiently inclusive manner, PSIAs could play an important role in advancing the interests of chronically poor people.

Any national anti-poverty strategy will leave some issues uncovered; that is to be expected. However, certain issues of importance to chronically poor people appear to be systematically underaddressed. Some of the most striking are as follows:

- Two vulnerable groups - disabled people and older people - receive notably little attention. In both cases this may reflect a productivist bias since both groups are (wrongly) assumed to be economically inactive. However, both groups are disproportionately likely to be chronically poor.



- Attention to inter-ethnic inequalities is also patchy except in a few PRSPs where they are given prominence.
- Social violence and criminality gain little attention, and in many strategies.
- Attention to the consequences of HIV/AIDS, in particular the care of orphans, is probably inadequate.
- There is a strong emphasis on trade as a way out of poverty traps and on reorienting the structure of production to more profitable commodities. There seems a mismatch between this emphasis and the recognition of trade shocks as a key driver of poverty; few strategies seem to have adequate safeguards even with growing attention to social protection.

Implementation

A general conclusion from the wider PRSP literature is that the institutional context for implementation is slowly improving; most importantly, strategies are increasingly linked to budgets usually via MTEF processes, and in some countries, public sector reforms have contributed to implementation capacity. However, substantial political, institutional and financial obstacles to implementation remain. A central focus of the next phase should be on what is and isn't being implemented and why, and how chronically poor people are affected.

All the PRSPs examined combine legal, policy and institutional reforms with a changed focus on resources, in some cases, starting to redress historic under-funding patterns and bring expenditure levels closer to international minimum standards for basic services, e.g. WHO recommendations for health sector spending. In general, we found policy commitments reflected in action matrices and PRSP budgets. However, the budgets presented in PRSPs may be notional, and real budgets developed through MTEF processes frequently fall short of those outlined in PRSP documents. Examining which policies are financed and which ones are deprioritised in PRSP implementation and why is an important task for the next phase of research.

Most PRSPs directly connect decentralisation to poverty reduction through bringing decision-making closer to the poor. However, this places considerable new demands on local governments that often lack the institutional capacity or accountability structures to meet such expectations. There is no inherent reason why local governance structures are likely to be more representative of the poor or better able to foster socio-economic transformations. That said, there is some evidence that incremental strengthening of local government functions hold potential for powerful changes, as more outward-looking leaders begin to emerge.

From a desk study it is not possible to draw strong conclusions concerning the representation of chronically poor people in PRSP processes. Few PRSPs and APRs provide much detail on who participated in consultative processes, though there are some exceptions, such as Senegal's PRSP. From this, one can see that civil organisations that might represent chronically poor people's interests, such as associations of disabled people, for example have participated. There is a growing preference in thinking about participation



towards poor people's direct self-representation in policy processes, rather than via intermediaries, such as NGOs. However, one can envisage scenarios where organisations of marginalised people represent an urban or better-off members' agenda, and where poverty-oriented NGOs represent the interests of chronically poor people more effectively. Further investigation of how best chronically poor people's concerns can be represented in policy processes would be helpful in the next phase of the research.

PRSP Monitoring

PRSP poverty monitoring largely responds to the MDGs. Indicators tend to be outcome/impact focused and aggregated to national levels. We concur with the argument that care is required in pursuing more disaggregation in monitoring indicators, both in terms of quality and capacity. However, we would argue for these discussions to remain on the table. Considerable work still needs to be done to determine 'good enough' indicators for chronic poverty. Certainly, a range of data and studies outside the formal monitoring system inform knowledge about chronic poverty and have a role to play (e.g. feed into iterations of PRSPs as detailed in progress reports). There is scope to support this process through other innovative information gathering.

It has been beyond the scope of this paper to look in depth at input and process monitoring. Processes around implementation of the PRSP, including decision making processes around budget allocations, are absolutely key and need to be systematically and rigorously strategised. The extent to which this is happening should become the central focus for second stage empirical work.



1 Introduction

As many as 420 million people live in chronic poverty worldwide, with limited prospects of escape, and at risk of passing their poverty on to younger generations. As the main focus of poverty reduction activity in poor countries, the PRSP approach has the potential to make a major difference to chronic poverty. This paper examines the ways in which PRSPs treat chronic poverty and their potential to make significant impacts on it. It is an initial input to a larger piece of work and is intended to inform the Chronic Poverty Research Centre's (CPRC) primary research on chronic poverty and PRSPs to be carried out in 2006.

The myriad reviews of PRSPs over the last 5 years can broadly be divided into pessimistic and optimistic camps. Pessimists are concerned with:

- the overall conception and thus relevance of PRSPs - depoliticised bureaucratic planning, to tackle a fundamentally political problem (Booth, Grigsby and Toranzo, 2005; Craig and Porter, 2002; Gould and Ojanen, 2003);
- the kinds of policy choices that almost all PRSPs make - still very much in the new poverty agenda mould, emphasising growth, social services and improved governance and paying much less attention to structural national and international inequalities, and the processes which entrench these, including the operation of the global system and processes of social exclusion (Craig and Porter, 2002);
- the influence of donors, especially the World Bank and IMF, on policy choices (Gould and Ojanen, 2003; Stewart and Wang, 2003);
- flawed processes that promise broad participation but in practice only achieve the involvement of certain, often elite, interests in any meaningful or sustained way (Gould and Ojanen, 2003; Stewart and Wang, 2003; McGee with Levene and Hughes, 2002);
- the imposition of yet another process by the international donor community with its own complex sets of procedures, despite a rhetoric of reducing burdens on aid-recipient countries;
- and the failure of PRSPs to address adequately a range of issues, from inclusion of particular groups (disabled people or children, for example), to sectors of the economy (productive sectors, health or education), or issues such as the environment, water, HIV/AIDS or gender.² This last set of analyses exemplify what Shepherd and Fritz *et al.* (2005) have termed 'complaining mode', a common orientation for PRSP analyses.

Optimists recognise all these concerns but argue that the process will take time to 'bed down', or for realism - no strategy or process will ever be perfect but they argue that, at least

² Many of these issue-focused critiques are reviewed in the relevant thematic sections of this paper.



in some countries, the political will is there and PRSPs have already make a difference.³ The issue is therefore whether the degree of difference is adequate. As this hinges very strongly on implementation, we return to a growing concern of the pessimistic camp - implementation and implementability. Concerns here include:

- the breadth, range and degree of prioritisation of actions to which PRSPs commit;
- inadequate linkages between PRSPs and budgets;
- sometimes substantial financing gaps, and/or low absorptive capacity resulting in underspending (Roberts, 2003; Holmes with Evans, 2003; World Bank/IMF, 2005);
- a range of issues related to the capacities of the public sector, in particular, but also other sectors expected to play a role, such as the private sector or NGOs, to fulfil ambitious plans;
- lack of political commitment to and ownership of the PRSP at all levels (Booth, Grigsby and Toranzo, 2005; Piron with Evans, 2004); and
- limited incentives to implement the PRSP or certain elements of it (Booth, 2005a; Booth, Christiansen and de Renzio, 2005).

Also critical is how far donors are aligning themselves behind PRSPs, through general or sectoral budget support, and how far they continue to channel money through projects or in other off-budget ways (Driscoll with Evans, 2005).

Many recent reviews have sought to assess how well PRSPs tackle certain themes, such as, HIV/AIDS, gender, child wellbeing, rural development and forestry. This paper does not attempt to do the same for chronic poverty - firstly, chronic poverty is too broad - almost all aspects of a PRS affect it. Secondly, a desk study cannot illuminate the all-important questions of implementation; only locally-informed analysis can do so. Instead this paper has two purposes:

- to summarise what can be gleaned from a desk study with regard to the treatment of chronic poverty in PRSPs, focusing in particular on poverty analysis and monitoring, and key areas of policy and action likely to impact on chronic poverty
- to contribute to defining the agenda for the Chronic Poverty Research Centre's forthcoming primary research on how far PRSPs are contributing to reducing chronic poverty. This will focus largely on questions related to implementation and how it can more effectively reduce chronic poverty.

³ This upbeat view is best represented by the annual PRSP: Progress in Implementation Reports series of the IMF and World Bank, and the 2005 IMF/World Bank PRSP Review. Many of the critical reviews of PRSPs to date also give them credit for increased attention to poverty reduction at central government level, catalysing public expenditure management reforms which help give greater priority to poverty reduction, and creating additional space for civil organisations to engage with policy processes (Driscoll with Evans, 2005).



Our approach in this paper shares with the optimists an openness to the potential of PRSPs to achieve positive impacts on chronic poverty, while recognising with the pessimists the range of obstacles to their doing so. We identify areas where policies may benefit or harm chronically poor people and major gaps, and try to find a middle ground that is ambitious and realistic for reducing chronic poverty. We find the following caveat from Zambia's PRSP salutary, provided it is not used as an excuse for inaction on chronic poverty.

“Understandably the ideal approach to poverty reduction might require many varied interventions. In reality, our interventions are limited by the available financial and human resources” (Zambia PRSP, 2002:38).

The paper is based on a detailed review of 14 PRSPs, and a less in-depth review of 3 others, dating from 2000 to 2005, and associated Joint Staff Assessments and Annual Progress Reports. Where these are available, it also draws on national Human Development Reports, Poverty Assessments and independent reports and analyses by researchers and NGOs. Time constraints prevented us from reviewing PRGFs and PRSCs, donor country assistance strategies and national policy documents in key sectors; this greater depth of analysis of donor strategies and support is important in the next phase since it helps contextualise PRSP policy choices, and may help explain patterns of implementation.

In selecting PRSPs for review we aimed for a diverse sample, illustrating a range of issues:

- countries which have been implementing PRSPs for several years and have had more than one PRSP, and those where PRSPs are very recent;
- PRSPs that are well integrated into national planning architecture, and those which sit uncomfortably, a donor imposition;
- countries where the PRS is a broad development strategy, and those where it is a focused anti-poverty plan.

In addition to these, we aimed to achieve a geographical spread, with a concentration on Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where the highest numbers of chronically poor people live; to draw on PRSPs from a mixture of political environments, including some countries emerging from conflict; and have sought to include countries with reasonable availability of documentation and those with CPRC partnerships.

Our focus in this paper was to obtain a good overview of how chronic poverty is treated in a range of PRSPs, rather than undertake in-depth analyses of particular contexts; this will be done in the primary research. PRSPs for the following countries are included in the analysis: Albania, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Bolivia, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Nepal, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam and Zambia.⁴ Despite our efforts to include a wide range of contexts, it is clear that the sample

⁴ We recognise that in some countries, the policy and political context has moved and the PRSP has been left behind or abandoned (e.g. Bolivia), and that some of the PRSPs reviewed here are soon to be superseded by new strategies (e.g. Cambodia, Ethiopia, Mozambique). They are included because of specific features of interest in those countries and strategies and to facilitate comparisons over time



substantially influences conclusions. For example, Xenogiani and Shepherd (2005) found few African PRSPs concerned with irrigation; in our sample, almost all PRSPs, from all regions, mentioned irrigation as a vital means of transforming agriculture.

The paper starts by presenting a conceptual framework for understanding chronic poverty (Section 2), and then examines the ways in which PRSP poverty analysis and monitoring incorporate an understanding of chronic poverty (Section 3). Section 4 analyses policy choices in key sectoral and thematic areas of importance for chronically poor people, and in relation to commonly identified vulnerable groups, while Section 5 discusses key insights from the secondary literature on implementation, with reference to the PRSPs examined here. Section 6 concludes by summarising key issues and questions raised for CPRC's primary research.

in the next phase of the research. Of these, the majority were examined in detail and those of Mozambique, Nicaragua and Nepal in less detail due to time constraint.



2 Conceptual Framework

2.1 What is the 'chronic poverty' challenge?

The CPRC (2004) estimates that at least 300 to 420 million people are trapped in chronic poverty. This means that many millions of people are experiencing long-term poverty, which is often extreme and multi-dimensional in nature, which may last most or all of their lives, be passed on to their children and/or even result in their premature poverty related death.

Current international emphasis on poverty reduction is encouraging, but the CPRC would argue for increased nuance in understanding and responding to disaggregated experiences of poverty. Simple \$1/day poverty lines or an intuitive understanding of who the poor are as 'vulnerable groups' is not always enough. People's experiences are based upon different capabilities and assets, including social and political, as well as economic or financial assets, and these may change over time.

Responding to these differences requires providing policy support, to enable people to make the most of their capabilities and assets, and protection where risks are high or there is destitution. Policy responses to very poor communities living in remote mountainous regions, for example, would look very different to that required for pockets of very poor households living within otherwise buoyant rural communities; likewise, the needs of an orphaned child living with an elderly grandparent may be very different from those of a child living in a very poor household with both parents present.

In reality, however, the chronically poor are often invisible to policy makers, reflecting both the difficulties of reaching certain groups and regions in surveys or information gathering exercises, and because the process of recognising disaggregated need is itself subject to the social processes that exclude and exacerbate poverty differently in the first place, rendering certain people's needs a blind spot in the design of development policy and the delivery of public services. Reaching the chronically poor is not simply a matter of implementing current policies more fully, if the ways in which they are conceptualised are blind to specific poverty related needs.

2.2 Distinguishing chronic and short-term poverty

It is generally recognised that poverty is dynamic, relating to changing risks, vulnerabilities and opportunities. However this dynamism rarely gains policy recognition. An emphasis on chronic poverty implies bringing analysis of change (or lack of change) over time into focus. This means distinguishing between the long-term, intergenerationally poor, and seasonally or transitorily poor. This does not imply a hierarchy of need, but identifies a conceptual difference as to who the poor are and presents different kinds of challenges requiring particular kinds of policy and programmatic support.

Although intuitively the overlap between chronic and extreme poverty is clear, it is important to note that the chronically poor are not always the same as those living in extreme or the most severe poverty at any particular time. Sometimes the very poorest people are non-poor people who have been badly affected by a recent shock. If, as individuals or households, they are resilient enough and they can draw on sufficient resources to help them out of a



spell in poverty, no matter how deep, these people will bounce back. People who are structurally poor over the longer term and in many different dimensions, by contrast, would be less able to recover from an idiosyncratic shock. This suggests that vulnerability is sometimes but not necessarily linked to the duration of poverty.

People who stay poor are often those who experience several forms of disadvantage and discrimination simultaneously. The CPRC (2004:14) identifies a series of factors that underlie marginalisation:

- ascribed status (e.g. ethnicity, race, religion and caste)
- oppressive labour relations that trap people in insecure and low return livelihoods (e.g. migrant, stigmatised, and bonded labourers)
- position as an 'outsider' (e.g. migrant labourers, refugees, internally displaced people, people without citizenship documents)
- disability
- gender
- age (e.g. children, youth and older people)
- stigmatised illness (especially HIV/AIDS)
- household composition (e.g. young families, households headed by disabled people, children, older people and widows)
- geography (e.g. living in geographically remote or marginalised areas, areas affected by conflict or other forms of violence, and environmentally insecure areas)

The extent to which PRSPs distinguish between poverty depth, duration and different dimensions is examined in Section 3.

2.3 Effective policies to tackle chronic poverty

The causes of long term poverty, like their manifestations, are multiple. They can relate to economic and political spheres but can also be socio-cultural and geographical. Sometimes they are the same as the causes of short-term poverty, only more intense, widespread and lasting. In other cases, there is a qualitative difference between the causes of transitory and chronic poverty. The causes of poverty are most extreme and difficult to overcome when they overlap.

Responding to these diverse causes challenges policymakers to carefully unpack the multiple causes of marginalisation, exclusion, adverse incorporation, low assets and capabilities within a country and build from this understanding into strategic policy formation and implementation. CPRC (2004) presents a crude framework for distinguishing between the structural causes of poverty ('maintainers'), including prevailing institutions and relationships, and more idiosyncratic causes ('drivers'), typically 'shocks' or crises spanning the economic, political and socio-cultural spheres.



Responding to shocks and crises (the ‘drivers’) is arguably more straightforward to conceptualise than tackling the structural factors associated with institutions and embedded relationships. Rarely is there a single, clear cause of chronic poverty so policy needs to be able to draw linkages across different sectors. CPRC (2004) suggests that tackling chronic poverty requires specific action in three priority policy areas:⁵

- *Livelihood protection and promotion.* In this paper we focus principally on rural development and social protection policies and examine how far they address chronic poverty.
- *Growth with equity.* Here we focus on macro and structural economic policies, rural development, policies aiming to promote human development, and redistributive policies, including social protection.
- *Effective empowerment.* We discuss action aiming to reduce social exclusion and the extent to which PRSP processes increase opportunities for chronically poor people to advance their interests.

These policy areas are highly sophisticated. It is a major political challenge to change the growth path of a national or regional economy. Socio-cultural patterns do not respond easily or predictably to policy. There are limits to how far policies can challenge politically and historically based relationships that create and sustain patterns of distribution and discrimination. We do not underestimate the enormity of these challenges and this paper does not aspire to simplify them. By looking at the analysis and monitoring of poverty in PRSPs, and the articulation of policy priorities, we are simply considering the degree to which governments appear to recognise these issues and are committing to policies to tackle the long-term structural constraints that perpetuate poverty.

Before we move on to look at the treatment of poverty in the PRSPs, it is important to briefly acknowledge that the chronically poor are not dependent and passive but are actively working to cope with and overcome their poverty, whatever their situation. As the CPRC (2004) notes, real commitments, matched by actions and resources, are required by policy makers to support their efforts. As is increasingly recognised this requires a supportive institutional framework. What this means for governments and donors is discussed briefly in Section 5, but is not the major focus of this paper.

⁵ A fourth requirement is national and international recognition of obligations to provide resources, and is considered in Section 5 of this paper in particular.



3 Poverty analysis and monitoring - how is chronic poverty considered?

What might a chronic poverty sensitive PRSP look like? With limited data, what is the best we can expect from poverty analysis in PRSPs? Table 1 summarises the questions with which we have interrogated the PRSPs, and this section presents our findings on the extent to which chronic poverty is considered in PRSP poverty analysis. It looks specifically at the degree that duration, depth, multi-dimensionality, vulnerability and disaggregation drive the analysis of poverty.

Table 1: Determining the depth and breadth of poverty analysis in PRSPs

Poverty definition	How is poverty defined? (e.g. vulnerable groups, poorest 20 per cent, chronicity, poverty lines, multidimensionality)
Data	How are qualitative and quantitative data used? Is disaggregated data collected? Who collects and analyses data? (e.g. a role for CSOs, communities, national and local government, donors, international researchers, national researchers, statisticians, sociologists, anthropologists)
Poverty analysis	In what ways is data disaggregated? Any discussion of poverty duration or severity? How else is it disaggregated? (rural-urban, districts, gender, age, occupation group, vulnerability, income quintiles, disability, sources of vulnerability etc) Is this different for quantitative and qualitative data? Are sources/causes of poverty articulated and assessed? How well is this linked to poverty analysis?
Poverty monitoring	Which indicators are presented for poverty monitoring? How far do they disaggregate forms of vulnerability to chronic poverty? How well do these relate to the issues raised above?

3.1 Poverty Measurement and Characterisation

PRSPs generally have well developed sections outlining the characteristics and extent of national poverty, limited, however, by data availability. They tend to draw from a number of different data sources, including household and living standards surveys, participatory poverty assessments (PPAs), academic studies and donor reports, as well as annual government sector reports. They are often supported by extensive consultations. In principle, thorough national poverty analysis should provide the bedrock for the poverty reduction strategy. In reality, application is varied.



3.1.1 *How is poverty defined in PRSPs?*

Poverty is defined using a variety of monetary and non-monetary indicators and articulated multi-dimensionally. Typifying the breadth of characterisation, Albania's NSSD, for example, refers to low incomes as well as high incidence of disease and lack of access to medical facilities, poor quality housing, child malnutrition, illiteracy or lack of schooling, high levels of exposure to risks, and low voice in government decision making institutions. In addition, this PRSP also highlights the proportion of families (75 per cent) that experience acute 'social problems' (2001:13-14). Cambodia's NPRS highlights the psychological impacts of having 'people look down on you', while Senegal's PRSP includes an absence of knowledge and power as well as possessions in its definition of poverty.

Income poverty is given particular emphasis in PRSPs. In some cases (Uganda, Vietnam) this perhaps reflects the fact there is good recent evidence for changes in this dimension of poverty, as does the focus on assets. Uganda's PEAP recognises, for example, the importance of durable assets (metal roofing, radios, mobile phones and access to land, as well as consumption of meat or fish within the household) to wellbeing.

Each PRSP presents evidence and discussion on a range of human development indicators (IMR, literacy, primary school enrolment, child mortality rates, etc). Hunger, particularly among children, is an oft-cited concern (including Sierra Leone, Uganda, Vietnam), and linked to discussions of productivity and weak service delivery. Some PRSPs also define poverty within a governance framework, linking people's choices and opportunities to 'deprivation of human rights' as well as material deprivations (e.g. Vietnam). Uganda's PEAP for example, argues for a wider definition of poverty to include voicelessness and social exclusion. At a general level, these definitions are reflected in subsequent policy emphases, though there tends to be substantially more emphasis on addressing income poverty, human development and governance concerns than voicelessness and exclusion, for example.

PRSPs provide thorough characterisations of poverty (see Table 2) and all the documents studied capture multidimensionality to some degree. However, they are limited in their analysis of dynamics. Of those examined here, only Bangladesh's NSAPR considers poverty duration in any analytical detail, linked to unfavourable agricultural environments. A few other PRSPs studied refer to duration in a cursory way (Cambodia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Uganda, and Vietnam). Cambodia's NPRS talks of cycles of poverty, ill-health and high health care costs that cripple poor families. Senegal's PRSP refers to pauperisation processes. Uganda's PEAP has a short section on 'chronic poverty and vulnerability' which, while the actual analysis presented is limited, suggests that issues of poverty dynamics are gaining some momentum in this country (and perhaps reflects the presence of the CPRC in Uganda). The position articulated in the PEAP is that temporary income shocks, due to climatic factors and illness, can translate into chronic impoverishment if households are not able to insure themselves or access outside assistance.



Poverty severity and depth are more widely examined: using extreme/food poverty lines, looking at quintile difference, and P1/P2 indicators⁶, as well as qualitative findings. In some cases (e.g. Burkina Faso) this disaggregation is very detailed and applied across many variables (urban-rural, regions, access to services, etc). Cambodia's NPRSP concludes from P1/P2 analysis that on average the poor are living close to the poverty line and that consequently there is considerable potential for poverty reduction through equitable growth. Bangladesh's NSAPR, by contrast, identifies 'worryingly high' proportions in extreme poverty.

Table 2: Poverty definitions in selected PRSPs

Country paper	Below poverty lines	Poverty severity	Poverty depth (P1 and P2)	Poverty duration	Multiple dimensions	Vulnerability	Human capital	Physical assets
Albania (NSSD, 2001)	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	2
Bangladesh (NSAPR, 2005)	3	2	3	1	2	1	3	2
Bolivia (EBRP, 2001)	2	3	0	0	3	2	2	1
Burkina Faso (PRSP, 2004)	2	3	3	1	2	1	3	1
Cambodia (NPRS, 2002)	3	2	2	1	1	2	2	1
Ethiopia (SDPRP, 2002)	2	2	2	0	1	2	2	2
Pakistan (AGPRS, 2003)	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0
Senegal (PRSP, 2002)	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	0
Sierra Leone (PRSP, 2005)	3	2	3	0	3	2	2	3
Sri Lanka (VSAD, 2002)	2	1	0	1	3	2	2	1
Tanzania (NSGRP, 2005)	1	1	0	0	2	2	2	1
Uganda (PEAP 2005)	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
Vietnam (CPRGS, 2003)	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	0
Zambia (PRSP, 2002)	2	2	0	0	1	2	2	2

⁶ The poverty gap (P1) measures the depth of poverty, the average distance of the poor to the poverty line in relation to the poverty line. The poverty gap squared (P2) measures the severity of poverty, and is particularly important because it takes into account inequality among the poor by giving more weight to the poorest of the poor (Grant, 2005).



Key: 0- not mentioned at all; 1 – mentioned but not in detail; 2 – covered in detail; 3- exceptional (linked to duration aspects or poverty depth strongly)

3.1.2 *How is poverty measured in PRSPs?*

Information on chronic poverty requires longitudinal datasets, such as panel data and oral history methodologies that track the same households and individuals over time, alongside standard household surveys. PRSPs tend to draw from and make good use of both qualitative and quantitative data in their poverty analysis, but not longitudinal data of this kind. The lack of panel data is explicitly acknowledged as a shortcoming in Ethiopia's SDPRP.

PRSPs quote from a range of national statistical data, and data from specific quantitative studies,⁷ and typically measure the extent of national poverty through the use of poverty lines. These are largely national lines drawn from consumption baskets based on a calculation of the cost of basic food needs plus other essentials relevant in particular society's level of development and cultural contexts. In some cases (e.g. Pakistan) the analysis based on different poverty lines conflicts.

Most PRSPs also use an extreme (or food) poverty line to analyse poverty severity, but as these are often different in different countries, international comparisons are difficult. The food poor are defined as those who cannot cover their basic food needs. However, the food poverty line in Vietnam's CPRGS is based on 2,100 kcal per day, while in Sierra Leone it is 2,700 kcal per day and, here, 26 per cent live in extreme poverty (or 'more than two-thirds of the poor could be described as living in conditions of extreme poverty'). Zambia's PRSP argues that 'the situation is, in reality, worse [than the statistics suggest] since the 'food basket' used to arrive at the poverty line is very modest and based on a predominantly minimal caloric requirement that is vegetarian and excludes meat, chicken, and fish' (2002:22). Albania's NSSD refers to the international standard for extreme poverty (\$1/day), by which definition 17 per cent of the population are poor, but also uses a relative poverty line (the EU 60 per cent median income threshold) which identifies 29.6 per cent of Albanians as poor in 2001, and half of these as extremely poor. This common use of food poverty lines for poverty measurement is only linked to a limited extent to a policy emphasis on promoting food security (see Section 4.3), indicating an area of disconnect between poverty analysis and policy responses.

In addition to statistical surveys, Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs) have been a prominent data source for first and second generation PRSPs (including Albania, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Vietnam, Uganda and Tanzania). PPAs generally provide broad national geographical spread and coverage of levels of different dimensions of deprivation, and factors contributing to poverty including forms of economic activity, ethnicity

⁷ Including Demographic Health Surveys (DHS), Living Conditions Surveys (e.g. Albania, Zambia), population surveys (e.g. Bolivia) and national household surveys (e.g. Cambodia, Sierra Leone, Bolivia, etc). Some donor studies are also quoted, such as Poverty Assessments (e.g. Asian Development Bank in Cambodia; Sri Lanka; the UNDP Human Development Index data is particularly used in Zambia; and MDG reports are a resource used in a number of country PRSPs) and government benefit incidence surveys (e.g. Cambodia).



and linguistic marginalisation, gender, poor governance and remoteness, all of which underpin chronic poverty in different ways. The PRSPs examined here did not draw on PPAs explicitly in relation to chronic poverty; this may reflect the limited representation of chronically poor people in participatory processes (See Section 5.1).

Qualitative data tends to feed into discussions of vulnerability while quantitative data is used to make the case for the extent and depth of national poverty. In some cases, such as Senegal's PRSP, both data types are used extensively. A discrepancy is noted between the poverty-line based trends (where reduction in poverty is noted) and the perceptions of citizens (worsening situation) (2002:4). Qualitative data also provides insights beyond correlates to present information on processes, notably of exclusion and discrimination. In Bolivia, for example, qualitative data collected through consultations centred very firmly on issues of exclusion and marginalisation.

3.2 Poverty dynamics

Despite some effort to distinguish trends within countries, very few PRSPs refer in any detail to chronic poverty or poverty dynamics. A quick word survey of these PRSPs (see Table 3) shows that only four (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Sri Lanka and Uganda) make direct reference to 'chronic poverty' and even then only once or twice in the whole document. As already mentioned, Uganda's PEAP presents a short, limited section on 'Chronic Poverty and Vulnerability'; Bangladesh's NSAPR links chronic poverty to unfavourable agricultural environments (e.g. salinity-prone, flood-prone, river erosion prone, drought-prone areas)⁸; Sri Lanka's VSAD estimates that chronic poverty affects 25 per cent of the population and that 40 per cent experience either chronic or transitory poverty; and chronic poverty is cited in Burkina Faso's PRSP as one of ten 'factors of poverty' identified by rural and urban populations.

Pakistan's AGPRS, (not included in the word survey because the document is not searchable), distinguishes the chronically and transitory poor, transitory vulnerable and transitory non-poor, as well as non-poor and extremely poor. It estimates that the chronically poor make up 10 per cent of the population and the transitory poor 20 per cent (2003:13). The analysis illustrates high incidence of vulnerability to shocks such as drought and the report argues the case for safety nets.

⁸ Note that this was work specifically done by CPRC partner BIDS for the Programme for Research on Chronic Poverty in Bangladesh, in which the director was very closely involved with the interim PRSP.



Table 3: Poverty Measurement in PRSPs, a Word Count Analysis

Search term	First generation PRSPs ⁹											Second/third generation PRSPs			
	Albania	Bolivia	Bangladesh	Cambodia ¹⁰	Ethiopia ¹¹	Mozambique	Senegal ¹²	Sierra Leone	Sri Lanka	Vietnam ¹³	Zambia ¹⁴	Burkina Faso ¹⁵	Nicaragua ¹⁶	Tanzania	Uganda
Quintile(s):	5	1	6	27	14	0	2	0	7	13	0	8	6	0	27
Per centile(s):	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chronic poverty	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	1
Chronic	3	3	6	5	4	6	2	0	9	0	6	5	19	3	5
Severe poverty	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Severity	0	0	2	3	14	0	5	0	1	0	2	10	0	1	0
Extreme poverty	5	36	13	1	0	1	1	15	4	0	17	1	59	0	0
Poverty depth/depth of poverty	2	0	0	1	15	5	1	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	1
Persistent/ce (of) poverty	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	8	0	0	3	0	0	0
Disaggregation	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	7	0	0	0
Disaggregated	0	0	11	9	8	0	0	0	2	5	4	2	0	2	7
Traps	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Poverty cycle/cycle of poverty/vicious cycle/circle	0	2	1	3	2	0	2	1	2	3	3	3	2	0	0
Multi-dimensional	10	2	7	3	2	2	1	4	1	1	4	4	1	0	1
Inter-generational	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

A document word search only offers a rough indication of articulated priorities. A term not being mentioned does not mean that the ideas contained in the term are not explored in the PRSP. In the Cambodia’s NPRS, for example, chronic poverty is not mentioned at all but there is a discussion of people moving in and out of poverty and an assertion that the

⁹ Pakistan and Benin not included as documents are not searchable

¹⁰ Cambodia includes ‘poorest of the poor’ once.

¹¹ Ethiopia includes ‘persistently poor’ once.

¹² Senegal includes ‘destitution/destitute’ three times and ‘poorest of the poor’ twice.

¹³ Vietnam includes ‘extremely poor’ three times.

¹⁴ Zambia includes ‘severely poor’ once.

¹⁵ Burkina Faso includes indigence/indigent twice.

¹⁶ Nicaragua includes ‘severely poor’ once, ‘extremely poor’ 67 times, and ‘destitute’ once.



definition of poverty and better knowledge about cyclical, seasonal and unexpected shocks is important (2002:15).¹⁷

While all PRSPs, except Sierra Leone, used the term ‘chronic’ a number of times, it is mostly used in reference to chronic food insecurity, malnutrition or ill-health. For example, though poverty duration is not discussed in the Vietnam’s CGPRS, the eradication of chronic hunger is a main goal of the National Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction Programme, which precedes but is linked to the PRSP (Nguyen, 2002:1). Similarly, Bangladesh’s NSAPR and Cambodia’s NPRS draw links between poverty duration and hunger, the former discussing persistent seasonal hunger, and the latter distinguishing between the chronically and transiently hungry. Taking a multi-dimensional perspective on chronic poverty, it would seem that the duration of aspects of poverty, if not poverty as a whole, is a concern in these PRSPs.

Time bound analysis is clearly limited. Terms that help articulate long-term poverty, such as ‘traps’, ‘poverty cycles’, and ‘poverty persistence’, are rarely mentioned in these PRSPs. There was no mention at all of ‘intergenerational’ poverty transfers except once in Burkina Faso’s PRSP. But again the concept is discussed in Vietnam’s PRSP, particularly in relation to the role of education in escaping poverty and how uneducated parents are likely to make worse child-rearing decisions and perpetuate poverty in their children.

This contrasts with the discussion of poverty depth, for example, exemplified by analyses of quintiles (Cambodia, Ethiopia, Uganda), severity (Burkina Faso, Ethiopia), and extreme poverty (Bolivia, Nicaragua, and Sierra Leone). In Bolivia’s EBRP, significant analysis is drawn on ‘extreme poverty’, applying an extreme poverty line to most poverty variables examined and noting very high rates of extreme poverty in the central highland plateau region, among indigenous and poorly integrated communities. Thirteen references are made to the ‘ultra poor’ in Sri Lanka’s VSAD; and 5 in Bangladesh’s NSAPR. The discussion of poverty depth reflects the availability of quantified data on these issues and the existence of accepted techniques of analysis, in contrast to poverty persistence, for example.

3.2.1 How far do PRSPs disaggregate poverty?

Table 4 summarises further the statistical analysis of poverty in selected PRSPs. It shows our interpretation of the variety and extent of statistical disaggregation, indicating quite strong analysis in all PRSPs. Some disaggregation (e.g. rural-urban and regional difference and occupation groups) tends to be more systematically covered than others (e.g. ethnicity, age, gender). It is also clear that some PRSPs (e.g. Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka) present more detailed quantitative analysis than others (e.g. Pakistan, Senegal, Tanzania). It is yet to be seen whether this translates into more considered policy choices for poverty reduction.

¹⁷ Similarly, ‘multidimensionality’ is little mentioned but the concept underpins the characterisation of poverty in most cases.



Table 4: Quantitative analysis of poverty and poverty dynamics

Country PRSP	Poverty dynamics			Poverty disaggregation						
	Includes chronic poverty	Includes chronic malnutrition/food insecurity	Transient/transitory poverty	Income quintile	Occupation groups	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Rural - Urban	Spatial/Regional poverty traps
Albania (NSSED, 2001)	0	0	0	2	2	1	1	0	3	2
Bangladesh (NSAPR, 2005)	1	2	0	1	0	2	2	0	2	0
Bolivia (EBRP, 2001)	0	1	0	0	2	0	1	3	3	3
Burkina Faso (PRSP, 2004)	2	0	2	2	2	3	0	0	3	3
Cambodia (NPRS, 2002)	0	0	0	2	2	1	2	0	0	0
Ethiopia (SDPRP, 2002)	1	0	0	2	0	2	2		3	2
Pakistan (AGPRS, 2003)	2	0	2	1	2	1	0	0	1	2
Senegal (PRSP 2002)	0	1	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	0
Sierra Leone (PRSP, 2005)	0	0	0	1	3	3	3	0	3	3
Sri Lanka (VSAD, 2002)	1	1	1	2	2	2	0	2	2	3
Tanzania (NSGRP, 2005)	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	1
Uganda (PEAP, 2004)	0	1	0	1	2	2	1	0	1	2
Vietnam (CGPRS, 2003)	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
Zambia (PRSP, 2002)	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	2

Key: 0- not mentioned at all; 1 – mentioned but not in detail; 2 – covered in detail; 3- exceptional (linked strongly to duration aspects or poverty depth)

Qualitative data tend to provide some disaggregation but this is often less systematic, used particularly in reference to the different experiences of specific vulnerable groups. This data is explored below within a more detailed look at the treatment of occupation, gender, age, ethnicity, and disability categories, as well as spatial and regional analysis in the PRSPs.



3.2.2 Identifying the poorest people

Though analysis of poverty duration is limited, PRSPs are more considered in their analysis of poverty depth and distribution. Most PRSPs draw to some degree from standard Foster-Greer and Thorbecke measures of poverty incidence, severity and depth (refer back to Table 2). In some cases, such as Sierra Leone, this data is disaggregated further by region and gender. This partly reflects data availability but also the role of national statistical agencies in generating poverty data that informs PRSPs, and which privilege this type of analysis over more qualitative, causal analysis. This has also been a primary focus of donor statistical capacity building.

Most PRSPs disaggregate by income or consumption quintiles. In some cases (e.g. Uganda and Sierra Leone) data is disaggregated to different quintiles to a degree but not consistently. Those that disaggregate in this way, tend to look at quintile based access to services (e.g. Albania, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Senegal, Sri Lanka). Ethiopia's SDPRP presents poverty incidence, some assets data and some health utilisation data by quintile. Senegal's PRSP shows discrepancies in access to water, indicating the poor pay three to four times more for water at standpipes than do the rich with private connections. Cambodia's NPRS examines human development indicators by quintile, for example differential rates of malnutrition among boys and girls in rural and urban areas in different quintiles are discussed and the striking inequalities noted. Similarly, education attainment indicators are disaggregated by quintile in Sierra Leone's PRSP and Uganda's PEAP also disaggregates human development indicators by quintiles.

Using PPA data, the Sierra Leone PRSP identifies four categories of the poor from PPA data (the poorest, the poorer, the poor and the better off – see Table 5). In this context, the extremely poor are presented as having the highest risk of staying poor, with low capacity to cope with the economic and social shocks that 'threaten survival in a post-conflict economy, due to their inability to accumulate and retain assets, and the loss of the informal safety net provided by families and friends'. This PRSP goes on to say that these groups are 'thus trapped in a vicious circle'.

Table 5: Characteristics of the Poor in Sierra Leone

Category	Characteristics
<i>The poorest (popolipo)</i>	Those who cannot meet immediate needs (food, shelter, and clothing); cannot invest for the future; and have exhausted the charity and goodwill of others; they have dirty/torn clothes and are completely isolated; they cannot meet medical expenses when they fall ill; they are physically challenged. Those without husbands or wives and children to care for them also fall into this category.
<i>The poorer (po-pas-po)</i>	They have some ability to meet some basic needs but not always. They are unable to invest for the future through education and savings. Their credit is limited, and this gets eroded with their inability to repay. They have no houses and thus live with other people. They cannot afford decent clothes and strive hard to survive on a daily basis. Often, they do not have enough to support a family. They highly depend on others for both work and general support.



<i>The poor (po)</i>	They can meet some of their daily needs including a meal per day though the meal may not be nutritious. They can barely afford to send their children to school and have no savings. They can hardly afford the cost of medical care.
<i>The better off</i>	They tend to see well-being in terms of their ability to provide the essentials of life for themselves and their families. They can provide good food, shelter, education, clothes and medical facilities for their families; and are gainfully employed and physically fit.

Source: Sierra Leone PRSP

Albania's NSSD also identified four different socio-economic groups on the basis of a multidimensional poverty index: very poor, poor, not poor and relatively well-to-do families. Zambia's PRSP presents poverty categories based on clothing and happiness, with people suggesting that peace was rare within poor households, as quarrelling was common. In both cases, these categories acknowledged psychological aspects of poverty alongside material well-being but none allude at all to the duration of poverty or an inability to escape poverty. Senegal's PRSP presents data in which 65 per cent of PPA respondents identified themselves as poor, and 23 per cent as very poor. In this case, 64 per cent of respondents also perceive poverty to have worsened over the past five years.

Most PRSPs also examine broader inequality trends, usually drawing on Gini coefficient data and making comparisons regionally, which allow for some analysis of the relative position of the poorest. Where there is rising inequality (e.g. Albania, Bangladesh, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, since the late 1990s, and Vietnam) the implications are that conditions are worsening for the poorest/chronically poor, to whom opportunities for greater prosperity are less accessible. Sierra Leone shows one of the most skewed income distributions in the world, with a Gini of 0.66, indirectly linked in the PRSP to conflict, very poor governance and widespread corruption. By contrast, distribution is more even in Ethiopia. The SDPRP argues that egalitarian land holdings systems may have contributed to this in rural Ethiopia and is a picture consistent with being a very low income country. Gini coefficients are sometimes compared between urban and rural areas (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Senegal, Vietnam, Zambia). Cambodia's NPRS uses a land Gini to show that the lowest quintile has almost no land.

3.2.3 *Vulnerable groups*

Vulnerability is a key analytical concept in most of the PRSPs we looked at, and clearly informs policy responses. All the PRSPs examined identify key vulnerable groups. In contrast to Table 3 (above) which shows the limitation of depth and duration references in PRSPs, Table 6 (below) indicates a much higher prevalence of terms used that identify with broad groupings of vulnerable people. In some cases this is linked to poverty duration. In Sierra Leone's PRSP, for example, the vulnerable are identified as constituting a 'category of the extremely poor... with a high risk of staying poor... they have low capacity to cope with various economic and social shocks that threaten survival in a post-conflict economy, due to their inability to accumulate and retain assets and the loss of the informal safety net provided by extended family and friends. They are thus trapped in a vicious circle' (2005: 48).



Table 6: Vulnerable groups identified in PRSPs

Search term	PRSPs ¹⁸														
	Albania	Bangladesh	Bolivia	Burkina Faso	Cambodia	Ethiopia	Mozambique	Nicaragua	Senegal	Sierra Leone	Sri Lanka	Tanzania	Uganda	Vietnam	Zambia
Children:	58	42 1	54	11 5	181	59	55	129	84	100	112	111	148	11 9	69
Gender:	4	14 2	53	58	7	65	24	6	7	97	53	25	76	37	10 0
Women	21	71 2	75	17 9	214	88	43	99	58	86	116	123	113	10 1	13 9
Girls	2	62	7	42	37	24	8	3	21	13	3	36	21	10	14
Boys	2	14	5	8	7	12	0	3	4	4	0	22	6	0	2
Disability¹⁹	13	22	0	1	18	3	0	0	3	6	22	7	11	11	0
Disabilities		9	0		3		0	0		0		50	10		1
Disable		45	1		13		0	9		12		0	11		7
Older people	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	8	0	1	0
Elderly	6	16	12	4	5	2	4	11	16	2	13	12	9	8	1
Pastoralist	0	0	0	0	0	7 ²⁰	0	0	0	0	0	2	10	1	0
Ethnic minority	0	51	40	0	39	1	0	0	1	1	45	0	4		0
Ethnic(ity)		1		0			0	10				0			0
Indigenous	0	17	94	0	1	8	0	34	0	4	3	0	5		4

Vulnerable groups identified in PRSPs include: children (particularly street children, and orphans), women (particularly at child bearing age and in female headed households), people with disabilities or with vulnerable occupations, and, to a lesser extent, older people, and ethnic minorities (see Table 8, below, which summarises the PRSPs).

Other vulnerabilities identified in the PRSPs reviewed include: geographical vulnerability (those living in areas affected by disasters such as floods and droughts in Cambodia, Pakistan and Senegal); vulnerable occupations (such as fishermen in Sri Lanka or those working in plantation communities; small-scale farmers in Zambia; crop producers, pastoralists, fishermen and their families, and estate workers in Uganda; and small-scale farmers and miners, artisans, informal sector workers, domestic service and commercial sex workers in Tanzania); and groups experiencing particular forms of social alienation (e.g.

¹⁸ Pakistan and Benin not included as documents not searchable

¹⁹ Bukina Faso - includes 12 references to handicap; Ethiopia – includes 2 references to handicap; Senegal - includes 40 references to handicap

²⁰ But 66 references to 'pastoral'.



people experiencing alcoholism in Cambodia and Uganda; and those who fall prey to ‘social evils’ (not defined) in Vietnam).

Certain vulnerabilities are clearly more visible in PRSPs than others (See Tables 3.6 and 3.7). The more visible vulnerabilities may be less politically problematic, such as age (although while children/youth are visible, older people aren’t) or impossible to ignore in the prevailing development climate, even if they are only cursorily included, such as gender. By comparison those that are more politically sensitive or easier to ignore, such as ethnicity or disability are much less discussed. The way that ‘vulnerability’ is conceptualised in PRSPs partially reflects the exclusion or limited participation of particular groups in the process. It may also reflect a ‘productivist’ paradigm that focuses attention and resources on groups perceived as having potential productive contributions to make, and ignoring those, such as disabled or older people perceived as long-term net consumers.

Even in PRSPs where vulnerable groups are an important identification tool, the subsequent analysis often remains limited. This may reflect an absence of grounded sociological analysis, so that discussion remains on the level of correlates, rather than causes. This said, though no PRSPs examine social exclusion-related vulnerabilities systematically, some provide detailed analysis of the role of specific vulnerabilities in causing poverty. See Section 3.2.1 below for examples.

Table 7: Vulnerable groups in selected PRSPs

Country PRSP	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Disability
Albania (NSSED, 2001)	Children at risk: beg, work, leave school, in public orphanages, confined to their homes because of blood feuds Youths at risk: drug addicts, unemployed, involved in criminal activities Older people at risk: those living alone, or abandoned	Women at risk: violated women, divorced women, women who head households, and those who have fallen victim to trafficking	Not mentioned despite the poverty of the Roma and Egyptian minorities. This gap is addressed in a later Annual Progress Report.	One reference to both physically and mentally disabled people.
Bolivia (EBRP 2001)	Poverty higher in households headed by young people.	Brief mention of women doing particularly badly among the poor. Reference to labour market discrimination.	Indigenous groups face high degree of discrimination and segregation, manifest in access to services and labour market.	
Burkina Faso (PRSP, 2004)		Female headed households; Women engaged in farm work or self-employed non-farm work Female unemployment, due to difficulties accessing	Immigrant populations (little education and few skills for securing gainful employment and contribute to the growing numbers of unprotected wage-	



		urban labour market and capital.	earners	
Cambodia (NPRSP, 2002)	Orphans; Street and abandoned children, who are increasingly vulnerable to drugs, "big brothers", HIV/AIDS, prostitution, other health risks, and to feelings of no future and social exclusion; Child labour is very important for poor households, but is considered harmful to the future of children	Women's workload, unequal access to education, paid employment, land ownership and other property rights, health and childbirth, HIV/AIDS, trafficking and sex trade as well as domestic violence	Ethnic minorities: lack of representation at management and legislative levels, and language barriers; Forest dwellers and marginalised tribal people – in reference to malaria prevalence in remote areas.	Mentioned in relation to legacy of conflict; landmine explosions were the cause of disability of 11 per cent of the disabled population.
Ethiopia (SDPRP, 2002)	There is very little on vulnerable groups at all in the Ethiopian SDPRP: nothing in the poverty analysis section and only one sentence in the policy section referring to reforming traditional social safety nets to support groups such as street children, orphans and commercial sex workers.			
Pakistan (AGPRS, 2003)	Child labour and youth unemployment (includes abuse and ex-bonded labourers). Child mortality. Acknowledges the needs of low income older workers.	Whole section on gender equity. Women's participation in paid employment is limited related to social and cultural restrictions; discussed with ref to education (female illiteracy) and health gaps (maternal mortality). Vulnerability varies by class and region and urban-rural (particular emphasis on rural women).	People living in tribal areas in desperate poverty – highly stratified economic and social structures	Mentioned within a discussion of education special needs – ref to physically handicapped, mentally handicapped and insane, multiply disabled and visually impaired, hearing impaired and unclassified.
Senegal (PRSP, 2002)	Young people – violence and delinquency, and jail; Child and adolescent beggars, including Koranic school students; Child labour – withdrawn from school	Violence against women; Prostitutes: young and abused women; HIV/AIDS. Poverty higher among male-headed households		Physical incapacity resulting from old age of a disabling sickness
Sierra Leone (PRSP, 2005)	The aged/elderly; Youth unemployed (disabled, school dropouts, commercial sex workers, drug addicts, diamond diggers, HIV/AIDS infected and sexually/physically abused young boys and girls, pregnant girls, teenage mothers and the homeless); Children as	Poverty is deeper and more intense in male headed households, except in younger households. Widows and women in polygamous households		Limited access to food, jobs or income earning opportunities; lack of medical facilities and psycho-social services; lack of adequate shelter; high rate of sexual and other abuses; discrimination and stigmatisation, even within their extended families



	perpetrators of violence during the war, but also victims of separation, displacement and violence			
Sri Lanka (VSAD, 2002)	<p>Children are more affected by poverty of their families than any other segment of the population:</p> <p>Child workers, in rural areas particularly. In the north, children engaged in conflict.</p> <p>Elderly women in low-income families (new category emerging)</p>	<p>Whole section dedicated to poverty and gender. Poor women are especially vulnerability to vicious cycle of poverty (elderly, and displaced)</p> <p>New categories emerging: women coping with displacement and lack of services in conflict affected areas; Women migrants (sometimes the result of abuse and teen pregnancies); lack of adequate accommodation for female workers in the Free Trade Zones (nutrition, security, sexual harassment).</p>	<p>Indian Tamils are among the poorest people in Sri Lanka - live largely on tea, rubber and other plantation estates, face high degree of social and economic isolation (remote location, language barriers, and social stigmas).</p> <p>Tamils are homogenously poor.</p>	<p>Discussion of iodine deficiency disorders – as the single most important preventable cause of physical and mental retardation, particularly during the first 18 months. One in every 5 children suffers.</p>
Tanzania (NSGRP, 2005)	<p>Children in rural areas</p> <p>Ill-health, risks and social marginalisation resulting from one's age (old, youths and children identified)</p>	<p>Impoverishment due to cultural norms/traditional beliefs, that discriminate against women and children</p>		<p>Employment opportunities for people with disabilities are limited and special support for them in the workplace is frequently lacking.</p>
Uganda (PEAP, 2004)	<p>Orphans and other vulnerable children: living on their own, street children, abused, neglected or abandoned; children in need of legal protection and alternative family care; children in hard to reach areas; children with disability related vulnerabilities and children facing significant physical, mental, social and emotional harm.</p> <p>The elderly, particularly female</p>	<p>Detailed analysis of gender based vulnerability of women</p>	<p>Specific problems faced by pastoralist communities (mentioned but not elaborated)</p>	<p>Disabled people suffer relative income poverty, social stigma sometimes experienced, and more limited access to services. In 2000, 46 per cent of persons with disability were poor compared to 34 per cent of people in general.</p>



	widows but evidence is mixed.			
Zambia (PRSP, 2002)	Child: orphans, street children, working children, children who head households.	Female headed households		

3.2.4 Gender based vulnerability and household structures:

There is some degree of gender disaggregation in all PRSPs. In Burkina Faso, where data is among the most disaggregated, the headcount and depth and severity data are all disaggregated by gender (2004: 21). Women are identified as a vulnerable or disadvantaged group in many of these strategies and all detail action to improve their situation. Similarly girls' relative disadvantage in education is often mentioned. More specific vulnerable groups of women and girls are also mentioned in some strategies, such as unmarried girl mothers in Sierra Leone, elderly war widows in Sri Lanka and women and girls at risk of HIV and sexual abuse in IDP camps in Uganda. By contrast, no areas of male disadvantage are recognised, such as higher levels of forced recruitment into armies or involvement in extremely hazardous forms of child labour, and as Table 6 (above) indicates, 'women' and 'girls' are often referred to, but more analytical references to 'gender' (or even 'boys') are limited.

How gender dimensions of poverty are played out within a household is related to many factors, including household structures. Sierra Leone's PRSP presents poverty analysis by age group and gender of head, marital status of head of household; occupation of head of household and demography. Polygamous households stand out sharply, with 75 per cent poor and 36 per cent in extreme poverty, these households are most prone to food security problems and child poverty. Similarly, in Zambia, determinants of poverty are identified as household size, gender and child status, and in Albania, Senegal and Uganda as well, higher poverty incidence is found among larger families, and those with lower education levels.

AIDS related mortality and polygamy are mentioned in Uganda's PRSP (2005:17) as causes of poverty although discrimination within polygamous households is not. In Senegal however, poverty prevalence is higher among male headed households than female headed households. This reflects in part the larger number of male headed households in Senegal, but also the relative freedom women have when they head their own households. This PRSP, unusually, provides fairly detailed sociologically informed analysis of why this is and the relative opportunities of poor men and women, for example, women may get additional help from family and also certain sectors open to poor (e.g. vending) are female-dominated. However, this more nuanced analysis does not appear to be reflected in differentiated policy.

3.2.5 Chronic poverty and the life cycle:

Poverty in childhood can lead to intergenerational transmission of poverty, so the clear emphasis on children in these PRSPs is welcomed. Particular vulnerabilities among children identified in the PRSPs include orphan-hood; living on the streets; working, particularly child sex work; children heading households; as well discrimination based on gender, caste, tribe, ethnicity and religion. Vietnam's CPRGS implicitly recognises the importance of addressing childhood poverty in order to ameliorate adverse effects on future generations and break poverty cycles.



Comparing the extent to which particular groups are identified is instructive: Young Lives (2005) found that child(ren) were mentioned 59 times in Ethiopia's 225 page document. This was relatively high compared to the elderly (mentioned only 5 times) and disabled/handicapped (9 times) but low compared to "women" (88 times) and "gender" (65 times) and even "pastoral/ists" (66 times²¹). They argue that this reflects the limited involvement of advocates for children's interests in the PRSP formulation process.²²

Although children are mentioned relatively frequently in PRSPs, the analysis of differential needs is still fairly weak, except perhaps for girls. Cambodia's NPRS, with paragraphs on street children and a box on child labour is unusually detailed on these groups. Vietnam's CPRGS recognises a range of social problems - child labour, child malnutrition, lack of attention to childhood disability, rise in road accidents, child trafficking and abuse, rising numbers of street children, spread of HIV/AIDS, but doesn't go any further with this analysis. Ethiopia's SDPRP addresses child related issues within the paradigms of human capital and productivity, with little discussion of child abuse, child work or child trafficking, unlike some other PRSPs (Young Lives, 2005:22).

The vulnerabilities of older people receive far less PRSP attention than children and youth. This is despite this group's considerable vulnerability to chronic poverty and premature poverty related death, and may reflect a productivist agenda that often overlooks the economic contributions of older people and perceives there to be limited value in investing in their support. CPRC (2004:23) suggests that chronic poverty is disproportionately experienced by older people, associated with absence of income security, inadequate family or social support and poor health combined with inadequate health care.

3.2.6 *People with disabilities*

Though disability is mentioned as a cause of vulnerability in 10 out of the 17 PRSPs we examined, little data is presented. Some PRSPs do identify disabled people as a particularly disadvantaged group (e.g. Senegal, Vietnam (but less systematically), Pakistan and Uganda). In several cases, this is linked to a history of conflict, and large numbers of amputees (e.g. Cambodia, Sierra Leone); Senegal's PRSP is unusual in identifying discrimination as a cause of poverty among disabled people.

Limited attention to disability probably itself reflects cultural prejudices and discrimination against disabled people which permeate all societies, the productivist bias mentioned earlier (and the assumption that disabled people must be net consumers) and a feeling that disability is a 'social welfare' issue rather than a proper, hard, development issue, particularly among economists. This may reflect the role of Ministries of Finance in PRSP development and the dominance of the growth paradigm. This said, those PRSPs that identify disability as a cause of poverty do include some actions aiming to reduce vulnerability; see Section 4.7 for more detail.

²¹ The greater focus on pastoralists is noteworthy given that they represent a small percentage of the overall population compared to children who account for more than 50 per cent.

²² Ethiopia's second SDPRP, currently under development is expected to be substantially more child-sensitive as a result of inputs from the Young Lives project.



3.2.7 People affected by conflict

Conflict has created a particularly severe form of vulnerability in affected countries (e.g. Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Uganda). The vulnerable groups created by conflict identified in this set of PRSPs include children, particularly orphans, as well as direct survivors, and, in some cases (e.g. Sierra Leone), perpetrators of violence; women, particularly war widows, and women at risk of sexual violence in refugee or IDP camps; amputees; wounded and/or demobilised soldiers; surviving families of soldiers killed in action; internally displaced people, refugees and returnees; and also people living in areas contaminated with landmines in Cambodia.

3.2.8 Ethnicity and minorities

Minorities are likely to be among the poorest and chronically poor, with very weak access to services, facing considerable discrimination and multiple marginalisations. Where population numbers are small these groups are often politically insignificant (CPRC 2004). Ethnicity is a particularly strong correlate of poverty in some PRSPs (Bolivia and Vietnam), but is often missed in others. Regional aggregation of numbers obscures the condition of these groups, as regional data rarely disaggregate by ethnicity.

Hughes (2005) examined 37 PRSPs and found only 21 mentioned minority groups. Our survey of 14 PRSPs showed that only 8 mentioned 'ethnic(ity)' with four of those countries mentioning the term under five times in the whole document, while 'indigenous' is mentioned by just three PRSPs (Bolivia, Nicaragua, and Sierra Leone - minimally). Uganda's PEAP, for example, 'recognises that vulnerability varies with age, gender, ethnicity, occupation and social status' (2005:29) but ethnicity is little mentioned other than in this statement.

However, several others are silent on ethnicity issues, despite in some cases, ethnically-based independence movements.²³ This may be a strategic silence (due to the political sensitivity of ethnicity in some cases), with ethnicity being addressed 'by proxy', through identification of particular regions or occupation groups where minorities are concentrated, as particularly poor. It may also reflect the marginalisation of ethnic minorities and indigenous people from PRSP processes; in many cases, consultations occurred and information about the PRSP was disseminated in national languages, limiting the participation of poor people, and particularly women from ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples, whose fluency in national languages is often limited (Hughes, 2005).

3.2.9 Geographically based disaggregation:

Distinguishing between rural and urban poverty

In all these PRSPs, the quantitative data presented is disaggregated by rural and urban areas.²⁴ One of the most comprehensive, Burkina Faso's PRSP, disaggregates poverty headcount, depth and severity data by rural and urban areas, as well as by region and agro-climatic zone (2004:17-18). Most of these PRSPs find that severe and deep poverty is concentrated in rural areas. For example, Bolivia's EBRP recognises high levels of extreme poverty in the rural zones where indigenous people, and other groups who suffer acute social

²³ Such as, for example, Senegal (Hughes, 2005).

²⁴ In Tanzania's NSGRP, this is the only disaggregation of quantitative data.



exclusion, live. This PRSP additionally recognises the interconnections between rural and urban areas, as part of livelihood and households strategies to manage risk.

Identifying spatial poverty traps

Some PRSPs (including Bolivia, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Vietnam, and Zambia) have made significant efforts to go further than broad urban-rural analysis. Geographical disparities are presented on a number of different variables: inequality, infant mortality and malnutrition, population, natural resources and infrastructure. Sri Lanka’s VSAD also provides a combined ranking of districts based on income and human development indicators. In some PRSPs, identification of certain areas as particularly poor is linked to analysis of why this is the case: typically, agro-ecology (e.g. Burkina Faso), limited integration with national economies (e.g. Vietnam, Albania) and conflict (Sierra Leone, Uganda).

People living in spatial poverty traps often go unnoticed in policy processes because of difficulties in counting and collecting accurate statistics in remote or difficult terrain and in reaching marginalised groups. In Sri Lanka, for example household surveys from the mid-1990s have been unable to reach the Northern and Eastern provinces because of the conflict. The lack of data concerning these areas is discussed in the PRSP and the higher levels of poverty acknowledged. Where data is available, it can assist policy makers in identifying particularly significant pockets of poverty and/or regions where poverty is prevalent and may require specific targeting. The poverty maps presented in Cambodia’s NPRS, for example, provide the basis for detailed geographical targeting. This contrasts with the approach taken in Tanzania’s NGPRS, which, rather than identifying particular districts as poor, simply talks of ‘disadvantaged areas’.

Several of these PRSPs do identify spatial poverty traps, as outlined in Table 8 below:

Table 8: Spatial poverty traps identified in selected PRSPs

PRSP	Spatial poverty traps	Detail
Bolivia	Rural municipalities of the high plateau (<i>altiplano</i>) Low lands of the East	Many indigenous people live, scattered communities, difficult to access and poorly integrated centres and services
Senegal	Central, South and North East provinces	
Sierra Leone	Bombali district	Six out of 10 people living in extreme poverty
Sri Lanka	North and East	Poverty known to be higher as result of war.
Uganda	North and East regions	Marked decline in living standards in last 3 years esp. in East; Child and infant mortality much worse in conflict-affected North.
Vietnam	Northern, upland and ethnic minority areas.	Weakly integrated with national economy.
Zambia	Eastern, Luapula, Northern, Western provinces; areas located away from main rail line. ‘High’ and ‘low’ cost areas distinguished.	High levels of extreme poverty, relatively smaller pop sizes though so not highest numbers of poor



3.3 How far is Poverty Analysis Linked To Causal Analysis?

Although, as we have seen, there is limited explicit identification of chronic poverty *per se*, most PRSPs identify many of the groups most at risk of chronic poverty as vulnerable. Several recent reports argue that PRSPs' analysis of causes is often limited to discussion of the correlates of poverty (World Bank and IMF, 2005; World Vision, 2005). This section examines how far these PRSPs identify causes of poverty, and whether factors often underpinning chronic poverty are discussed, using the framework of drivers (idiosyncratic causes) and maintainers (structural causes) of chronic poverty outlined in Section 2.

PRSPs identify a range of causes of poverty. Those from Tanzania's NGPRS listed in Table 1 are representative of other PRSPs; the main additional maintainer of poverty identified was geographical isolation and lack of integration with national (or international) economies; the main other driver of poverty identified was conflict. Several of these PRSPs also view lack of access to and low quality services – in the social and agricultural sectors, in particular – as underpinning poverty.

Table 9: Major categories of impoverishing factors from Tanzanian PPA (2002/3)

Category	Description
Environment	Weather extremes (e.g. flooding, drought), stresses from gradual degrading of forest, soils, fisheries, and pastures; health effects and loss of confidence in future well-being
Macroeconomic conditions	National economic decisions such as privatisation, elimination of subsidies on inputs, cost sharing in health, reduced spending on agricultural services, employment, rural livelihoods, costs and access to social services
Governance	Coercion, extortion, all forms of corruption, unsatisfactory taxation (multiple taxation, coercive tax collection methods); political exclusion
Ill-health	Ill-health, risks and social marginalisation resulting from one's age, with the old, youths and children being particularly vulnerable to special problems
Lifecycle linked conditions	
Cultural beliefs and practices	Impoverishment resulting from cultural norms/traditional beliefs, diminishing their freedom of choice and action – e.g. those discriminating against women and children

A word search survey provides a very rough indication of the emphasis of analysis. The search terms chosen in our survey to identify *maintainers* were 'social exclusion', 'remote' and 'discrimination'. We chose 'shock', 'disaster' and 'risk' to represent *drivers*. We also used 'vulnerability' as an indicator of a *driver*, but acknowledge that the discussion around vulnerability is often articulated in terms of what makes people vulnerable and can therefore be construed as a maintainer as well. 'Vulnerability' is a common term in nearly all PRSP. We note a generally lower occurrence of terms that represent *maintainers* compared to those chosen to represent *drivers* (see Table 1). There are some exceptions (e.g. Bolivia) where perhaps the nature and understanding of poverty is widely accepted to be structural (e.g. in Bolivia associated with ethnicity and remoteness). While this analysis is highly limited, it implies that the structural causes of poverty are less well articulated in PRSPs, which may reflect the fact that structural causes are socially and politically embedded, more difficult to isolate and policy responses are less clear.



Table 10: Identifying the causes of poverty

Search terms for 'maintainers' and 'drivers'	PRSPs ²⁵														
	Albania	Bangladesh	Bolivia	Burkina Faso	Cambodia	Ethiopia	Mozambique	Nicaragua	Senegal	Sierra Leone	Sri Lanka	Tanzania	Uganda	Vietnam	Zambia
Vulnerability	15	10	10	64	92	67	21	35	52	28	41	42	10	31	4
Vulnerable		5	17				20	59		62		10 4	37		39
Shock	8	18	19	6	3	31	3	2	1	25	15	12	8	10	4
Disaster	1	18 4	28	1	3	22	23	9	4	1	11	15	57	43	3
Risk	36	14 2	41	65	16	34	27	48	6	39	57	17	30	31	21
Social exclusion	7	1	31	9	7	0	1	2	1	0	2	0	1	0	0
Exclusion	8	4	33	10	14	0	1	4	6	2	3	9	1	3 ²⁶	3
Remote	22	23	5	2	28	3	1	1	3	6	24	0	7	74	7
Discrimination	3	25 27	10	8	6	1	2	3	1 ²⁸	5	21	13	4	3	2

3.3.1 *Maintainers of Poverty:*

The following factors are identified in this set of PRSPs as key structural causes underlying poverty:

The structure of the economy and economic reforms

All PRSPs emphasise the centrality of the economy in potentially reducing poverty. In general, PRSPs identify macroeconomic issues as major underlying causes of poverty, but do not tend to relate the situation of particular groups to the macro-economy. Nor are the commonly reported inequality statistics developed into a socio-political analysis of unequal distribution as a direct cause of poverty. Most commonly, low or stagnated levels of growth (and in some cases, negative growth e.g. Sierra Leone in the 1990s), underpinned by low productivity are seen as critical causes. Uganda's PEAP is unusual in viewing inequality as restricting investment and therefore growth. Though it does not go as far as to examine the relative impact of growth on specific groups, Bolivia's PRSP is candid about the fact that growth in the 1990s was skewed toward capital intensive sectors and relatively high-income regions. Similarly, Vietnam's CPRGS acknowledges that growth has benefited the rich more than poor being insufficiently broad-based, so that women, older people and the less educated are least likely to get new jobs.

²⁵ Pakistan and Benin not included as documents are not searchable

²⁶ but all refs relate to trade policy, not social exclusion.

²⁷ Primarily discrimination against women.

²⁸ 'prejudice' against disabled people also discussed.



Many PRSPs analyse employment status or livelihoods as characteristics of poverty, and in some cases this is developed into stronger causal analysis. For example, labour market participation, and access to land and other productive assets are identified as important causes of poverty (e.g. Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Vietnam, Zambia). Persistent poverty is linked in Bolivia's EBRP to poor market access in rural areas, and inadequate insertion in labour markets in urban areas, while in Vietnam's CGPRS, the poor are seen as stuck in low profitability activities as they lack opportunities to employ more profitable production strategies and access to production enhancing services (e.g. extension), credit and information more generally. Where economies have experienced major transformations, as in Albania's transition to a market economy, or declines, as in Zambia's mining sector, the role of these changes in generating unemployment and poverty are noted.

Politics and governance:

All PRSPs mention poor governance as a cause of poverty, though some (e.g. Cambodia) develop this much more than others. Perhaps reflecting the PRSP's 'technical' status, none present any thorough political analysis. The roles of bad governance, corruption and limited access to the legal system and justice and their effects on poor people are much discussed (e.g. in Tanzania, Cambodia, Zambia, Vietnam). Much weight is given to the findings of Tanzania's PPA findings on vulnerabilities created by 'wrong policies and effects on environment' and 'bad governance and the macro economy'. Weak access to information on government decision-making and policies is cited as impacting badly on the poor in Cambodia's NPRSP. A brief paragraph in Zambia's PRSP discusses issues related to the misdirection of resources, such as government mismanagement. At its extremes, poor governance and political instability can lead to conflict – this is discussed with drivers of poverty

Service delivery and social spending failures:

Inadequate service provision - particularly in the social sectors, and also in agriculture - itself caused by poor governance and inadequate financing, is viewed by several of these PRSPs as an important factor contributing to poverty cycles. Uganda's PEAP, for example, relates the much lower access to and uptake of services by the lower income quintiles to their ongoing poverty. In Senegal's PRSP, this lower uptake is related to biases in public spending – for example, health expenditure is concentrated in three better off regions, while social transfers have not benefited the poor. Vietnam's CPRGS views lack of education as a critical cause of intergenerational poverty cycles - leading to lack of 'wise decisions' about education, child rearing, child delivery etc. The CPRGS also notes the cyclical nature of cause and effect - the role of malnutrition in undermining educational enrolment and achievement is particularly identified.

Most PRSPs outline the ways in which specific groups' access to services is limited – for example, problems faced by unregistered migrants in accessing services are identified in Vietnam's CGPRS. Albania's NSSD notes the lack of financial support to rural older people to replace the role formerly played by agricultural cooperatives is noted; and Burkina Faso PRSP is frank about the failure of some sectoral policies, e.g. microfinance, to reach the poorest and limit their capacity to move out of poverty. As well as framing these problems as



governance issues, a number of PRSPs also relate service deficiencies to national debt (e.g. Senegal and Zambia).

Exclusion and discrimination

Most PRSPs identify aspects of exclusion and discrimination as causes of poverty. Following the identification of vulnerable groups discussed earlier, discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, disability and HIV status are all cited as causes of poverty. Sri Lanka's VSAD, like Nepal's Tenth Plan, also highlights caste as a factor leading to social exclusion. In its description of the conditions of the urban ultra-poor and of estate workers of Indian Tamil origin, Sri Lanka's VSAD also highlights the role of residence in a poor neighbourhood without functioning services and amenities in perpetuating exclusion. In several PRSPs, crime and exclusion are linked – excluded, impoverished people are viewed as more likely to engage in crime (Sri Lanka, Albania, Senegal, for example).

Few PRSPs look in detail at these issues. However, in some cases, exclusion is fundamental to the analysis of poverty, often linked to governance and powerlessness. For example, social exclusion is defined in Cambodia's NPRS as the barriers preventing the poor from fully participating in the mainstream of the society, due to such factors as illiteracy, lack of access to decision-making and the law, discrimination on the basis of gender and ethnicity, and corruption. In Bolivia, the high correlation between poor households and minority language speaking among household heads is presented as indicative of the presence of a high degree of discrimination and probably segregation as well, manifested in particular by lower educational opportunities, and access to social services and the labour market among the indigenous population. Efforts have been made to measure social exclusion in Albania NSED – using indicators on mortality rate, dropout levels and income-related poverty. A social exclusion index was prepared using a point system using official data which fed into a 'social exclusion map'.

Geography

Although location is used extensively as a disaggregating variable, it is mainly through discussion of spatial poverty traps that it informs analysis of the causes of poverty. See Section 3.1 above for further details. Bangladesh's NSAPR, one of the few PRSPs to identify chronic poverty directly, links the persistence of chronic poverty to unfavourable agricultural environments, such as salinity-prone, flood-prone, river erosion-prone, and drought-prone areas. In Bolivia's EBRP and Vietnam's CGPRS, geographical features, including different natural resource endowment levels, and road infrastructure investments, are part of the causal analysis accounting for different poverty levels. Vietnam's CPRGS also, unusually, mentions the role of inadequate or biased state investments. Generally, however, there is limited discussion of geographical factors, perhaps because geographical factors are often overlain by other social, economic and political processes. Environmental vulnerability, which clearly is geographically related, is discussed below among 'drivers' of poverty.

Socio-cultural maintainers of poverty

Socio-cultural causes of poverty are discussed in a limited way in these PRSPs. This may reflect a reluctance to appear to be blaming poor people for their poverty, and also a lack of



the relevant social analysis (this seems to be the case in Burkina Faso's PRSP, for example, which does not address vulnerability arising from kinship structures, in particular polygamy, despite identifying it as a poverty correlate).

This said, most PRSPs explicitly mention several culturally-related issues. Tanzania's NSGRP talks of impoverishment resulting from cultural norms/traditional beliefs that diminish freedom of choice and action particularly of women and children, while gender based discrimination is often mentioned (e.g. Uganda, Senegal). A major cultural maintainer identified through qualitative research with women in male-headed households in Uganda is alcohol use and abuse among men. Breaking up the household can however bring increased vulnerability. Usury and divorce are cited as maintainers of poverty in Senegal's PRSP. Other social ills cited, usually drawing on PPAs, include drug addiction (Cambodia) and laziness (Sierra Leone), and disunity or social tensions (Sierra Leone, Pakistan).

3.3.2 Drivers of Poverty

In this section, we focus on PRSPs' analysis of vulnerability to shocks and crises. Though these affect both chronically and short-term poor people, the impacts are often more severe for chronically poor people, as interlocking structural disadvantages prevent them from bouncing back after a shock. These PRSPs emphasise environmental, economic and health shocks, and we find many references to each. For example, Sierra Leone's PRSP highlights shocks related to global prices (exports), dependence on aid, illnesses among breadwinners, and seasonal factors as key causes of poverty. In countries affected by conflict, the role of conflict in driving poverty is understandably given prominence.

Environmental shocks include those related to natural disasters, especially floods and drought (e.g. Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Vietnam), particularly where these intersect with other agro-climatic factors, soil degradation, and attacks by pests. Shocks related to environmental degradation associated with growth are also mentioned in Uganda's PEAP. Several countries specify actions to reduce industrial pollution, suggesting that this is also considered an important cause of ill-being. Ethiopia's SDPRP unusually highlights the vulnerability of urban households to climatic shocks, which may reflect their limited access to assets such as land and livestock.

The discussion of health shocks includes both the impacts of breadwinner illness and that of the costs of treating other household members' illnesses. Uganda's PEAP explicitly links chronic poverty to temporary ill-health which disrupts households and can make a permanent change in the household's ability to raise income. Links between ill-health, crippling health care costs and broader issues of access to services are also flagged in Vietnam's CPRGS and Cambodia's NPRS. Cambodia's NPRS draws on the PPA to make the point graphically: *"Malaria-carrying mosquitoes bit two children of mine. I spent all of my money on treating their illness, but it did not work. ... Eventually they died, and now I have neither my two children nor any money"* (2001: 26) Finally, Albania's NSSD discusses the ways in which environmental and health shocks reinforce one another, leading to divestment of assets, and making escape from poverty even less likely.

Economic shocks, principally those related to terms of trade for commodity exports, are also identified as precipitating sharp declines into poverty. Examples include coffee (Ethiopia),



and cocoa, coffee, and the minerals bauxite and rutile (Sierra Leone). Given the strong policy emphasis on international trade as a route out of poverty (see Section 4) complementary measures to reduce vulnerability to trade shocks would appear important for preventing declines into chronic poverty. Senegal's PRSP also cites micro-level persistent economic crises at household level as a driver of destitution, particularly if no help is provided from public authorities or society. This, in turn can lead to violent crime (increased juvenile delinquency), begging, prostitution, child labour and further environmental deterioration.

Conflict is identified as a driver of poverty in all the PRSPs from conflict-affected countries. Sri Lanka's VSAD argues that the effects of the conflict have far reaching economic, social, and psychological repercussions that extend beyond the 'theatre of battle', many of which contribute to poverty. These include: displacement, restricted mobility in some areas of the country, disruption of local economies, and community and institutional networks, and widespread vulnerability and insecurity within the locality. While rigorous data are scarce, the Ugandan PEAP acknowledges that studies have shown alarmingly high rates of malnutrition in the refugee camps many people have to live in. These PRSPs rarely discuss the causes of conflict in detail – understandably, perhaps, since these are often taken for granted. However, Nepal's Tenth Plan links the conflict to structural underdevelopment in particular regions, and Sierra Leone's PRSP mentions the role of weak governance, widespread corruption, marginalisation and disempowerment of the rural communities in fuelling conflict.

Despite their role in precipitating long-term poverty, these shocks are rarely linked systematically to the structural factors that underpin them. For example, Senegal's PRSP talks of 'natural factors' such as droughts, coastal erosion and salinisation of the soil, and 'natural processes', such as death, retirement or loss of employment of the principal income-earner, and physical incapacity resulting from old age of a disabling sickness. Being conceptualised as 'natural' occurrences may inhibit policy responses that address structural issues, rather than simply the immediate precipitating causes.

3.4 Monitoring PRSP Performance on Poverty Reduction

The PRSPs we examined broadly divide into those which present substantial detail on monitoring systems and indicators (e.g. Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Pakistan, Tanzania, Uganda), and those which largely emphasise future plans (e.g. Albania, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Zambia). Most PRSPs however indicate quite substantial discussion of future intent. In most cases we find that well-developed poverty analysis is currently weakly reflected in the choice of monitoring indicators. This is a pragmatic reflection of both monitoring capacity in many countries (see Section 5.6) and data limitations. Sri Lanka's VSAD, for example, commits to integrating qualitative insights through PPAs, but currently lacks relevant annual data, while conflict in the North and East has seriously affected data collection in these areas.

Monitoring indicators tend to be MDG-based (See Table 1), plus some input and process indicators. For example, Zambia's PRSP monitoring indicators were chosen to enable monitoring progress on MDGs and include: poverty headcount, poverty depth, percentage of food secure households, life expectancy at birth and percentage of under 5s immunised, literacy rates, HIV/AIDS incidence, access to services and various growth related indicators.



In some cases there are also other indicators of special national/local relevance, reflecting regional imbalances or specific sector developments.

Table 11: Poverty monitoring indicators

Country PRSP	Includes chronic poverty/poverty	Includes chronic malnutrition or	Follows MDGs	Includes disaggregated monitoring indicators:					
				Quintile	Rural/urban	District or province	Age	Gender	Ethnicity
Albania (NSSED, 2001)	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	1	0
Bangladesh (NSAPR, 2005)	0	0	2	0	2	1	2	2	0
Bolivia (EBRP, 2001)	0	0	2	0	1	0	2	2	2
Burkina Faso (PRSP, 2004)	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	1	0
Cambodia (NPRS, 2002)	0	1	2	1	2	0	1	1	1
Ethiopia (SDPRP, 2002)	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0
Pakistan (AGPRS, 2003)	0	1	2	0	0	1	2	2	0
Senegal (PRSP, 2002)	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0
Sierra Leone (PRSP, 2005)	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sri Lanka (VSAD, 2002)	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	1	1
Tanzania (NSGRP, 2005)	0	0	2	0	2	1	2	2	0
Uganda (PEAP, 2005)	0	1	2	0	2	1	0	2	1
Vietnam (CPRGS, 2002)	0	0	2	1	2	0	1	2	2
Zambia (PRSP, 2002)	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0



Key: 0 – not mentioned at all; 1 – mentioned but not in detail; 2 – covered in some detail)

3.5 How far does PRSP monitoring address chronic poverty?

PRSPs usually draw on aggregate indicators (such as per capita growth, poverty headcount, etc).²⁹ These are sometimes disaggregated to rural and urban areas (e.g. Bangladesh, Cambodia, Tanzania, Uganda) and provinces (e.g. Burkina Faso), or there is an intention to do so (e.g. Albania). This effort towards disaggregation is supported by the PRSP Sourcebook, which argues the need for disaggregated indicators in terms of location, gender, income level and social group in order to ‘design good policies and programmes’. While we would agree with this position we also recognise Booth and Lucas’ caution against making excessive demands on limited statistical resources (2002:15).

3.5.1 Poverty trends

Several PRSPs aim to monitor trends in poverty depth and related issues. For example, Bolivia’s EBRP and Tanzania’s NGPRS state that they will monitor extreme poverty, and Bangladesh’s NSAPR intends to monitor the access of the ultra-poor to micro-credit. Vietnam’s CPRGS monitors the percentage of poor households escaping from poverty, poverty depth and the share of consumption of poorest 20 per cent. Cambodia’s NPRS discusses an intention to monitor poverty sensitivity.

Some PRSPs also monitor trends in inequality. For example, Vietnam’s CPRGS aims to monitor the relative school enrolment of ethnic minorities compared with Kinh children, and child mortality rate and malnutrition rates, disaggregated by gender and ethnicity. Cambodia’s NPRS plans to monitor the richest-poorest quintile ratio of under five mortality.

Disaggregating indicators by gender is common (particularly in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Pakistan, Tanzania, and Uganda). Bangladesh’s NSAPR has a whole section dedicated to monitoring indicators of women’s empowerment, although gender disaggregation is not applied systematically across all indicators.

By contrast, other than those mentioned above from Vietnam, there are very few ethnicity based indicators. Cambodia’s NPRS does disaggregate educational achievements by ethnicity, although no targets are set in the NPRS. Sri Lanka’s VSAD includes just one weak indicator - monitoring the introduction of social harmony programmes in secondary and tertiary education curriculum. Vietnam’s CPRGS however has a set of indicators for attaining its objective 8: improve living standards, preserve and develop ethnic minority cultures. These include monitoring the rate of ethnic minority language illiteracy, the rate of ethnic minority peoples with land-use right titles for all forms of land-use, the rate of ethnic minority peoples leading nomadic life and the percentage of ethnic minority peoples working in governing bodies at various levels.

Age based indicators are more likely to reflect children than older people, which few of the PRSPs examined plan to do. In Tanzania, however, although measurable indicators aren’t

²⁹ As well as reflecting data availability and statistical capacity, the choice of indicator may not be as arbitrary as could be assumed, but rather reflect the needs of meeting HIPC and PRGS commitments. Booth and Lucas (2002) would argue for separating out these processes.



yet developed, the targets for social protection and support to vulnerable groups include orphans and vulnerable children, including children with disabilities, as well as older people. A set of child wellbeing specific indicators is outlined in Pakistan's PRSP. These include child labour, and children as victims of violence, juvenile justice and HIV. Mostly, however, the child indicators relate to education and on occasion to immunisation, which is unsurprising considering the prominence of the MDG indicators. Other monitoring of vulnerable groups includes plans to monitor the conditions of internally displaced people in camps in Uganda.

While we would broadly support efforts towards enhanced monitoring of multidimensional poverty outcomes, we return to the warning provided by Booth and Lucas (2002) that weaknesses in administrative systems seriously impinge on what can and should be usefully monitored.³⁰ Using the example of regional disaggregation, for example, they argue for great care in relying on data produced by low quality administrations in the poorer areas. Optimism for disaggregation needs to be treated with caution, and efforts directed to supporting statistical capacity both in the longer term and through short term 'quick and dirty' data collection exercises.

3.5.2 Monitoring of policies to tackle chronic or severe poverty

Bangladesh's NSAPR has thorough policy monitoring indicators, notably covering food security, credit and social protection goals. Similarly, Cambodia's NPRS monitors the numbers of people in the safety net programme, although this is not disaggregated, as does Pakistan's food programme. Tanzania's NSGRP social protection indicator is intended to establish a vulnerable groups database at different levels of government and the social protection programmes targets orphans, children with disabilities, and older people. Similarly, there are plans for ensuring free medical care to older people through the provision of identity cards, although monitoring indicators are not developed in the NSGRP. In most cases, monitoring relies on final outcome indicators, although often only weakly developed, rather than any process indicators.

Booth and Lucas (2002: 16) argue that the discussion of indicators needs to be driven by a discussion of strategy. This demands a realistic view of policy processes, which treats PRSP monitoring not as a technical exercise but as a fundamentally political one, and accepts the need for a systematic and rigorous handling of all the steps required to reach specific PRSP goals (the 'missing middle'). They warn against over-reliance on indicators and argue for broader relevant information, including proxy indicators for policy design and implementation.

The Uganda JSA (2005) commends the innovative results matrix in the PEAP, which identify both outcome indicators, alongside identified challenges, baseline statistics and projected targets. The Poverty Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy (PMES) is housed in Office of the Prime Minister and offers a harmonising framework for multiple existing systems currently operating in Uganda.³¹ Booth and Lucas (2002) argue that PRSP commitments are only viable when clearly carried through to decisions about resource allocations and that a key

³⁰ They argue too that fundamental obstacles to using routine data (such as its unreliability) are worryingly not even acknowledged in PRSPs or even JSAs (ibid, 2002:5)

³¹ See www.povertymonitoring.go.tz for the Tanzanian Poverty Monitoring System.



step in outcome-oriented budget reform is the establishment of a Medium Term Expenditure Framework (see Section 5.3 for a discussion of how well PRSPs are managing this). This implies a much stronger emphasis on input indicators than is currently found in most PRSPs, as well as process indicators.

Innovative approaches to developing monitoring tools are key to filling current gaps. Booth and Lucas (2002:3) argue that, just as the PRSP initiative is itself distinct and ambitious, so too should monitoring be correspondingly innovative, citing examples such as participatory beneficiary assessments, self assessments and focus group methods, exit polls, and light weight service-delivery surveys.³² We found few examples of this actually articulated in PRSPs. In Uganda, the PMES maintains a district endowment profile database and an initiative is underway to set up client score cards (PEAP, 2005: 216). Booth and Lucas present a practical response to current data limitations, which, if tied to real allocations, would also go some way to rectifying current lack of demand for poverty information and its application.

3.5.3 Towards more effective monitoring of chronic poverty

Most countries hook PRSP monitoring into other monitoring processes, such as MDG progress reviews. This is clearly sensible in ‘killing two birds with one stone’ and reducing potentially burdensome reporting requirements. As far as monitoring trends in chronic poverty is concerned, we would argue that MDG indicators provide a partial picture - they are helpful, but insufficient. A fuller treatment of chronic poverty would include reporting trends in proportions of people in long-term income poverty (assuming data allows this), and more systematic disaggregation of a few priority indicators by age, and disability, as well as the more established gender, ethnicity and location. Desirable though this is, we need to be realistic about the limitations in many countries.

Other than arguing for greater disaggregation of poverty outcome indicators and concurring with the arguments put forward for increased recognition of the role for input and process indicators, are there specific chronic poverty indicators that would provide sufficient proxies for progress on poverty duration? Would considering chronic malnutrition or food insecurity be a good enough proxy for chronic poverty? Baulch and Masset (2002) found from a 2 period household panel that monetary poverty was less persistent than malnutrition among adults and stunting among children in Vietnam during the 1990s. This study showed that the overlap between the chronically poor using defined using different indicators was limited. While this is just a single study and covers just one period in one country, this finding indicates our knowledge about the usefulness of proxy indicators remains limited.

It is vital to avoid overloading monitoring systems with demands for data that will not be used – being strategic about monitoring is vital for those aiming to promote the interests of marginalised people within PRSPs, and avoiding creating a ‘tick-box’ situation where in

³² They also identify corresponding accountability roles for ‘new’ stakeholders, such as FM radio stations and other mass media. They suggest turning PRSP implementation issues into ‘news’, through publication of regular poverty status reports, briefings and press releases, as concurrent activities that can affect the way officials and departments behave and, crucially, use poverty information (2002:39).



theory, data on certain groups are collected but then paid no attention. As Pakistan's AGPRS asserts, 'monitoring should not become an end in itself. The real issue is effective follow up and implementing remedial measures and the reinforcement of accountability for results' (2003:4).³³ We would agree, recognising that achieving this will require substantial changes in incentive structures among those charged with implementation, as well as some of the institutional changes and reforms discussed in Section 5.

3.6 Discussion/conclusions to Section 3

This section has illustrated considerable depth of poverty analysis in PRSPs. However, few PRSPs frame this analysis within a discussion of poverty dynamics. Only four of the 18 PRSPs examined here analyse long-term, persistent or chronic poverty, and despite wide-ranging commitments to children, only three PRSPs explicitly or implicitly mention intergenerational transmission of poverty. Most, by contrast, differentiate extremely poor or destitute people from other poor people, and many present quantitative data indicating the depth and severity of income poverty. Partly this reflects the absence of relevant panel data, which is being remedied over time in many poor countries. However, very little qualitative information on long-term poverty is also included, suggesting that poverty persistence is not yet sufficiently embedded on policy makers' 'radar screens' as a key problem. We argue that this may be because it is harder to conceptualise and respond to the embedded relationships and institutions that perpetuate poverty, and politically harder to assist the structurally, and often discriminated, poor than to 'vulnerable groups', particularly children. This is most clearly witnessed in the lack of emphasis on ethnicity.

The building blocks of chronic poverty analysis are, however, apparent in most PRSPs. All indicate the multi-dimensional nature of poverty, implicitly or explicitly acknowledging the multiple disadvantages facing chronically poor people. Several PRSPs discuss the persistence of particular aspects of poverty, in particular chronic malnutrition and food insecurity, and also unemployment. All identify groups who are particularly vulnerable to poverty, on the basis of livelihoods and occupations, social exclusion, geographical location or as a result of specific shocks such as illness or conflict. Most identify a wide range of causes of poverty, both structural maintainers of poverty, and specific shocks which propel people (deeper) into poverty.

However, the depth of causal analysis varies even in later or second-round PRSPs, and in some cases, is only informed by limited social analysis. Though governance issues are discussed in all PRSPs, the details of political analysis are also generally absent. These twin biases, reflecting the dominance of economic analysis in thinking about poverty reduction, and the technocratic character of many PRSP processes serve to limit the depth of causal analysis. Potentially this also limits the range of thinkable policy options. In that tackling chronic poverty may require innovative policy thinking based on strong analysis, the quality of analysis in PRSPs is of policy significance, not simply of academic interest.

³³ The JSA of Pakistan's AGPRS notes a lack of specifics on institutional mechanisms for achieving this, however.



PRSP poverty monitoring largely responds to the MDGs. Indicators tend to be outcome/impact focused and aggregated to national levels. We concur with the argument that care is required in pursuing more disaggregation in monitoring indicators, both in terms of quality and capacity. However, we would argue for these discussions to remain on the table, while accepting that there still remains considerable work that needs to be done to determine 'good enough' indicators for chronic poverty. Certainly, a range of data and studies outside the formal monitoring system inform knowledge about chronic poverty (and feed into iterations of PRSPs as detailed in progress reports). There is scope to support this through other innovative information gathering.

It has been beyond the scope of this paper to look in depth at input and process monitoring, although some of these issues are explored in Section 5. Processes around implementation of the PRSP, including decision making processes around budget allocations, are absolutely key and need to be systematically and rigorously strategised. The extent to which this is happening should become the central focus for second stage empirical work.



4 Policy Choices in PRSPs

This section examines the policy choices laid out in this set of PRSPs that may impact on chronic poverty. It does not attempt a comprehensive analysis of all policies outlined in the PRSPs examined, nor does it assess any individual PRSP in terms of its likely impact on chronically poor people. Instead it notes common policy patterns in these PRSPs, and reviews policy choices in five areas which CPRC research has identified as critical for chronic poverty – economic policy, agriculture and rural development, health, education and social protection (CPRC, 2004). It thus concentrates on directly or indirectly redistributive policies of different kinds - broadly defined as those that seek to enhance the assets and opportunities of people who are often particularly at risk of chronic poverty, and thus have the potential to help overcome structural inequalities that maintain poverty. It also discusses policies that aim to stem drivers of poverty, in particular some aspects of health and social protection policies, actions to protect against natural disasters and actions to mitigate, contain or prevent conflict.

The second part of the section examines policies aiming to address social exclusion among specific vulnerable groups. Any review is selective and a number of issues with important implications for chronic poverty could be not examined in any depth. These include: governance, transport and communications, electrification, water and sanitation, housing, security and urban poverty. We touch on some of these issues in our discussions of other sectors and approaches, and certain governance issues are discussed in more depth in Section 5.

Where possible we have analysed how far policy priorities outlined in PRSP documents are carried through to action matrices and budgets. In general, we find consistency between the text and action matrices, unlike Whitehead (2003), for example, who found that commitments in the text were not necessarily carried through to action plans. There is substantial variation in the detail to which budgets are presented, and in most cases, analysis is limited to broad sectoral allocations.³⁴ These confirm the general observation (e.g. Driscoll with Evans, 2005; Shepherd and Fritz, 2005) that a substantial proportion of PRSP resources (sometimes around 50 per cent) are being spent on the social sectors. From the perspective of reducing chronic poverty, the assertion that this is problematic needs to be challenged and possibly qualified; the potential of the social sectors to help break cycles of chronic poverty is large, there is often substantial financing of actions that support the productive sectors (e.g. infrastructural and agricultural development), and the nature of the social sectors is that they are cash-intensive services that need recurrent financing. Examining this issue in more depth would be a useful contribution since the ‘overemphasis on social sectors’ has become a stylised fact in much PRSP analysis.

³⁴ The one exception of those we examined is Senegal’s PRSP which breaks down budget allocations on a sub-sectoral basis. This is highly revealing of priorities; more detailed budget analysis of this type is an important activity for the next phase of the research involving looking at other government financial planning documents and linking these to the PRSP.



All PRSPs draw, to a greater or lesser extent, on national sectoral plans and strategies. Ideally they are intended as a framework drawing these plans and strategies together, and using a poverty focus as a lens for prioritising them. This means that the full details of any given policy area are often to be found in national sectoral plans; the fact that details are not specified in a PRSP does not automatically mean that they are not developed. Nor does absence from a PRSP definitely mean that an issue is not addressed, though it does suggest that it is considered of minor importance. Conversely, the inclusion of an issue does not automatically mean it will be addressed.

A desk review of this nature cannot explain why particular PRSPs have taken the approaches they have; however, understanding why particular choices have been made is an important first step in understanding the spaces and opportunities for more pro-chronically poor policies. Potential influences on policy choices include: the framing of poverty and ways of responding to it within national political agendas³⁵ by both governments and their interlocutors; donors' conditionality, advice or lobbying, including their role in the production of strategy papers; and the findings from analyses of the causes and correlates of poverty and ways of tackling it. Of these, we can comment only on the latter. We recommend that the primary research examines all three areas.

4.1.1 *Relationship between poverty analysis and policy choices*

PRSPs are commonly criticised for inadequate linkages between (increasingly sophisticated) poverty analysis and policy choices. For example, the World Bank's 2005 review report argues that economic policies choices are, in most cases, only based to a limited extent on analysis of the sources of growth, and their potential to reduce poverty. Similarly Shepherd and Fritz (2005) suggest that rural development policy choices seem somewhat disconnected from sectoral and poverty analyses, drawing from a limited menu of policy options without apparently considering where they have failed to reduce poverty. Among these PRSPs, we found only three mentions of poverty and social impact analysis (PSIA) and all were planned – it was not possible to see how their findings had influenced policy (see Table 12 for details).³⁶ The World Bank/IMF (2005) review report is rather more upbeat about this, citing a number of examples of PSIA which have informed PRS policies, though it notes that further work is needed to institutionalise PSIA more deeply within PRSP processes. Though PSIA are of no use to chronically poor people if they do not engender pro-poor policy change, they are an increasingly accepted input into policy-making. If strategically chosen and conducted in a sufficiently inclusive manner, they could play an important role in advancing the interests of chronically poor people.

Table 12: PSIA planned or recommended

Country	PSIA mentioned in PRSP
Albania	Water sector reform (conducted)
Burkina Faso	Rural development strategy (recommended in JSA of 2003 Progress Report) (unclear if conducted or not)

³⁵ See for example, Piron with Evans (2004) for a summary of experience in Bolivia, Georgia, Uganda and Vietnam.

³⁶ Some countries plan reviews of particular sectors or policy options (e.g. Burkina Faso's PRSP mentions a planned study on increasing the effectiveness of public investment).



Cambodia	Trade strategy (planned)
Uganda	Land reforms to enhance property rights of poor (planned)
Vietnam	Distress land sales (JSA recommendation – not clear whether recommendation taken up)

For any generalisation about PRSPs, one can find counter-examples. Sierra Leone’s PRSP, one of the most recent, provides a detailed breakdown of historical and expected sources of growth and productive sector strategies are based on this. Pakistan’s PRSP presents an analysis of employment elasticities in different sectors and derives policy choices concerning the productive sectors from this. In one of the clearest linkages between poverty analyses and policy choices, Cambodia’s NPRS tabulates its analysis of the causes of poverty and examples of policies to tackle these. (See Table 13)

Table 13: Analysis of Causes and Policy Choices in Cambodia’s NPRS

Causes of Poverty (examples)	Government Policies to Address Poverty (examples)
<p>LACK OF OPPORTUNITIES Limited access of the poor to land Limited access of the poor to jobs</p> <p>Limited access of the poor to common resources</p> <p>Lack of infrastructure serving the poor</p>	<p>CREATING OPPORTUNITIES Land reform; Land titling; Mines clearance Rapid and balanced economic growth; Macro-economic stability; Trade; Private sector development; Pro-poor investments (e.g. to support eco-tourism) Community forestry and fisheries; Strengthened enforcement of environmental laws; Reduced population growth Rural roads; Mine clearance</p>
<p>VULNERABILITY Crop failure</p> <p>Violence against women, trafficking in women and children Child labour</p> <p>Risk of catastrophic health care costs</p> <p>Risk of HIV/AIDS infection</p> <p>Landmines and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO)</p>	<p>ENHANCING SECURITY Safety net programs (e.g. food for work programs); Improved irrigation and drainage; Improved crop varieties Judicial reform</p> <p>Scholarships for poor children to attend secondary school Effective exemption mechanisms and equity funds for the poor at government hospitals; Effective HIV/AIDS prevention Effective HIV/AIDS prevention; Empowerment of women Mine clearance; Mine/UXO clearance; Awareness education and Victim assistance</p>
<p>POOR CAPABILITIES Poor education</p> <p>Poor health</p> <p>Poor nutritional status (stunted growth)</p>	<p>STRENGTHENING CAPABILITIES Fee exemptions for children of the poor; Rural roads; Higher salaries for teachers and civil service reform Increased utilisation by the poor of cost-effective preventive health services; Higher salaries for health workers and civil service reform; Expanded access to safe water and sanitation; Rural roads Improved access for the poor to cost-effective preventive health interventions; Nutrition</p>



	education (as part of basic education programs for adults)
<p>SOCIAL EXCLUSION Specially vulnerable populations (e.g. orphans, homeless, female-headed households) Women and ethnic minorities</p> <p>Lack of participation</p>	<p>EMPOWERING THE POOR Special programs for education, training and rehabilitation; Social safety nets Improved access to government health and education services; Appointment of women and ethnic minorities to key decision-making positions Expanded coverage of Village Development Committees</p>

Since, as we have seen in Section 3, very few PRSPs identify chronically poor people, it is not surprising that none talk about policy for specifically tackling chronic poverty, except perhaps Bangladesh. However, all PRSPs identify groups among whom poverty is concentrated, or who are particularly vulnerable to poverty, and accordingly outline both general and group-specific policies for reducing poverty. Where poverty is strongly associated with certain livelihoods, such as fishing or small-scale farming, or pastoralism – i.e. where it is possible to take a sectoral approach - PRSPs contain often fairly detailed strategies for improving wellbeing, as they do in two key sectors for human development – health and education. Focusing resources on disadvantaged regions to address spatial poverty traps is another common response, and in some cases, multi-sectoral responses to shocks such as natural disasters are detailed. Where social inequalities are at the root of poverty, PRSPs are much less comprehensive, with some issues getting very limited consideration (such as old age poverty), and some PRSPs paying very little attention to social vulnerabilities, though in most cases, particular vulnerable groups are identified, and at least one specific action per group outlined to improve their situation. Sri Lanka’s PRSP is unusual in this set in outlining a specific set of policies for the ‘ultra-poor’,³⁷ though Ethiopia’s intended safety net for destitute people who cannot be economically active has a similar focus.

It is also obvious, but worth stating, that issues that are disregarded in poverty analysis have little chance of being addressed systematically through policies and programmes – at best they will be partially addressed by happy accidents. One example of this is polygamy in West Africa – a number of analyses suggest that junior (or less favoured) wives and their children are much more likely to experience poverty than senior (or more favoured) wives. However, among the West African PRSPs we examined, this issue was only mentioned in Sierra Leone; as a result none of the others discuss potential ways of addressing this problem. Some observers, such as Eyben (2004), focusing specifically on gender, and World Vision (2005) in a wider argument suggest that the current mode of analysis which derives policy agendas largely from poverty correlates tends to obscure the operation of power relations, and leads to de-historicised, de-politicised technical policy agendas, which are at risk of failing because they are insufficiently contextualised.

³⁷ Bangladesh does this to a lesser degree by hooking into NGO credit programmes.



While many policy choices outlined in PRSPs appear to select rather blunt instruments for complex problems, arguably, as observed earlier, PRSPs should be at approximately this level of generality, with the details of specific choices and modes of implementation left for local decision-making. This, of course, implies a level of optimism about participatory local arrangements that may or may not be warranted, particularly where chronically poor people are concerned. How far this is in fact the case, and how the choices made are impacting on chronically poor people is an important issue for investigation.

4.2 Common patterns and approaches

The sets of policy choices outlined in this set of PRSPs can broadly be classified into: enabling actions which either set the framework for, or contribute to the effectiveness of other policies; policies aiming to include and benefit poor people but not exclusively targeted at them; and policies directly targeted at poor people. In all three categories, some actions relate principally to tackling the structural ‘maintainers’ of poverty (such as improving infrastructure so that people living in remote areas can access markets), some to preventing vulnerabilities driving people into poverty (such as action to protect people from natural disasters), and many to both at the same time (for example, accessible health care which can both prevent an illness driving people into poverty and can help people build up human capital for breaking out of poverty).

Enabling actions include macroeconomic and structural economic reforms, governance and institutional reforms, legislation in a range of areas and capacity building of various actors, especially the civil service to fulfil policy commitments and deliver services. Of these, economic policy reforms are discussed in Section 4.2, legislation is discussed within the context of particular themes, and aspects of governance and capacity development issues are examined in Section 5 since they are critical to PRSP implementation. Booth (2005a) has argued with reference to agriculture that PRSPs tend to shy away from enabling reforms – often reducing the role of government – in favour of those where there is a public expenditure role. Our review of PRSP *content* does not confirm this in agriculture or other areas of action. Whether PRSP *implementation* prioritises the relatively easier ‘spending’ actions over what may be more difficult reforms is an important empirical question for CPRC’s primary research since the implications for chronically poor people may be profound.

4.2.1 Inclusive/sectoral policies.

These are the bedrock of anti-poverty actions in most PRSPs. They aim to stimulate growth and employment opportunities which will benefit poor people (but not exclusively) and provide services that will benefit poor people and others. Examples include microenterprise support programmes, expanded vocational training programmes and improving the quality of primary and secondary education. Though it is often argued that PRSPs neglect actions in the productive sectors and give too great an emphasis to social sector programmes, we, like Shepherd and Fritz *et al.* (2005), do not find this charge justified in first or second generation PRSPs; both contain an extensive set of policies in both areas.

Direct, targeted support to redistribute assets or income (e.g. through cash transfers and land reform), address specific obstacles faced by poor people (e.g. through training, or information, education and communication (IEC)), and enhance their access to services (e.g.



through fee waivers, or by additional resources to services mainly used by poor people or in areas where poor people are concentrated). All PRSPs have programmes in these areas; asset redistribution is the least common. Several PRSPs, including Mozambique's PARPA and Nepal's Tenth Plan, point out the vital complementarity between inclusive mainstream policies and direct, targeted action for reducing the poverty of the most disadvantaged.

These PRSPs take two main approaches to targeting or focusing resources on poor people, geographical/spatial targeting, and categorical targeting (focusing resources on specific vulnerable groups). Several PRSPs state that they will focus resources and actions in particularly disadvantaged regions or provinces (for example Mozambique, Nepal, Vietnam and Burkina Faso); and in all strategies there is a substantial focus on rural poverty. Categorical targeting is also common and used as a tool to reach both vulnerable social groups (e.g. Nepal) and particular occupational groups e.g. growers of particular crops. Finally, the cash transfer programmes mentioned in Zambia's, Sri Lanka's and Albania's PRSPs may well be means-tested, i.e. financially targeted, though this is not made explicit.

Targeted approaches are justified in terms of their cost effectiveness and as a way of making public spending more progressive. For example, Zambia's PRSP argues,

“On education and health, the policy of supplying free basic services to all goes a long way to providing safety nets for human development. This is augmented by additional targeted support (e.g. education bursary schemes) for those who need but cannot afford services that are not free. Again, not every need can be covered but Zambia recognises that unlike after independence when she had the money, she can no longer afford to provide universal free education and health” (GoZ, 2002: 32).

Whether targeting of particular activities and support is effective in redressing inequalities and helping people escape poverty, or whether it results in poor quality programmes with little political support, and stigmatised participants, and cost more to administer than universal services, as detractors claim (Mkandawire, 2005), are important empirical questions for the primary research phase.

4.2.2 Sectoral and Thematic Approaches

Some of the earliest PRSPs, such as Tanzania's and Burkina Faso's first PRSPs, tended to structure policies and programmes around priority sectors. If an activity did not fall within the priority sector framework, it was likely to be marginalised. As Marshall with Ofei-Aboagye (2004) found in Tanzania, the prioritisation of health, education, agriculture and roads, for example, left the Ministry of Social Welfare, whose responsibilities included a range of vulnerable groups, including children, older and disabled people, with diminished political clout and a smaller budget. Several second-generation and later strategies have moved away from priority sector approaches to thematic approaches. Vulnerability and inclusion are key thematic strategies in a number of PRSPs, including Tanzania's second one (the NSGRP); this may help focus attention on chronically poor people more effectively than a sectoral approach. Thematic approaches could also stimulate more multi-sectoral action, which has underpinned successes in human development in many poor countries (Mehrotra, 2004). Whether or not they do in practice, will depend on whether, at the front line of service delivery, there are perceived benefits and incentives for doing so.



4.3 Economic policies impacting on chronic poverty

4.3.1 Overall orientation – perspectives on the role of growth

All the PRSPs reviewed accord an important and usually primary role to growth as a means of reducing poverty. Some explicitly link growth with declines in *income* poverty (e.g. Sierra Leone, Cambodia), implying that other actions may be important to address non-income aspects of poverty. Others do not make this distinction, even where they, in principle, espouse a multi-dimensional definition of poverty. This may be either because income poverty is the real concern, or because it is reasoned (or implied) that growth is also critical to generate the resources for social investment.

Sri Lanka's and Albania's PRSPs both particularly elevate the role and importance of growth. This is not to imply that these strategies ignore other poverty reduction policies – they do not – but to underline their emphasis on growth. Clearly these emphases respond to specific contexts – in Sri Lanka, to a history of social investment-led poverty reduction and the necessity of drastic action to overcome the debt crisis and economic stagnation, and in Albania, to ongoing transition reforms that are intended to contribute to the ultimate goal of European Union accession.

The first line of Ethiopia's SDPRP, by contrast, states,

“In some countries, economic growth is the primary policy goal and poverty reduction is to be achieved through measures complementary to growth. This is not the approach of the Ethiopian government. Poverty reduction is the core objective of the Ethiopian government. Economic growth is the principal, but not the only, means to this objective.”

This sentiment is reiterated later in the SDPRP.

In practice, the differences are more in presentation than in the substance of these PRSPs, where there is a striking similarity in the measures selected to promote both increase in incomes and reductions in wider aspects of poverty.

Most of these PRSPs aim for growth rates per annum of 6-7 per cent, which they expect to translate into reductions in the income poverty headcount of around 3-4 per cent per year (e.g. Burkina Faso, Cambodia). Sri Lanka's 2002 strategy aims for 10 per cent growth (as compared to -1.5 per cent in 2001 and less than 4 per cent in 2002) and declaims boldly '***It can be done!***' (bold and italics in original) but the commitment of the whole of society will be necessary to achieve it.

All the strategies reviewed aim to achieve 'pro-poor' or 'broad-based' or 'inclusive' growth. This pro-poor orientation is to be achieved mostly by promoting growth in sectors in which poor people are currently concentrated or where their participation can easily be promoted. All PRSPs give some indication of which these sectors are – Sierra Leone's, one of the most recent (2005) has a detailed analysis of the contribution of growth in different sectors to GDP and to poverty reduction; this then informs choices concerning sectoral focus. In all the PRSPs under review, this leads to a focus on rural development and investment in agriculture and agro-processing since the bulk of the poor population are rural dwellers, and



usually primarily engaged in subsistence agriculture. (See Section 4.3 for a more detailed discussion of rural development policies).

Within chosen focal sectors it is less clear that all actions are necessarily particularly pro-poor. Uganda's PEAP 2004/5-2007/8 is unusual in drawing on analysis of the rates of return to investments in various sectors to commit resources to agricultural research and extension, where rates of return in terms of income poverty reduction have been the highest. By contrast, several agriculture strategies (e.g. Pakistan, Zambia), for example, list actions intended to promote large-scale commercial agriculture – for reasons including increasing productivity, introducing specific technologies, providing an impetus to agro-processing, and 'modernising' agriculture. It is not always clear how poor people will benefit, other than references to their potential role as outgrowers or seasonal labourers. Similarly, tourism strategies in several countries (e.g. Senegal, Zambia) concentrate on the high end of the market and neglect community-managed facilities. This raises the question of the scope of PRSPs – whether they are intended as national development plans, in which case inclusion of policies with at best indirect benefits to poor people are clearly justified, or whether they are a focused sub-set of national development plans that should focus purely on actions to promote poverty reduction, in which case the inclusion of policies with wider development aims may be more questionable. There seems no consensus on this and both tendencies are apparent in the documents under review; second generation PRSPs lean towards wider agendas, even where they do not comprise national development plans.

4.3.2 Key economic policy choices

For such a wide range of contexts including the world's least developed country (in terms of social indicators) emerging from a brutal civil war (Sierra Leone), a dynamic 'emerging market' noted for its strides in poverty reduction over the last decade (Vietnam), favoured donor clients with over 10 years of IFI-supported reforms behind them (Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Uganda and Tanzania) and a small, poor Balkan country engaged in economic transition and aspiring to join the EU (Albania), there is a striking similarity in key economic policy goals and choices. Essentially these reflect the 'post-Washington Consensus' and include: maintaining macroeconomic stability, promoting trade, improving public financial management, tax reforms, promoting foreign and domestic investment, increasing the reach and depth of the financial sector, promoting small and medium enterprises and providing the infrastructure needed to underpin productive and profitable economic activity. In many cases they also include management of public debt. Sierra Leone's PRSP explicitly observes that its macroeconomic policy choices reflect its PRGF agreement; this is likely to be the case for other strategies developed after or alongside PRGFs.

In all cases there is a consensus that the proper role of government involves maintaining macroeconomic stability, and on creating an environment in which the economy is driven by the private sector. In all cases, the latter requires a reduction in government economic activities (often by privatisation, divestment or in some cases, closure of state-owned enterprises), creating a legal and juridical environment that removes barriers to private sector economic activity, and a reinvented leaner role providing or arranging some support services and disseminating market information. Though the details of efforts to maintain macroeconomic stability vary, in all cases they include limiting inflation, in many countries



(e.g. Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda to around 5 per cent per annum) and pursuing 'strict fiscal discipline' (Sierra Leone).

Space prevents a detailed discussion of the macro and structural economic policy choices reflected in these strategies. In brief, some of the most common include:

- *Trade* – further trade liberalisation, usually involving reductions in tariffs (where these have not been completely removed) and non-tariff barriers to trade, as well as a range of policy measures to promote competitiveness of exports. These include selective promotion of particular products and sectors to occupy niche markets (Burkina Faso, Cambodia), 'economic diplomacy' (Tanzania), and export credits for certain products/sectors (Pakistan).
- *Public financial management* – all strategies contain commitments to improve this, usually by means of Medium Term Budget or Expenditure Frameworks.
- *Tax reforms* – to increase overall revenue collection from businesses and individuals; an overall reduction in tax burdens and stability in tax regimes to attract investments (domestic and foreign); introduction of Value Added Taxes in several countries (Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia); improvement of tax collection and administration systems.
- *Promoting foreign and domestic investment*, by packages to attract investment related to tax, provision of infrastructure, improving the security of the banking system, setting up 'one stop shops' for investors (Zambia), a slow reduction of currency controls (Sri Lanka) and marketing of particular countries as good investment opportunities.
- *Increasing the reach and depth of the financial sector* – a range of actions, including promotion of microfinance, (most countries) and insurance as an important risk management tool (Sri Lanka), as well as improving the functioning of the financial system as an inducement to investors.
- *Promoting small and medium enterprises* through a favourable regulatory and tax environment, through reducing bureaucratic requirements and by provision of relevant market information.
- *Providing the infrastructure* needed to underpin productive and profitable economic activity – including investments in roads, rail and water transport, electricity and water supply.

These strategies are linked to detailed plans for specific sectors of economic importance such as mining (Burkina Faso, Zambia), cotton (Burkina Faso), garments (Cambodia), fisheries (Senegal) etc. They are also linked to strategies for improved governance in order, among other things, to promote security and investor confidence, to enhance the regulatory functions of government and reduce direct economic activities, build the capacity of the civil service to support rather than constrain economic activity, and tackle corruption.



The significance of these macroeconomic and structural measures for chronically poor people depends largely on how they affect the sectors in which chronically poor people's livelihoods are based, and how far they support or undermine public spending plans on sectors and activities of particular importance to chronically poor people. While a desk review can raise some potential impacts (see Table 14), how particular macroeconomic policy choices contained in PRSPs are affecting chronically poor people in practice is an important issue for empirical research in the next phase, though methodologically challenging.

Table 14: Examples of Potential Impact of PRSPs

Policy and country examples	Potential Positive Impact	Potential Negative Impact
Removal of tariffs (Uganda, Pakistan)	Reduced prices for key goods and inputs; competitiveness of exports – can enhance economic opportunities for (chronically) poor depending on sectoral mix.	Reduction of revenues, potentially requiring other taxes; potential to undermine livelihoods if imports flood markets.
Privatisation of state-owned enterprises/public sector enterprises/parastatals (Vietnam, Zambia, Pakistan)	Funds freed up for poverty reduction spending; state capacity can be redirected to other functions.	Large scale unemployment; private sector may not step in as effectively as hoped leaving gap in key functions e.g. collection of farm produce from remote areas.
Enhance tax collection e.g. through administrative reforms, and use of sales and value added taxes (Albania, Sierra Leone, Cambodia)	Increased revenues for poverty reduction programmes; progressive taxation will promote equity	Thresholds set too low may tax very poor; sales taxes may penalise poor unless not applied to goods consumed disproportionately by poor.
Increase flexibility of labour market (Sri Lanka, Mozambique)	Stimulate economic activity by attracting investment; reduce unemployment; raise incomes.	Increased financial and health/safety vulnerability of workers – could drive more people into ranks of chronically poor or adversely incorporated into labour market.
Encourage FDI (Zambia, Vietnam)	Increase employment opportunities; technology transfer; access to different markets	Crowding out of local (including small scale) enterprises unless carefully planned.
Rural electrification (all strategies)	Increase economic opportunities in remote areas; improve educational and health facilities.	Negative environmental impacts e.g. loss of land due to hydropower dams, or pollution from coal emissions may disproportionately affect chronically poor.

As observed earlier in the discussion of PSIA, there appear to be limited attempts to analyse the distributional consequences of policy choices. This is despite the fact that all the PRSPs reviewed select policies which have been shown in a range of contexts to have harmful effects on poor people (for example, extending sales taxes since these are regressive), or which are controversial (such as low inflation targets which can lead to limitations on public spending that undermine key services (Waddington, 2004)).



4.4 Rural development and food security

All the PRSPs reviewed assign a critical role to rural development, reflecting the concentration of poverty in rural areas and the contribution of primary sector activities, particularly agriculture, to national economies. Rural development strategies span the economic and social sectors; as the social sectors are discussed below, this section will focus on support to economic activities, particularly agriculture. Food security strategies – where these are elaborated, as in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Sierra Leone – are also discussed in this section as they are very closely tied to agricultural development strategies. Whether or not these strategies are effective for chronically poor people will depend on the institutional arrangements for implementation of programmes and reforms, which are generally not specified in PRSPs.

4.4.1 Agriculture and livestock

The underlying analysis, spelt out in several of the PRSPs reviewed, suggests that a critical reason for rural poverty is the concentration of people in low-productivity agriculture; raising productivity, and hence marketable surpluses is therefore central.³⁸ Among the approaches taken in these PRSPs, the following stand out:

- *Improving poor farmers' access to water* through irrigation schemes of varying sizes, though usually small scale ones (Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda, Albania, Bolivia, Mozambique, Senegal), and through water conservation measures such as rainwater harvesting (Ethiopia, Tanzania and Burkina Faso)
- *Increasing use of high-yielding* and pest-, disease- and drought-resistant varieties (Tanzania) and the promotion of integrated pest management (Tanzania, Mozambique)
- *Improving soil fertility management* (Ethiopia, Tanzania, Burkina Faso)
- *Improving access to seeds, tools and equipment* (Tanzania, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Senegal, Mozambique)
- *Improved animal health services* (Uganda, Pakistan); in some contexts, development of alternative fodder/forage for animals (Ethiopia, Burkina Faso).

Approaches to achieving this greater access to and use of a range of inputs include:

- *enhanced extension services*. For example, in Ethiopia, these are to become menu-based and extension agents are to be educated to diploma level, in Cambodia, more 'participatory' and in Vietnam, more responsive to farmers' priorities. Uganda's PEAP observes that the National Agricultural Advisory Services have, to date, worked with the 'economically active poor' and states that deepening the pro-poor focus will be a priority. In part this will involve attention to livestock and pastoralists, and recruitment of women extensionists to work with women farmers.

³⁸ This may or may not be an accurate diagnosis. Where it is not, as Shepherd and Fritz (2005) suggest is often the case, the impact on chronic poverty may be limited.



- *Promoting public-private partnerships in input supply* (Zambia, Mozambique). This is identified as particularly important for the 'integration of outlying areas'.
- *Promoting cooperatives and/or other farmer organisations* – both for input supply and marketing (Tanzania, Ethiopia).
- *Credit* is identified as a critical obstacle to agricultural development in all these PRSPs and strategies for increasing farmers' access are outlined. These generally involve extending the reach of microfinance institutions; in Tanzania support to community-based savings and credit schemes is also mentioned (but no details of the support envisaged are given).

A further approach is to try to tie production more closely to agro-ecological conditions, both to prevent degradation of fragile environments and to reduce the need for costly inputs. For example, in Ethiopia, there is to be greater emphasis on alternative (non-crop-based) income-generating activities in drought prone areas, such as poultry and apiary development, and agro-forestry, while crop production is promoted in regions with high rainfall. In areas of land shortage, high value crops are to be encouraged.

In most cases, it is not clear *how* very poor farmers – those who have to date generally not benefited from initiatives of the kind outlined above – will be reached. This is one area where the often-made charge about lack of specificity, as compared with the social sectors, has some foundation. For example, as discussed in Section 4.4 below, most PRSPs give detailed accounts of how, for example, the school attendance of poor girls will be promoted (e.g. through scholarships, IEC etc.). A similar degree of detail for the agricultural sector might involve specifying how particular input packages will be made available to women farmers in remote areas, for example.

The other most frequently identified impediment to agricultural productivity is insecurity of land tenure. Several PRSPs state that they will increase security of tenure without giving details (e.g. Senegal, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia). Where strategies are detailed, they include land titling programmes (e.g. Cambodia), distribution of land to poor and landless households, including female-headed households (Cambodia) and legal reforms to secure women's rights to land (e.g. Uganda) and poor people's rights (Vietnam). In Albania and Vietnam, consolidating the land market is seen as important; in Vietnam's CGPRS, the potential impact on poor farmers is recognised; an integrated package of seeds and credit is outlined as a way to prevent poor farmers being forced off their land, though other than reducing financial outlays, it is not clear how this will prevent distress sales.

Livestock production is flagged in most of the African PRSPs and also Pakistan's. This is linked to a recognition that although livestock production often offers the prospect of higher incomes, and is a crucial way of reducing vulnerability in mixed farming, many pastoral livelihoods are extremely vulnerable. Improved access to water is recognised as critical (e.g. Tanzania, Ethiopia) as are animal health services. Thus Uganda's PEAP states that National Agricultural Advisory Services will focus more on pastoralists, and animal health will be a central priority. Zambia's PRSP, with a characteristic focus on export markets, states that the livestock strategy will focus on creating disease-free livestock zones from which meat can be



exported. Of the PRSPs examined here, Ethiopia's SDPRP has the most substantial section on pastoral development. Actions will include supported sedenterisation of mobile pastoralists, supply of services to sedenterised and mobile populations; water conservation and irrigation; improving animal health through veterinary services and improved forage; strengthening the livestock early warning system; and controlling encroachment on marginal areas. In Pakistan, there is a particular focus on supporting small farmers to become more involved in the dairy industry, and so support for animal health, improved forage and marketing are envisaged (but details not specified).

Most strategies are not only concerned to promote small-scale agriculture. For example, expanding, professionalising and increasing the productivity of large-scale commercial agriculture is a concern in Zambia's and Ethiopia's PRSPs. This is linked to a concern to intensify and diversify agricultural exports, and it is implicit in most PRSPs that larger-scale producers, rather than small farmers will drive this. In Ethiopia's and Zambia's PRSPs, small-scale producers will have the opportunity to act as outgrowers, and thus tap into the markets accessed by commercial farmers; in Zambia the opportunities for small farmers to provide labour on commercial farms are also noted. Zambia's PRSP also flags the opportunities presented by the supermarket trade as an important market for a revitalised, commercialised agriculture sector. The strategy of producing for export markets as a key source of agricultural growth leads to an emphasis on meeting international veterinary and food hygiene and safety standards (examples include Albania and Sierra Leone).

Tanzania's PRSP notes that land access rights will be ensured for large-scale producers, and Zambia's PRSP justifies in some detail the policy of allowing locally controlled demarcation of land blocks for commercial agriculture; the intention is that communities will benefit from taxes paid by commercial farmers, and that alienation of land by chiefs without community consent will be prevented.³⁹

The majority of these PRSPs also attempt to shift poor farmers into the production of high-value products, usually those with strong export potential. For example, Cambodia's PRSP mentions spices, organic products and essential oils; Nepal's, herbs and non-timber forest products (NTFPs); and Ethiopia's, coffee,⁴⁰ spices and *chat* (a stimulant with a mild narcotic effect). Vietnam's CPRGS indicates that studies will be undertaken to identify potential high value crops; a specific budget is to be set aside to enable poor farmers to shift the structure of their production. Livestock production – for meat, dairy or hides – is also identified as a higher value enterprise in several PRSPs (e.g. Uganda, Pakistan), and therefore a priority for support. If effective, these strategies should help chronically poor people move out of being trapped in low-value production.

However, it is not always clear that efforts to promote high value crops and products will necessarily involve poor farmers. For example, Vietnam's CPRGS highlights the role of fruit production and industrial crops, with no mention of the structure of production, while Burkina Faso's PRSP devotes considerable attention to the cotton sector without specifying who

³⁹ This is in a context where only 16 per cent of the country's arable land is currently used.

⁴⁰ Though at various points in the SDPRP the poverty-inducing effects of coffee price shocks are noted.



does the growing. Uganda's PEAP states that production and marketing of crops identified as important under the Strategic Export Programme will be supported, but again without explaining how poor people will be involved or benefit. While there is clearly a case for focusing on stimulating the production of foreign exchange-earning crops in the commercial sector, the distributional consequences of this need to be assessed; if poor farmers play a minimal role, or their involvement is on adverse terms, poverty may be little reduced as a result. Furthermore, many of these PRSPs also flag the role of trade shocks as a key cause of impoverishment; though seeking new niche crops may be an attempt to diversify in the face of poor terms of trade, there is the risk that vulnerability is simply shifted to different commodity producers.

For almost all these PRSPs, supporting value-addition through agro-processing is also a priority, and this is an area where public action is uniformly seen as important – particularly in facilitating the development of storage and marketing infrastructure, as well as the transport and energy facilities needed for agro-processing. Examples include Vietnam (where promotion of improved storage for high value crops is flagged), Sierra Leone (where storage, marketing and drying floor infrastructure will be provided in every chiefdom), and Bolivia, where there will be public investment in basic agriculture infrastructure, such as dips and silos. In Ethiopia, agro-processing is central to the government's Agricultural Development Led Industrialisation initiative, which in many ways is the core of its poverty reduction strategy. In Sri Lanka, agro-processing is specifically identified as a way to create jobs for unemployed women with secondary education.

Agricultural research is also an important approach in many of the PRSPs reviewed here. Uganda's PEAP is most explicit on this issue, arguing that agricultural research and extension has the highest returns of any poverty reduction investment and this is a priority public action. More generally, improving the environment for economic activity is a central focus of most of the PRSPs reviewed. This review did not, in general, find a disconnect between agriculture sector policies and macroeconomic ones, other than the issue of trade shocks discussed earlier; there was often cross-referencing to wider economic reforms in the agriculture sections of the PRSPs reviewed, while sections in the macroeconomic framework or in the introductions to 'growth' pillars (i.e. themes), on providing an effective framework for the productive sectors, often made reference to agriculture.

4.4.2 Fisheries

Another important focus of investment in the majority of these PRSPs, though possibly not commensurate with their economic importance (Thorpe *et al*, 2004). In Sri Lanka and Uganda fishers are identified as some of the poorest, most vulnerable people and strengthening their livelihoods thus prioritised. In Sri Lanka, with the planned modernisation of the fishing industry, efforts to ensure that poor people benefit include establishing 'community hatcheries for fingerling production' (GoSL, 2002:64), and encouraging large enterprises with modern technology to link with small scale producers. In Uganda, beach management units have been developed to ensure that the interests of women and youth are represented in decision-making concerning fishing. These are intended to ensure sustainable management of lakes and the fisheries resource. A seven-fold expansion in beach management units is planned during the period of the current PEAP.



- In several of the other PRSPs reviewed e.g. Zambia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Pakistan and Sierra Leone, aquaculture is flagged as an important area for growth and investment. In the absence of detail concerning institutional arrangements, and the structure of production, it is impossible to conclude how far this is likely to benefit chronically poor people; however experience from many other countries suggests there can be problematic impacts in terms of environmental damage and pollution of nearby waterways and land.

4.4.3 Forestry.

Bird and Dickson (2005) suggest that forestry issues are paid very little attention in PRSPs, despite their importance to many poor rural people's livelihoods. This review could not examine the treatment of forestry issues in any detail. However, three mentions of forestry are noteworthy in that they signal issues of potentially great significance to chronically poor people. Burkina Faso's PRSP recommends increasing community control over forest resources so that they can be integrated into poor people's livelihoods. Cambodia's NPRS similarly mentions 'community forestry' – though as Bird and Dickson (2005) observe, 'community' strategies are not necessarily pro-poor, or pro-chronically poor. In Burkina Faso, non-timber forest products are seen as a potential area for the development of agro-processing – often these are critical to very poor people's livelihoods and as such may form part of a strategy for tackling chronic poverty. Cambodia's NPRS similarly recognises their role and notes that certain restrictions on NTFP marketing will be removed. A third area of importance concerns the impact of commercial forest exploitation on poor people. Cambodia's NPRS states that 'dialogues are continuously maintained with local government and NGOs to ensure that issues are addressed with regard to the impact of forest policies on the local communities and the poor'. The NGO Forum on Cambodia, however, suggests that this is often not the case in practice. Increasing poor people's voice in relation to forest concessions appears not to be on the agenda. Finally, Senegal's PRSP flags the need for investment in reforestation, as part of soil fertility management; it is not clear from the strategy how poor people will be supported in this area.

4.4.4 Other supporting sectors and actions.

In all the PRSPs reviewed, rural road maintenance and/or construction, and in a few PRSPs, maintenance of other transport infrastructure (water or railways) is a high priority with a correspondingly substantial budget. It is also an issue often flagged in consultations as a priority of poor people (for example in Bolivia's National Dialogue). In a few PRSPs, road maintenance is to be managed locally; in some cases, e.g. Uganda and Ethiopia, road works are to be used as an employment creation tool or a safety net; in others, it appears that community control is principally a way of mobilising community contributions. Electrification and telecommunications are likewise flagged as critical elements of rural development strategies. There is insufficient detail concerning institutional arrangements to draw even tentative conclusions concerning chronically poor people's access to these services.

Mining, tourism (both large-scale and community-managed) and crafts are also flagged as areas for development. In Burkina Faso, improving conditions in artisanal mines is highlighted, given the extremely poor working and living conditions of miners and their vulnerability to HIV; mining is also flagged in Zambia's, Tanzania's and Senegal's PRSPs.



Tourism is mentioned in many of these PRSPs; approaches range from capacity building for small-scale and/or eco-tourism (Sri Lanka), to promotion of high value tourism as a foreign exchange earning activity (e.g. Senegal, Zambia) with the implication that this will principally be the preserve of the large-scale private sector. Crafts development is seen as a way that poor people, particularly women, can benefit from tourism in various strategies, including those of Burkina Faso and Senegal. It is not clear whether the substantial experience of (relatively unsuccessful) handicraft income-generating projects has been taken into account.

Clearly, environmental protection policies critically underpin rural (and urban) development. They can only be summarised very briefly here. A broad general orientation towards supporting sustainable natural resource-based livelihoods is variously translated into support for environmentally friendly farming practices (Tanzania), greater community involvement in natural resource planning and management (Ethiopia, Mozambique) and in beach and coastal zone management (Uganda and Sri Lanka, respectively) and a range of measures to enhance the quality and quantity of various natural resources. There is a strong emphasis in these PRSPs on securing or promoting bio-diversity, often through arrangements to increase poor people's stake in wildlife conservation (e.g. through revenue sharing arrangements with communities living adjacent to protected areas (Uganda, Bolivia), community participation in planning and management and promotion of livelihood sources that use protected areas sustainably, such as eco-tourism (Sri Lanka). Other major emphases include: increasing forest cover, particularly on watersheds (Nepal, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Cambodia); reversing land degradation, often related to mining (Sierra Leone, Tanzania) or intensive agricultural use (Bangladesh, Senegal) and desertification (Senegal, Burkina Faso); improving the quality of the urban environment, particularly through sanitation and solid waste management programmes (Vietnam, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Uganda); and pollution control (Vietnam, Pakistan).

Many of the PRSPs reviewed here make commitments to implementation of National Environmental Action Plans or similar strategies (examples include Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Uganda and Zambia) or enhancing the institutional framework for environmental protection (Sierra Leone). There are varying degrees of commitments to enhancing the regulatory framework – this is given high priority in Mozambique's PARPA, for example, but less in many other strategies. Uganda's PEAP states that a SWAp will be developed for the environment and natural resources sector; and in several countries (Vietnam, Bolivia, Zambia), there are commitments to institutionalising environmental impact assessments at various levels of decentralised planning. Uganda's PEAP and Bangladesh's NSAPR also state intentions to access international resources available for environmental projects, particularly those related to reduced carbon emissions. In principle, many of these strategies should have positive effects on chronic poverty. More detailed analyses of budget commitments and implementation are needed to tell whether they are fulfilling their potential.

4.5 Food security

Of the PRSPs reviewed here, only Ethiopia, Mozambique, Tanzania and Sierra Leone's strategies have specific sections on food security strategies. This is surprising, given that food insecurity and poverty are seen as synonymous, particularly in the 'voices of the poor' quoted in the poverty diagnosis section. It is also surprising given the MDG focus on hunger.



This said, many of the other PRSPs make reference to food security in the context of agricultural sector strategies. The main approaches taken are:

- *Promotion of food production* (as detailed above). In some countries, e.g. Senegal, there is to be a specific focus on foodstuffs important to poor people, such as legumes and root crops, alongside the promotion of high value crops. Subsidies on selected crops are also part of the strategy in some countries (Pakistan – wheat) and Tanzania (crops not specified).
- *Maintenance of food reserves*, in a manner that does not distort market signals (e.g. Zambia, Tanzania, Ethiopia); in Vietnam, the development of local stores is an integral part of the disaster preparedness strategy.
- *Improvements in food distribution*. Here public action focuses principally on storage facilities and rural road construction and maintenance.
- *Programmes to increase the access to food of poor and vulnerable people*. These include: wider employment promotion activities, especially those related to SMEs (e.g. Ethiopia, Sierra Leone); and in Ethiopia, the provision of tools, inputs and loans to destitute women, cash transfers to orphans, older and disabled people, and self-targeted food subsidies for particular vulnerable groups. Employment guarantee schemes also have an important role to play in some strategies (e.g. Ethiopia, Pakistan).
- *Monitoring and surveillance activities*, for example through Early Warning Systems (e.g. Ethiopia), and the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Mapping System to be established in Cambodia.
- *Strengthening the bodies responsible for coordinating action to promote food security*. For example, in Sierra Leone, a Right to Food Secretariat has to support the coordination of activities in the food security sector. In Ethiopia, the Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission has been reorganised.

There is some overlap with activities considered as ‘social protection’ or ‘safety net’ activities; see Section 4.6 for an elaboration of social protection strategies, many of which are also intended to promote food security.

4.6 Conclusions: implications for chronically poor people

Rural development strategies are likely to benefit chronically poor people if they:

- focus on activities, sectors and geographical areas where chronically poor people are concentrated, and provide sufficient inputs and opportunities to enable more adequate and secure livelihoods, including shifting into more financially rewarding activities.
- promote integration on more advantageous terms with the wider economy.
- are appropriate to the local environment.



- effectively address inequalities, such as those based on gender, age and ethnicity.
- are sufficiently linked to complementary sectors, including the social and infrastructural sectors, and overall macroeconomic policy is supportive.

The discussion above suggests that most strategies attempt to address many of these issues; how well they do so is a matter for empirical investigation. Action to address gender inequalities is among the weakest of the issues raised here, though there are some notable exceptions (e.g. Uganda).

4.7 Education

Education has a special place in these PRSPs; it is seen as a critical route out of poverty and is thus a high priority everywhere. This analysis neatly dovetails with the emphasis on education in the MDGs, the high-profile Education for All process and the enhanced availability of donor resources for meeting international education goals, for example, through the Fast Track Initiative. All the PRSPs examined outline measures to promote school attendance among disadvantaged groups (very poor children, girls, ethnic minorities, orphans and, in some cases, others such as child workers and disabled children); they also summarise the provisions of national education policies, where these exist, in the areas of: development of school infrastructure, improving teaching quality, universalising primary and expanding secondary school attendance, non-formal education, including adult literacy, and extending and enhancing vocational and technical education. Some also discuss tertiary education, principally from the perspectives of reducing inequities and expanding participation. Examples are summarised in Table 15 below.

Most PRSPs thus promise additional resources to the education sector. These may be substantial, as in Pakistan where spending is planned to increase by an average of 2.2 per cent of GDP over the next five years to achieve a 45 per cent increase over 2001 levels (GoP, 2002), or Cambodia where education spending was to rise from 16.2 to 20 per cent of current expenditure between 2001 and 2005. In several countries spending increases are coupled with sector-specific or civil service-wide administrative and management changes to increase the effectiveness of investments in the sector (see Table 15). Commitments to, and budget breakdowns that, prioritise state spending on primary education are also common (e.g. Ethiopia, Mozambique, Vietnam), though the importance of secondary, tertiary and vocational education is widely recognised. Several of the PRSPs examined here outline plans to increase private sector participation in different parts of the education system (e.g. tertiary and pre-school) – usually with the objective of bringing in additional finance so that state resources can be focused on the poorest (Sri Lanka), or so that public resources can concentrate on primary education. In Pakistan's PRSP, it is seen as a mechanism to expand resources for improving school infrastructure. Private sector involvement is particularly common in technical education.

Table 15: Common education policy measures in PRSPs

Policy measures	Examples
Removal of user fees for primary/junior	Cambodia, Tanzania, Mozambique



secondary education	
Scholarships/bursaries for poor children and specific groups e.g. girls, ethnic minorities, children from particular (low enrolment) provinces	Albania, Burkina Faso, Cambodia ⁴¹ , Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Vietnam, Zambia, Bangladesh
Provision of free/subsidised textbooks/uniforms to poor or abolition of uniforms	Albania, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Vietnam, Zambia
Dormitories for children from remote areas/multi-grade schools	Ethiopia, Cambodia
Expanded non-formal education/integration with formal system	Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Bangladesh
Reducing gender-based barriers to girls' attendance including more women teachers, girls' toilets	Burkina Faso, Pakistan, Bangladesh
Improving school infrastructure/construction of schools	Albania, Cambodia, Ethiopia
Improving quality – teacher training, reducing pupil:teacher ratios, curriculum revisions	Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Mozambique, Bangladesh
IEC campaigns to parents/communities on importance of education (in some cases of particular groups e.g. girls, OVCs)	Senegal, Pakistan, Zambia
Training of teachers/other action to integrate children with disabilities	Ethiopia, Uganda
Expanding early childhood education	Senegal, Vietnam, Zambia, Nepal, Bolivia
Enhancing teachers' salaries/conditions especially in rural areas	Albania, Cambodia, Sierra Leone, Zambia
School feeding programmes	Albania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Uganda
Language policies to promote opportunities of minorities (typically mix of dominant and minority languages); expand access to English	Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Bangladesh
Improve school/education management	Albania, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Vietnam
Expand participation in/improving quality of tertiary education	Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Vietnam, Mozambique
Enhancing training and vocational education through aligning with private sector; more apprenticeships, wider availability and reduced costs	Albania, Ethiopia, Senegal
Expanding adult (especially women's) literacy	Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Vietnam, Mozambique

Caillods and Hallak (2004) comment that because the education chapters of PRSPs are based on wider national sectoral strategies, they respond to a wider agenda than poverty reduction. As it is generally assumed that more education will lead to less poverty, education sector strategies are often not subjected to rigorous analysis concerning their pro-poor implications. They cite the example of improving examination and testing – a common element of strategies to improve educational quality – without considering how poor students' access to (or equitable use of) these services can be increased. They also point out that for education to play its maximum possible role in reducing poverty, interventions in this sector must be integrated with other those in a wide range of other sectors, from health, nutrition and water and sanitation, to electricity supply, food security and employment policies. This integration is generally lacking (or not explicitly pointed out), though there are some examples in the PRSPs we examined, in particular, relating to linkages between vocational

⁴¹ For secondary school as fees have already been abolished for grades 1-9.



education and training and private sector employers (see Table 15), and action to stem the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the cause of major attrition among teachers (Zambia).

4.8 Health, nutrition and water and sanitation

Laterveer, Niessen and Yazbeck (2003) suggest that pro-poor health policies will focus expenditures on poor people in the following ways: directly, through fee exemptions and subsidised health insurance; via categorical targeting of groups with large proportions of poor people e.g. young children or older people; by geographical criteria e.g. regions, rural areas or urban slums with large numbers of poor people; by focusing on levels of health care principally used by poor people (e.g. primary health care); and by targeting diseases that create a disproportionate burden of ill-health for poor people. Policies that support a pro-poor orientation e.g. adequate overall levels of funding, the distribution of personnel, health management systems that favour good quality and efficiency are also important elements of a pro-poor health system. To these we might add availability and pricing regimes for essential drugs. We examine the potential of the health policies outlined in this set of PRSPs with these elements in mind. Bearing in mind the importance of water and sanitation to good health, the role of nutritional interventions in tackling intergenerational transmission of ill-health and poverty, the crucial nature of specific actions related to HIV prevention, testing and care, and of reproductive health/family planning in addressing population growth, a major cause of concern for sustainable poverty reduction in some of these strategies, we also examine policy commitments on these issues in our sample of PRSPs. See Table 16 for examples of priority policies impacting on health.

As with the education sector, these PRSPs draw on existing sectoral plans for the health sector; in some cases, such as Cambodia, the PRSP is intended to give a sharper focus to pro-poor actions. And, as in the education sector, there is a strong focus on the primary level, while recognising the importance of effective secondary and tertiary care. As in education, many health sector goals are aligned with the MDGs – hence the emphasis on mother and child health care to meet maternal and infant and child mortality goals and on combating malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.

The majority of policy actions ought – if effectively implemented – to improve poor people's access to good quality health services and reduce the risk that ill-health will drive them into poverty or prevent their escape, though policies are not always described in sufficient detail to draw informed conclusions. The nutritional interventions – in place or planned in at least six countries – are notable since they are explicitly intended to prevent intergenerational transmission of poor nutritional status and ill-health. If successful, their contribution to tackling chronic poverty could be profound – however, Sri Lanka's PRSP sounds a note of caution over supplementation policies and notes that interventions need to be carefully designed to be acceptable to target groups. Some policies – such as fee exemptions – can increase poor people's access to health care and clearly are more pro-poor than user fees, but the burden of administration may absorb a substantial proportion of resources that could otherwise have been channelled into service provision.

Laterveer, Niessen and Yazbeck (2003) found the I-PRSPs they studied generally strong on direct targeting to poor people (principally via fee exemptions), and on targeting specific



diseases; we find similar patterns in this sample of PRSPs, as Table 16 shows. These PRSPs also put much emphasis on these areas, but also have a strong focus on targeting women and children and expanding provision in rural areas. The emphasis on shifting expenditure patterns towards preventative and primary care in two PRSPs is notable – in Senegal, this follows from benefit incidence analysis which shows the skewing of expenditures towards the better off. On paper, these health strategies seem relatively well integrated with those in other sectors, in particular water and sanitation, which have an important impact on health.⁴²

Table 16: Health and related policy measures with implications for chronically poor in PRSPs examined

Policy	Examples
Reducing direct costs to poor	Burkina Faso♣ Sierra Leone Vietnam – free health insurance cards Tanzania – health insurance ♣ Senegal – increase access to health mutual insurance societies Uganda – free primary care in public health facilities Cambodia – regulating official user fees, with community participation in price-setting and exemptions for poor, and Equity Funds to finance emergency services Zambia – fee exemptions /health care cost scheme as part of safety net based on age/disease/membership of vulnerable group
Targeting health services by age/to other vulnerable groups	Pakistan, Senegal, Albania, Cambodia, Vietnam, Ethiopia – enhanced mother and child health services Zambia – emphasis on labour force, school going age group, special needs and vulnerable groups (elderly, physically and mentally disabled, street children, chronically ill, young children and women of child bearing age) Senegal, Ethiopia – expanded programme of immunisations Vietnam – differentiated health policies for children, including free basic vaccines, elderly people, ethnic minorities Senegal, Sri Lanka – develop geriatric medicine Sri Lanka – reach victims of conflict
Geographical targeting of health services/increased expenditure to poor areas/regions	Albania, Cambodia, Senegal, Vietnam, Zambia Sri Lanka
Targeting by level of service	Pakistan – expenditure to focus on primary and secondary levels Senegal – increase proportion of expenditure at primary level Vietnam – improve local diagnostic capacity to maximise treatment at primary level
Tackling diseases particularly burdensome to poor/with major public health implications	Malaria control – Senegal, Cambodia, Pakistan, Uganda (voucher system for vulnerable groups to access insecticide treated materials), Vietnam, Ethiopia Tuberculosis control – Cambodia, Burkina Faso, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia Other diseases – Cambodia and Sri Lanka(dengue), Burkina Faso (leprosy, guinea worm/dracontiasis), Pakistan (hepatitis B, neonatal tetanus and polio), Vietnam (goitre), Ethiopia (polio, leprosy and guinea worm)

⁴² However, research in four African countries finds that water and sanitation issues are addressed weakly in PRSPs and that a range of obstacles exist to a more effective and comprehensive approach (Newborne and Slaymaker, 2004).



	Free treatment for priority diseases (Vietnam)
Increased availability/reduced cost of drugs to poor	Senegal, Ethiopia
Enhanced water and sanitation	Senegal – aims to meet 35 litres per capita per day WHO standard and improve hygiene. Construction of boreholes, rehabilitation of/deepening of modern wells, better water storage. Construction of protracted perimeters encircling village wells to prevent contamination. School latrines. Sri Lanka – improved provision through private sector and community approaches Sierra Leone, Vietnam, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Bangladesh
Improved housing conditions	Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso♣
Nutritional interventions	Pakistan - Tawana Pakistan – nutritional package for girls aged 5-9/12 ⁴³ Cambodia – programmes on micronutrient supplementation, iodisation, growth monitoring, explore possibility for food fortification, food supplementation among very poor, children 6-59 months and pregnant and lactating women. Community participation in nutritional identification and planning. Sri Lanka – improve nutrition among infants, children, adolescent girls, and pregnant and lactating women Burkina Faso, Mozambique – vitamin A distribution Also planned in Zambia and Sierra Leone Promotion of iodised salt – Mozambique Fortification – Bangladesh
HIV prevention, testing and care	Prevention through targeted IEC – Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia Zambia - campaigns, condom distribution, voluntary counselling and testing, community home based care, anti-retroviral treatment Uganda – identify funding modalities for supply of anti-retrovirals; introduction of free treatment for ‘HIV patients.’ Vietnam – continue investment; complete policies; mobilise care Ethiopia – IEC with range of specified groups; voluntary counselling and testing; ensure rights of people living with HIV/AIDS.
Expanded reproductive health/family planning	Pakistan, Vietnam, Zambia, Ethiopia
Measures to promote quality in health system	Senegal, Ethiopia – further training of staff Pakistan – Lady Health Workers to reach women Vietnam – training of local staff, particularly in ethnic minority areas Incentives to staff – Albania, Cambodia, Decentralisation – Albania, Ethiopia Contracting in of NGO provision – Cambodia
Communication and social mobilisation for better health among poor	Senegal – campaign against early marriages ⁴⁴ ; promotion of oral rehydration therapy to prevent diarrhoeal disease; also nutritional knowledge Vietnam – encourage people to participate in exercise programmes Sri Lanka – health promotion through schools Ethiopia
Balance of preventative and curative care	Pakistan – shift to preventative Senegal – make emergency tertiary care accessible through evacuation of patients from rural areas.
Private sector participation	Albania, Pakistan, Senegal, Sri Lanka♣
Cost-recovery /focusing of	Pakistan♣, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia

⁴³ The PRSP mentions this programme twice but the upper age limit is different each time it is mentioned. No details are available in the PRSP.

⁴⁴ since they lead to early childbearing, which can compromise the health and wellbeing of both mothers and children.



subsidised provision on poor	
Increase health sector expenditure	Pakistan, Senegal to 10 per cent budget by 2010 Vietnam to 8 per cent budget by 2010 Ethiopia to 8.2 per cent of budget by 2004/5
Increase role of traditional medicine	Vietnam, Senegal

Many of these PRSPs put strong emphasis on measures to strengthen the delivery capacity of national health systems; these include further training of ‘front-line’ staff and administrative and management reforms to promote smoother flows of resources, reduce procurement inefficiencies etc. Decentralisation is also seen as a key way to promote more effective service delivery, and is a key approach to poverty reduction more generally. Its implications are discussed in Section 5.

Certain policy choices may raise equity concerns – though there is insufficient detail to make informed judgements. At least four countries are planning to increase the role of the private sector. While this is intended to free up state resources to invest in services that benefit poorer people, this carries with it the risk of increasing inequalities with good quality private sector provision for the well off and poorer quality public provision for the poor. Additional cost recovery, and the promotion of traditional/herbal medicine also raise equity questions – in the latter case, the risk is that poor people might be trapped in using low-cost traditional and herbal medicines only and being unable to access allopathic medicines where they are of greatest efficacy. The policy commitment in Bangladesh’s NSAPR to improved regulation and training in this sector is notable here.

4.9 Social protection

This section discusses overall approaches to social protection in the PRSPs reviewed. Policies to support particular groups are discussed in Section 4.7, and those aiming to enhance access to health and education services, or to promote food security have already been examined in the sections above.

In 2001, one of us (Marcus) reviewed the social protection content of 23 I-PRSPs and PRSPs (Marcus and Wilkinson, 2002) and found that one-third of strategies did not discuss social protection at all.⁴⁵ By contrast, all but one of the PRSPs reviewed for this paper use the term social protection, and many have whole ‘pillars’ devoted to it or to improving the wellbeing of vulnerable groups (e.g. Senegal, Pakistan, Nepal and Bolivia). A wider range of social protection measures are either being implemented or considered – including nutritional supplementation programmes (Pakistan, Senegal, Sri Lanka), social assistance for especially poor people (Sri Lanka, Albania), cash transfers for destitute food insecure households (Ethiopia), employment guarantee schemes (Ethiopia, Pakistan), pensions (Albania), free health insurance cards (Vietnam), crop insurance (Cambodia) and legal protection of children from abuse (Uganda). Furthermore several countries plan to undertake studies to analyse suitable social protection mechanisms (Cambodia,) and/or develop additional, specific strategies (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Pakistan, Tanzania), often

⁴⁵ Though some of these had food security programmes which had strong similarities with broader social protection programmes.



following a review of existing programmes.⁴⁶ In several countries (e.g. Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Uganda), systems of social protection in the formal sector, particularly pensions, are also under review, generally aiming to reduce the fiscal burden on government; the implications for chronically poor people may be limited but these reforms may serve to reduce the security of current beneficiaries.

Social protection can be conceptualised in various ways and this heterogeneity is apparent in the sets of policies and programmes outlined in this set of PRSPs. Sri Lanka's and Bolivia's PRSPs takes a 'social risk management approach', similar to that of the World Bank's social protection strategy. In Sri Lanka, with a history of comprehensive social protection, this aims to shift from an approach heavily reliant on cash transfers to a much more insurance-based system where the role of the state is to help poor people to manage risk. Vietnam's and Senegal's health insurance programmes represent a trend in a similar direction. In other PRSPs, the focus on risk management is most apparent in relation to natural disasters – see Box 1 below. The role of macroeconomic shocks in inducing poverty is noted in many strategies; improved macroeconomic management and measures to reduce the structural vulnerability of economies (including by diversifying exports and vigorously pursuing trading opportunities) are the main responses. None of these strategies describes micro-level actions for helping people at risk of impoverishment through macroeconomic shocks.

Most commonly, social protection is seen as a way of alleviating the poverty of specific social groups who are generally not expected to be fully economically active such as older or disabled people, or whose circumstances render them particularly vulnerable, such as widows or orphans, or as temporary poverty alleviation while supporting affected people to build more secure livelihoods. As such it is the main way in which many groups of chronically poor people are addressed in PRSPs. In some strategies social protection is explicitly seen as a tool for social inclusion. For example, in Burkina Faso social protection is intended to 'develop ... systems for the integration and promotion of specific groups' (GoBF, 2005) and in Albania, it aims to involve marginalised people in economic activities and 'achieve social integration' (GoA, 2001).

Clearly the approaches taken respond to different conceptualisations of social protection and to very different existing levels of provision – with substantial systems already institutionalised in Albania and Sri Lanka and system reforms being the key question, while elsewhere, social protection approaches are being piloted from a basis of no or very limited public action. In Nepal's Tenth Plan, the social protection also aims to reorient policy approaches, in this case from welfare to a more active engagement of vulnerable people through social mobilisation.

Furthermore, the analysis of vulnerability plays a central role. For example, Albania's NSSD locates vulnerability as deriving from inadequate or disadvantageous engagement with the

⁴⁶ Of course, deferring action to further studies and the development of strategies may be a way of avoiding action in these areas. APR processes – which involves a range of civil actors as well as donors in most countries – provides a potential tool for accountability, though the hope that APRs may foster accountability may be based on several unrealistic assumptions about these processes and about the operation of political systems in PRSP countries (Booth, de Renzio and Christiansen, 2005).



market economy. Thus most of the interventions outlined aim to increase economic participation, and measures such as vocational training and microfinance are stressed. By contrast, Uganda's PEAP concentrates on social vulnerability, and in particular that of children, and emphasises their legal protection, though details are limited. Where restructuring of public sector enterprises is leading to retrenchment of employees, as in Zambia and Vietnam, such people, though not necessarily the poorest before retrenchment are targets for specific support.

The wide-ranging nature of social protection, its historical low priority within development strategies⁴⁷, and the fact that its inclusion within PRSPs has often been donor-driven all perhaps contribute to a rather disparate, often projectised approach, with listings of actions and relatively little supporting analysis. As noted earlier, several PRSPs commit to developing more detailed policies and strategies, which may mean that future PRSPs and sectoral strategies are more comprehensive and 'strategic'. The piecemeal nature of social protection in these PRSPs also reflects difficulties in drawing boundaries around social protection – what is termed a social protection intervention in one strategy appears under the growth pillar in another, under social services in a second or as part of the food security strategy in a third.⁴⁸ As a result, it is impossible to draw meaningful conclusions concerning the budgetary priority given to social protection. A crude comparison of spending in this area suggests three clusters – higher allocations comprise around 7-12 per cent PRS budgets (Senegal, Cambodia, Nepal); medium allocations 3-5 per cent (Sri Lanka, Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone); and low allocations of 1 per cent or below (Zambia, Mozambique).⁴⁹

The range of social protection actions laid out in this set of PRSPs can be categorised as follows:

- *Measures to improve livelihood adequacy and security* – including 'traditional' social protection tools, such as cash transfers, pensions and employment guarantee schemes, those drawn from a more productivist approach, such as microfinance, and those deriving from a disaster prevention/response approach, such as the development of community level food storage facilities. Nepal's Tenth Plan also includes land redistribution in its armoury of social protection policies – in this case, to former bonded labourers.
- *Measures to improve human development outcomes* – including school scholarships and bursaries for particular categories of children e.g. girls and orphans, nutritional programmes for specific groups and health fee waivers for poor people.

⁴⁷ The concern of social protection with particularly vulnerable groups including those with limited potential for economic activity, means that it has been seen, and to some extent still is seen as 'social welfare' i.e. not the proper concern of development i.e. economic development and the mainstream social sectors.

⁴⁸ There is surprisingly little linkage between food security and social protection strategies (Bolivia is an exception here), reflecting the production and distribution-focused nature of food security strategies and the relatively more limited emphasis on enhancing poor people's ability to purchase food.

⁴⁹ This is based on allocations to 'vulnerable groups', 'welfare services' or 'social action'. As Mozambique's PARPA notes, subsidies to basic health and education services are a key form of social protection. If this were taken into account, allocations would be more substantial in all countries.



- *Measures to improve the social status of vulnerable groups* – such as attitudinal change campaigns. Two examples are outlined in Senegal – aiming to change negative attitudes to disabled people and generate public concern about the situation of child Koranic school students.
- *Measures to enhance the care and legal protection of vulnerable people* – including support to orphans, child-headed households, older people without relatives, and more accessible justice, and action on domestic violence and child abuse.
- *Community development focused on the poorest people* – aiming to transfer assets to the poorest and to address community level obstacles to their wellbeing, such as community infrastructure. These are often carried out through social fund programmes, such as the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF). In such programmes, there are often strong commitments to participatory approaches.

Examples of each of these approaches are given in Table 17 below.

Table 17: Social protection measures in these PRSPs with potential impact on chronic poverty

Approach and tool	Examples
Improve livelihood adequacy and security	
Employment generation	Pakistan, Ethiopia, Albania, Bolivia, Mozambique, Nepal, Bangladesh
Targeted microfinance	Albania, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh
Increase security of property rights (including land rights)	Bolivia, Cambodia, Uganda, Tanzania
Social insurance (purpose unspecified) Social insurance as means of reducing government pension expenditure	Vietnam, Tanzania, Sri Lanka ⁵⁰ Albania
Unemployment insurance (planned)	Vietnam
Encourage saving for private pensions	Sri Lanka
Housing subsidies	Senegal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan
Cash social assistance to poor families and/or specific groups e.g. widows, orphans	Sri Lanka ⁵¹ , Pakistan, Ethiopia, Tanzania ⁵² , Bangladesh
In-kind assistance for those in very difficult circumstances e.g. survivors of natural disasters (food, clothes)	Vietnam, Bangladesh
Employment guarantee/food/cash for work programmes	Ethiopia, Pakistan, Nepal
Universal pension	Bolivia (over 65s), Nepal (over 75s)
Stipends/training to enable poor to acquire marketable skills	Pakistan, Bangladesh

⁵⁰ Government to provide part of premium cost for the poorest groups.

⁵¹ Civil society organizations argued against cash transfers in the discussions underpinning the PRS in Sri Lanka, fearing it would ‘create dependency’, and advocated measures to promote the ‘self-reliance’ of the poor. These transfers are to be refocused on those unable to earn an adequate living.

⁵² To be trialled in Tanzania.



Improve human development outcomes	
Health insurance – with subsidies for specific groups	Vietnam
Health user fee exemptions	Zambia
School bursaries and scholarships for specific groups	Burkina Faso, Zambia, Bangladesh
Nutritional interventions – supplementation and fortification	Zambia, Senegal, Mozambique Sri Lanka, Bolivia, Sierra Leone, Bangladesh
Community based rehabilitation programmes for disabled people	Senegal, Sri Lanka, Uganda
Improve social status of vulnerable groups	
IEC to change public attitudes to specific groups e.g. disabled people, Koranic school students people with HIV and AIDS	Senegal Tanzania
Affirmative action e.g. coaching of disadvantaged communities for civil service exams	Nepal
Improve care and protection of vulnerable people	
Support for community care of orphans, older people, people with mental health difficulties	Sri Lanka, Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania, Nepal
Legal measures – protection of rights at local level/improved access to justice	Uganda, Cambodia, Bolivia
Community development	
Community development approaches targeted at very poor communities/groups. With specific transfer of assets to very poor, identified in participatory manner.	Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Nepal
Social mobilisation and participation in grassroots structures	Pakistan, Nepal

There is a strong emphasis on careful targeting – to ensure that support reaches the poorest and most vulnerable and to prevent costs escalating. In countries such as Albania and Sri Lanka with pre-existing social assistance and pensions programmes, better targeting is intended to reduce the overall number of beneficiaries and ensure fiscal sustainability. Elsewhere, as in Zambia, it is to ensure cost-effectiveness and efficiency in systems under development. How this is to be achieved is not very clear in any of these PRSPs, though some degree of means-testing is implied. Tanzania’s PRSP states that the capacity of local authorities to identify and support people will be enhanced; it also aims for greater community participation in developing locally appropriate social protection mechanisms.

There are various arguments for and against targeting social protection which cannot be reviewed in detail here. These arguments generally pertain to cash-based social protection measures such as social assistance payments. In brief, targeting these should be more efficient and lead to increased resources for poor people than universal payments which unnecessarily provide cash supplements to better-off people. However, the cost of effective targeting systems and the opportunities created for corruption may undermine these advantages. Means-testing may also reduce societal commitments to redistributive and solidaristic policies which may ultimately undermine efforts to reduce chronic poverty (Mkandawire, 2005). The role of targeting is, of course, only one factor of several relating to the effectiveness of social protection measures in tackling chronic poverty (others include its



relation to the causes of poverty or vulnerability and its scope for enabling escape from poverty, and whether or not a wider set of enabling and linked policies and actions are in place).

In most of the PRSPs examined, social protection is intended to play a transformative role, rather than simply alleviating the poverty of the poorest; however, there may well be a mismatch between intentions and the limited funding and therefore sometimes patchy interventions proposed. Given the potential of social protection to help people break out of poverty, it is encouraging that this area is receiving some donor support. Current or past PRSCs for seven of the countries examined specify social protection as an area funds are intended to support. Patterns of donor financial, technical and moral support for social protection elements of PRSPs could be examined in more detail in the next phase.

Box 1: Vulnerability to environmental shocks and natural disasters

As noted in Section 3 above, almost all the PRSPs reviewed here identify natural disasters or chronic or recurrent environmental problems as an important drivers of poverty. Surprisingly, only ten strategies mention programmes for disaster prevention and helping survivors rebuild their lives, and in one document, the issue is addressed in one sentence! However, at least two others detail efforts to ensure food security in the face of climatic threats such as drought. Tanzania's NGPRS refers the reader to the National Operational Guidelines for Disaster Management, a reminder that these issues may be considered elsewhere and repeating discussion of them in the PRS may be unnecessary. Vietnam's CPRGS has the most comprehensive section on disaster prevention and response of the PRSPs reviewed here, and the most defined targets – it aims to halve the numbers of people falling into poverty after natural disasters by 2010.

Preventative action generally involves the development of information systems – vulnerability maps and early warning systems (Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Vietnam), strengthening planning at national, and particularly local levels (Cambodia, Vietnam, Bolivia, Mozambique, Bangladesh), training people living in disaster-prone areas to recognise warning signs and act swiftly (Vietnam); water control measures such as dykes to prevent floods (Cambodia, Vietnam, Ethiopia) or salinisation of soil (Senegal), and water conservation measures (Ethiopia, Senegal) to prevent drought. In Ethiopia and Vietnam, a series of actions to protect natural resources – in particular forest conservation and an associated change in farming practices in vulnerable areas – is envisaged. Vietnam's and Sri Lanka's PRSPs outline support to poor rural and urban people in disaster-prone areas to construct safer housing.

Disaster response measures include: employment guarantee and cash for work programmes (Ethiopia, Pakistan), distribution of productive materials e.g. seeds, tools, trees (Vietnam and Sri Lanka) and seeds of a fast-growing rice variety (Cambodia), developing local stores for food, distributing food and clothes to disaster survivors and setting up an Emergency Relief Fund (Vietnam). Bangladesh's NSAPR outlines an intention to move from disaster response to a risk reduction approach. Both Cambodia's and Vietnam's PRSPs also mention human-made disasters – Vietnam's CPRGS states that emergency teams will be put in place to clear up industrial disasters, while Cambodia's NPRS mentions fire as a risk particularly facing poor urban communities (but does not detail plans for prevention or response). Vietnam's CPRGS highlights disaster response as an area where the informal social safety net has a vital role to play, and NGOs, mass organisations and social organisations are to be mobilised as part of this effort.

4.10 Policies to tackle social exclusion among vulnerable groups

4.10.1 Gender-based vulnerability

Gender is treated as a cross-cutting issue in many of the PRSPs reviewed here, as suggested by the PRSP Sourcebook. In some cases, such as Pakistan, it has its own



chapter, but mostly, it is integrated to a greater or lesser degree in sectoral or thematic chapters. In a few of these PRSPs (e.g. Senegal, Sierra Leone), action to promote gender equality is situated as part of countries' international human rights obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Where this occurs, measures such as reform of discriminatory legislation and improving women's political representation are outlined. As with the strategies reviewed by Whitehead (2003), many of the PRSPs reviewed here refer to national strategies for the advancement of women, or to promotion of gender equality, which may account for the wide-ranging nature of their concerns. Certainly, they respond to a multidimensional definition of poverty.

An earlier review of gender issues in four PRSPs (Whitehead, 2003) concluded that they are treated in a 'fragmented and arbitrary way'. For example, there was a substantial focus on the health and education sectors, which have gender-differentiated MDG targets, but women's income, livelihoods and resource constraints were little covered. In this larger set of PRSPs, coverage of gender issues is also variable. As noted in the sections on education and health above, all the PRSPs examined here have strategies to improve mother and child health, on reproductive health and to reduce maternal mortality. Some e.g. Zambia and Tanzania have specific actions and targets to reduce HIV prevalence among women, while others e.g. Sri Lanka, Zambia, Sierra Leone and Pakistan target pregnant women and/or adolescent girls with nutritional supplements. All strategies also outline action to reduce or eliminate gender inequalities in school enrolment in line with MDG goals. Some, including Burkina Faso and Vietnam, aim to reduce adult women's illiteracy. Bangladesh's NSAPR also includes a range of women-oriented social protection programmes.

Compared to Whitehead's review, we find more recognition of women's involvement in productive sectors, more related action to tackle the difficulties they face and more monitoring of actions in these areas. Several also outline actions to improve women's access to land (Bolivia, Uganda, Cambodia, Tanzania, Vietnam) and other assets (e.g. housing) (Vietnam, Zambia), employment opportunities (Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam), inheritance (Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Uganda), and credit (Tanzania, Sierra Leone). Recognising women's existing involvement in many spheres of the economy in many societies, Zambia's PRSP notes that it will ensure that agricultural research and development builds on women's knowledge and targets them, while Vietnam's states that it will ensure information and support to businesses, particularly relevant to the changing regulatory environment, reaches women entrepreneurs. Senegal's PRSP states that it will develop targeted programmes for women in each of the priority sectors. Several PRSPs note women's excessive workloads and propose ways to reduce them – largely through the introduction of labour-saving technologies (e.g. Uganda, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia). Women's caring responsibilities for children and elderly people are recognised explicitly in Sri Lanka's PRSP; the policy emphasis is on day care for young children, since this is seen to have early education benefits.

Although several of these PRSPs mention physical and sexual violence against women as a critical concern, it is less clear how they plan to tackle it, other than through improved justice for poor people, shelters, in the case of Sri Lanka and better implementation of protective laws (Bangladesh). Others also mention plans to tackle traditional practices that



disadvantage women, including female genital mutilation (Ethiopia, Burkina Faso). Albania's NSEED and Cambodia's NPRS mention the trafficking of women to neighbouring countries, in the case of Cambodia through intergovernmental agreements and strengthened law enforcement. Increasing women's political representation is also a concern in some of the PRSPs reviewed here (Cambodia, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka).

As with other areas of inclusion and equity, few of these strategies are explicit about the substantial barriers to promoting gender equality. That several PRSPs observe the importance of social mobilisation or sensitisation campaigns at community level on girls' education, and the fact that so many strategies have specific bursaries for girls suggests some analysis of the potential resistance to gender equality in education. Pakistan's AGPRS is the most explicit on this issue – it accords a key role to women social mobilisers, and to enabling them to work with women and girls by sensitising 'the most conservative sections of the community'. None of the strategies discuss resistance to gender equality on other issues or at other levels of society. However, experience on issues as disparate as inheritance rights and agricultural extension suggests that changing practices will require substantial reorientation of service providers and law enforcement staff as well as cultural change. If women's political representation is effectively increased as is expected in several of the PRSPs reviewed, this may provide the impetus for implementation of gender-sensitive policies.

4.10.2 *Children*

Children's vulnerability to poverty is identified in two main ways in these PRSPs and policy responses flow from this analysis. The entire cohort of children is seen as potentially vulnerable to ill-health and malnutrition, in particular, resulting in an emphasis on the accessibility of health services, particularly to infants and young children. Early childhood development programmes – mentioned in Albania, Bangladesh, Zambia, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Senegal – are also intended to address this vulnerability, and combine health and nutritional support with early education.⁵³ The other major policy response to the specific situation of children is universalising primary and in some cases secondary education, in line with the MDGs. The approaches taken to this depend on whether non-attendance is widespread, in which case the emphasis is on improving access and quality and removing generalised barriers to attendance, or if it is confined to relatively small groups, in which case targeted measures such as bursaries or support for uniform or textbook purchase are the norm.

Specific groups of children are identified as particularly vulnerable because of their particular circumstances. These include street and working children, orphans, child headed households and children living with HIV/AIDS (sometimes grouped together as Orphans and Vulnerable Children or OVCs) and disabled children. The main policy approaches to children in especially difficult circumstances can broadly be classified into: measures to promote some degree of livelihood security or make poverty less extreme; measures to promote access to education and health services; measures to protect children from harm and promote their rights and well-being. Particular sets of actions aiming to support disabled children are

⁵³ The effectiveness of Early Childhood Development programmes in doing so depends on their resourcing, quality and appropriateness to their setting (Penn, 2004).



discussed in Section 4.7.6 below; those facing other groups of vulnerable children are discussed here. It is also notable that several PRSPs make commitments to developing policies rather than spelling out detailed actions at this stage. For example, Vietnam's CPRGS says it will 'supplement policies and measures to protect children in extreme difficulty' e.g. street children, working children, orphans, disabled children and children with HIV/AIDS. Bolivia's EBRP, Tanzania's NSGRP and Sierra Leone's PRSP make similar commitments to policy development in this area. Even so, given the scale to which children have been and continue to be orphaned by HIV/AIDS, it is surprising that this issue is not given more priority in PRSPs.⁵⁴

Securing livelihoods

Policy actions to support OVCs include financial and capacity building support to NGOs and CBOs (Zambia) and also to households (Tanzania) supporting orphans and vulnerable children and mobilising support for OVCs from similar organisations in Uganda; developing support networks for young children to ensure they benefit from early education, and ensuring that vulnerable children such as orphans are included (Senegal); Ethiopia's PRSP mentions reforming the traditional social safety net to support street children, orphans and commercial sex workers (but no details are given). In Burkina Faso's PRSP, material support (food and clothes and support with schoolwork) is to be provided to orphans, while a microenterprise programme is to be targeted at the parents of children and youth at risk in two of the poorest provinces. There are also plans to develop policies for the care of orphans in more detail. Sri Lanka currently provides support to a range of vulnerable groups through the Samurधि programme – this involves cash transfers, employment opportunities and microfinancial services. In the future this scheme is to be better targeted to those unable to support themselves; it is envisaged that support to orphans will continue.

Measures to promote access to education and health

In addition to the measures discussed in Sections 4.4 and 4.5, which either aim to make health and education free and accessible for all children, or to promote the access of girls, ethnic minorities and/or children in remote regions, some of the PRSPs reviewed here outline measures to support specific groups of children's access to education and health care. For example, Zambia's PRSP mentions school bursaries for orphans, and Pakistan's PRSP outlines 'rehabilitation' camps that provide crash courses which enable former child labourers to rejoin mainstream schools.

Protection from harm

Unsurprisingly, given the disparate risks facing children of different ages in different societies, a range of actions are envisaged here. They include mobilising public opinion on behalf of students in Koranic schools in Senegal (who are required to work long hours and beg on behalf of their teachers and whose standards of welfare are often very poor), developing strategies to support semi-homeless/street children (Senegal); removal of

⁵⁴ In similar vein, a World Bank and UNICEF (2004) study of the treatment of HIV issues in 19 African PRSPs found that only 33 per cent of strategies mentioned orphans and vulnerable children.



children from the worst forms of child labour (Senegal, Pakistan); preventing trafficking, principally through vigilance (Burkina Faso); developing a strategy on juvenile justice (Senegal). Orphans and vulnerable children are also a priority focus for HIV/AIDS IEC activities in several of the strategies reviewed here, including those of Ethiopia, Zambia and Uganda. Uganda's PEAP 2004/2005-2007/8 also commits to collecting and reporting data on abuse and neglect of children; beyond mobilising communities to protect children, it appears not to outline other concrete measures to protect children's rights. Sri Lanka aims to expand its network of child welfare centres, offering rehabilitation to children involved in child labour, who have been sexually abused and other abused and neglected children. Albania's National Strategy for Children will create 'a system of institutions ...and social policy reforms will be carried out, in order to protect children from all forms of violence, exploitation and ill-treatment' (GoA, 2004:25). This is one of the few examples in this set of PRSPs of commitments to children forming part of national strategies – the linkage of Vietnam's to a range of sectoral and cross-cutting strategies, including one on children is another.

Box 2: Child labourers: at risk of chronic poverty – how concerned are PRSPs?

There has been a heated debate in recent years as to whether child labour is a cause or consequence of poverty – clearly it is often both. From a chronic poverty perspective, child labour raises particular concerns since work in childhood may permanently endanger children's health, and may undermine their education. On the other hand, it may also enable children to acquire essential marketable skills that enable them to escape poverty. There has been very little analysis of the circumstances under which work in childhood can help children escape chronic poverty. However, it is clear that the conditions under which vast numbers of children work today – long hours, doing work that is physically tiring or dangerous, with no opportunities for education – can only serve to perpetuate poverty.

What do PRSPs propose? Several of the strategies reviewed here view working children as a particularly vulnerable group and some (e.g. Senegal, Nepal and Uganda) state their commitments to eliminating the worst forms of child labour, or to implementing national strategies and plans on child labour (Bolivia) but only Bangladesh's, Tanzania's, Cambodia's and Pakistan's PRSPs give much detail as to how they will do so. This accords with Heide's (2004) analysis which finds only 8 out of 54 strategies have sections on tackling child labour.

In Pakistan's Accelerated Growth and Poverty Reduction strategy, there is a strong emphasis on vocational education to enable children to earn a living from later adolescence; non-formal education to enable children who have missed out on formal education to catch up and in-kind and cash incentives to compensate for foregone income; and universalising primary education to prevent children's entry into the labour market. There is also a programme to prevent families falling into bonded labour by providing microfinance, rather than their having to rely on loans at high interest rates.

Cambodia's NPRS proposes to tackle child labour by implementing a national programme of child protection – this includes vigilance concerning children working at local levels. The strategy also provides secondary school scholarships for poor children, and exemptions for poor people from health care costs. Tanzania's NSGRP focuses on alternatives – in particular primary and vocational education, while Bangladesh's NSAPR makes commitments both to extending non-formal education for working adolescents and to increasing parental job opportunities so that children do not have to work.



Several of the PRSPs that provide detailed budgets (e.g. Senegal, Cambodia) indicate expenditure on child welfare activities. However, few APRs have reported on progress in any depth and so it is impossible to draw conclusions as to how far the wide range of policies outlined above are being implemented. Senegal's 2003 APR notes that action for children has fallen short in implementation in 2003 but this is a rare exception.

Despite wide-ranging commitments to children there is little explicit attention to the risk of intergenerational transmission of poverty – it is mentioned explicitly or implicitly in only three PRSPs. A set of interventions to support child wellbeing is proposed but thinking about impact of policy on children is not mainstreamed. This is important since it can lead to incoherence in poverty reduction strategies. For example, if the strong emphasis on improving agricultural productivity among small farmer households in various PRSPs means that such households are obliged to make more use of their children's labour, this may conflict with goals to enhance children's health and education, as some research suggests is the case in Ethiopia (Woldehanna *et al.*, 2005). In a worst case scenario, it could mean that efforts and expenditures to tackle poverty are undermined and the risk of intergenerational transmission of poverty – at least among a proportion of such households – could be entrenched.

4.10.3 Youth

Despite the importance of youth as a period in life when poverty can be consolidated or escaped, only six of the PRSPs examined here outlined specific policies for addressing youth problems. This lack of attention to youth as a specific group is mirrored in the PRSP Sourcebook⁵⁵, where they are not identified as a group who may well be vulnerable, and in fact appear only in one of the country examples. In these six PRSPs, the main policies for addressing youth problems are in the areas of education, employment and health, with a focus on HIV/AIDS prevention and reproductive health. However, most of the other PRSPs address these issues, whether or not they mention young people as a specific target group. As UNFPA's (2005) study also found, initiatives involving young people appear piecemeal rather than holistic, and only rarely addressed in a comprehensive, cross-cutting fashion. In a way this is surprising as in many societies, social integration of young people is often seen as a particular challenge and young people are figured as the source of many social problems (e.g. crime, the spread of STDs, teenage pregnancy etc). However, it is only Sierra Leone's PRSP which explicitly aims to promote the social integration of young people, aiming to prevent the recurrence of conditions that gave rise to conflict.

Of the PRSPs reviewed here, the following initiatives are notable: improved vocational training (Albania, Pakistan, Senegal, Sri Lanka and Sierra Leone) and other initiatives to promote employment such as support for SME development targeted at young people (Sierra Leone and Burkina Faso), increasing young people's linkages to job opportunities in the public and private sectors (Sierra Leone) and enhancing young people's employability through careers guidance and other 'life-skill' based training (Sri Lanka). Sri Lanka aims to create 2 million new jobs and notes the importance of soaking up the labour of unemployed youth; job creation is a similar priority in Bangladesh's NSAPR. In Senegal, young people are

⁵⁵ With the publication of the 2007 WDR on youth this may change.



the focus of anti-drugs programmes, while in Ethiopia, the national HIV/AIDS control programme has a specific component focused on out-of-school adolescents who cannot be reached by school services; the high levels of maternal and child mortality are noted among adolescent mothers in Bangladesh's NSAPR – the main strategy to address this is IEC on later marriage and childbearing. In Sierra Leone, in addition to measures to promote employment, the PRSP mentions sports development as a strategy for social integration and creating livelihood opportunities.

UNFPA found that in many PRSPs, descriptions of problems were not followed up by funded priority actions. However, among these PRSPs, where youth problems are signalled, some actions are outlined, though these may only be one or two out of hundreds of priority actions.

4.10.4 *Older people*

At the other end of the age spectrum, poverty among older people elicits few specific responses, implying that as far as old age poverty is considered at all, most PRSPs expect broader measures to reduce poverty to benefit older people. Actions focused on older people primarily involve health care and financial support. Both Sri Lanka's and Senegal's PRSPs, observing demographic trends, state that they will establish geriatric health care programmes, while in Vietnam free health insurance cards will be provided to 'the dependent elderly who live alone' (GoV, 2002:76). Sri Lanka's PRSP notes that 'new initiatives will be launched to significantly improve the quality of community-based care for the disabled, conflict victims and the elderly'. Bangladesh's old age allowance which currently covers around 1.5 million people over 60 will be extended. Bolivia's PRSP mentions 'old age insurance' but it is not clear what this is intended to cover.

Senegal's PRSP commits to establishing a social welfare system for elderly people, with professional re-training and 'assurances that elderly will be able to realise their full physical and psychosocial potential' (the definition of elderly and expectations about their continued involvement in work are unclear here). In Tanzania's PRSP, support to older people comes within the broader social protection framework to be developed. Recognising 'poverty induced destitution, particularly among the aged and disabled, in part due to collapsing 'traditional' social security systems of extended family, Zambia's PRSP states that it explores how best state funded safety nets are to be managed and financially supported though its conclusions are not clear. Albania's NSSD aims to reduce state contributions to pensions; the poverty implications of this are not analysed or discussed. In Sri Lanka, where social security arrangements have long covered poor elderly people, the public assistance programme is to expand support to poor older people who cannot meet their basic survival needs.

In Ethiopia, urban elderly people are one of the target groups for community-based rehabilitation (from what is not clear), 'with the full participation of target groups and the surrounding communities'. Similarly Cambodia's NPRS envisages increased community activities in support of elderly people but does not specify what these might be. A basic safety net is also considered, though this is intended to be employment-based so may exclude less physically healthy older people. Finally Bolivia's PRSP states that consideration will be given to implementing the national plan on seniors.



As noted in Section 3, this general lack of attention to older people perhaps reflects a productivist, rather than rights orientation in PRSPs, along with the dubious assumption that older people are net consumers rather than producers. It is also surprising given the role of older people in caring for HIV orphans,⁵⁶ a group which is identified and the target of some (albeit limited) support in many African PRSPs, and may reflect the lack of grounded social analysis, or the failure of consultations and PPAs to bring these issues to the foreground. Budgets are not broken down sufficiently to be able assess, in general, the proportion of expenditure on specific support to older people. Senegal's PRSP is the only one of those examined here to present such a detailed breakdown. Here 1.5 per cent of the budget for addressing vulnerability (which itself comprises an unusually large 12 per cent of the PRSP budget) is allocated to older people.⁵⁷ If this is the upper end of the scale (and only further budget analysis can confirm this), older people represent a truly marginalised group of the chronically poor.

4.10.5 Ethnic minorities and indigenous and tribal people

As noted in Section 3, relatively few of the PRSPs examined here identify ethnic minorities as particularly vulnerable or discuss ways to tackle their poverty. The policy focus of those that do is on reducing inequities in education and information; securing rights to land and, in some cases, other, generally collectively owned resources; and increasing political representation. Cambodia's NPRS notes the need for further research before detailed strategies are worked out and a national ethnic minority policy developed. Several strategies (including Ethiopia and Uganda) tacitly address ethnic minority poverty through specific strategies to improve the situation of the residents of particular disadvantaged regions, or in sectors, such as pastoralism, where minorities are concentrated. However, the fact that almost half these PRSPs contain no policy to reverse ethnically-based inequalities is striking.

Enhancing access to education is the principal approach common to the strategies reviewed here. For example, Cambodia's NPRS outlines the provision of performance based scholarships for disadvantaged ethnic groups (as well as girls and other children from poor families), in Albania, decentralised authorities are responsible for making efforts to attract minority students (and reporting their success in doing so), while Vietnam's CPRGS puts major emphasis on education among ethnic minority communities, in line with its general emphasis on raising educational levels. For example, it states that by 2010 there will be opportunities for all ethnic minority children to complete their education partly in their own languages and partly in Kinh (Vietnamese); children's books in minority languages are to be produced as well as literacy materials to ease minority children to acquire fluency in Kinh (e.g. children's sections of newspapers). Ethnic minority children's access to kindergartens is also to be promoted. As a result, ethnic disparities in primary and secondary school enrolment should be eliminated by 2010. Radio and TV broadcasting in ethnic minority languages is to be increased, though no specific targets are given. In Sri Lanka's PRSP, education is seen as one of the ways to right historic injustices and promote national integration. Future teacher training will no longer be in mono-ethnic institutes and will be

⁵⁶ For example, in southern Africa 43 per cent of households caring for orphans are headed by an older person (SC UK, Helpage International and IDS, 2005).

⁵⁷ 76 per cent is allocated to children, 21 per cent to women and the remainder to disabled people.



'appropriate to serving in a 'multi-ethnic, multi-religious environment'(GoSL, 2002:53). Furthermore, schools in multi-ethnic areas are to teach in multiple languages and biased textbooks are to be revised.

Cambodia's NPRS, Bolivia's EBRP and Vietnam's CPRGS raise the issue of property rights. In Cambodia, sub-decrees on community ownership and community forestry are to be passed, and forestry concessions are to be reviewed by ethnic minority communities. In Vietnam, the CPRGS outlines a policy of preventing the buying and selling of ethnic minority land and ensuring minorities' collective and individual land rights, while Bolivia's EBRP acknowledges the importance of ancestral principles regarding the use of productive resources (water and land) though it is not clear from the documents what this means in practice.

Cambodia's PRSP also commits to improving the delivery of basic services more generally to ethnic minority communities, many of whom live in isolated forest areas. Similarly, in Vietnam, ethnic minorities are to be eligible for free cards exempting them from hospital fees, and efforts are to be made to recruit and train more female teachers and local health staff from ethnic minorities. As part of focusing national poverty reduction programmes on disadvantaged areas, there is to be a particular focus on ensuring ethnic minorities are reached by agricultural extension and low-interest loans for employment generation.

Vietnam's PRSP is the only one reviewed here to mention the importance of raising the participation and representation of ethnic minority people. There is to be a special focus on supporting ethnic minorities' (and older and disabled peoples') active involvement in poverty reduction, including decision-making. Furthermore, the percentage of staff of public sector agencies and local government of ethnic minority origins is to be increased. However, Hughes (2005) cautions that these impressive sounding goals may well hide an assimilationist agenda, when the history of programmes with ethnic minorities in Vietnam is taken into account. This could well be a double-edged sword, reducing poverty but also threatening cultural values and traditional ways of life. As she points out, the critical issue is whether ethnic minority people have been involved in the development of these programmes and this is not clear from PRSP documentation.

Several PRSPs contain potentially contradictory policies, on the one hand aiming to improve conditions and the availability of key services among minority groups; on the other, seeking to alter (or even reverse) elements of minorities' ways of life that are seen by the mainstream as backward. So, for example, despite a wide range of commitments to tackling poverty among ethnic minorities, including subsidised health care, bursaries for education of minority children and increasing the availability of printed and broadcast materials in ethnic minority languages, Vietnam's PRSP outlines a policy of sedentarisation, which may contradict minorities' cultural rights and aspirations to continue a mobile lifestyle. Similarly, Ethiopia's PRSP discusses sedentarisation of pastoralists who are willing to settle and supplying mobile services to those who are not. Furthermore, contradictions arise with the implementation (or non-implementation) of PRSP policies. For example, as the NGO Forum on Cambodia points out, the reality of the issuing of logging concessions is undermining commitments to minorities' control of resources.



Few JSAs raise ethnicity issues (six of the 24 reviewed here) (see Table 18 below). As might be predicted, it is, in fact, only in those countries where PRSPs or APRs raise concerns about poverty among ethnic minorities that the JSAs mention ethnicity in their commentary. Of course, as with PRSPs themselves, this may be a strategic silence, given the sensitivity of ethnicity issues in some contexts. The JSA of Albania's 2004 APR raises a concern that actions to promote Roma and Egyptians' education are not flagged in the priority action matrix or budgeted, and are thus not really viewed as priorities.

4.10.6 *Disabled people*

Even where connections between poverty and disability are noted in the poverty diagnostics section, this does not necessarily lead to substantial programmes of action – most of the actions described below are 'hidden away' in the latter parts of PRS documents and not flagged among priority actions. However, ten of the strategies reviewed here outlined specific policies to tackle poverty among people with disabilities. These broadly involve improved access to health or education services and to employment opportunities and assets and include: programmes to improve access to equipment for addressing impairments (Cambodia, Burkina Faso) or to health services, such as through the provision of health insurance cards to disabled people (Vietnam), community-based rehabilitation programmes (Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Senegal), better training for teachers to include children with disabilities (Uganda and Tanzania); encouragement of parents to send disabled children to school (whether mainstream or special) in Sierra Leone and Mozambique, bursaries for disabled children to attend secondary school (Uganda), vocational training and education (Pakistan, Cambodia) and promotion of employment or self-employment (Burkina Faso, Vietnam). Mozambique's PARPA outlines plans to construct more special schools for disabled children.

In several countries, disabled people are mentioned as a group to be covered by social safety nets or social protection activities (Ethiopia and Tanzania, for example) but without detailing what this involves, sometimes because details are to be worked out during implementation. Bangladesh's NSAPR details the allowance paid to poor disabled people; this programme is to be extended. Vietnam's CPRGS highlights disabled people as one of three disadvantaged groups whose active participation in poverty reduction must be promoted. Senegal's PRSP takes the most comprehensive approach of the PRSPs reviewed here: it aims to combat discrimination and improve the economic and social situation of disabled people and their health, education and training. The main steps envisaged for doing this are: enhancing access to drugs and medical services, promoting integrated education, facilitating disabled people's acquisition of the means of production and disseminating positive attitudes. This focus on tackling discrimination is unique among the PRSPs we have reviewed. However, Sierra Leone's PRSP, noting the range of small-scale initiatives to help disabled people, amputees and other vulnerable people, seems to be moving in a similar direction, noting that target groups 'need recognition as integral members of society, benefiting from all rights and obligations. This requires a new agenda and an innovative strategy' (2005:132).

As noted above, there is relatively little emphasis on enhancing nutrition as a key intervention for preventing intergenerational transmission of poor health and impairments in the PRSPs



we have examined. It is therefore not surprising that the few PRSPs that do outline actions on both malnutrition and disability do not link them – Bangladesh’s NSAPR which makes a link here is an exception. Other than tackling disabling attitudes, as Senegal’s PRSP commits to doing, the other main example of PRS commitments to tackling causes of disability comes from Cambodia, where approximately 11 per cent of impairments are caused by unexploded ordinances. De-mining therefore, is a key preventative intervention.

Very few of the descriptions of consultative arrangements reviewed specifically mentioned disabled people’s organisations or disability-focused NGOs (and in general, tackling poverty among disabled people appears not to have been a key civil society concern. This may help explain the relative inattention to this issue. Exceptions include the description of civil society participants in Senegal, which included a disability-focused organisation the involvement of the Organisation of Disabled and Paraplegic People as one of the civil society representatives on the health advisory group in Albania and the comments put forward by the NGO Forum on Cambodia (noted in the National Poverty Reduction Strategy) which stressed the need for a much more holistic approach to disability.

Reflective of the general low priority given to disability and poverty issues, none of the 24 JSAs reviewed here urged more attention to poverty among disabled people. Only one of the JSAs – that of Cambodia’s NPRS (IMF/IDA, 2002) – mentioned disability at all and this was in a summary of dimensions of vulnerability flagged in the strategy. This rather surprising lack of concern may reflect the limited attention to disability in the PRSP sourcebook. Unlike gender, or HIV/AIDS, for example, it is not considered a cross-cutting issue. However, the social protection chapter of the sourcebook gives a number of suggestions of effective policies⁵⁸; here it seems that World Bank commentators are not following their own guidelines.

4.10.7 People affected by conflict

As observed in Section 3, in countries currently or previously affected by conflict, reducing the poverty of those made vulnerable, and preventing further recurrence of conflict are central themes in the PRS, particularly where the conflict has affected most of the country or is very recent. Actions can broadly be grouped into: rehabilitation and reconstruction in conflict-affected areas; support to specific groups affected by the conflict, such as internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees, and people traumatised by the conflict; and peace-building or conflict prevention efforts, including measures to improve governance and ensure the rights of all citizens are respected.

Sri Lanka’s PRSP, developed in conjunction with the national framework on Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation, itself a three-year consultative process, describes in detail actions to rehabilitate infrastructure to reconnect these regions with the rest of the country, and re-build public services in the North and East of the country. These include rehabilitation of the primary health care sector and emergency water supply repairs, and efforts to rebuild war-affected people’s livelihoods. The PRSP makes commitments to demining of land (as in Cambodia) and developing a trust fund to support self-employment in agriculture and

⁵⁸ http://povlibrary.worldbank.org/files/4430_chap17.pdf, accessed on 13/10/2005.



microenterprise. Ongoing actions such as supply of seeds and tools are also described. In addition, the return of IDPs is to be promoted through funding initial resettlement costs, especially those related to low-cost shelter. Supplying trilingual identity cards will facilitate mobility and thus migration as a response to poverty.

Uganda's PEAP mentions a pilot programme to reintegrate child soldiers and to provide psycho-social support to people traumatised by the conflict. It also specifically discusses the importance of the participation of IDPs in camp management, though stops short of proposing longer-term solutions (and allocating more funding) to the large numbers of people living in camps, where they often face discrimination, security problems and may be trapped in chronic poverty. Sierra Leone's PRSP seeks to promote the reintegration of demobilised combatants through the broader youth development measures noted above, including employment promotion and sports.

In Sri Lanka, other more general efforts to tackle severe poverty will include a de facto focus on conflict-affected regions in a programme of support to ultra-poor communities, including families living in the remotest parts of the poorest provinces. Similarly in Uganda, a geographical focus on the poorest regions will direct resources to the conflict-affected North of the country. In Sierra Leone, it is intended that decentralised planning and greater local control of resources and decisions will help prevent recurrence of the conflict (WB, 2005), while Nepal's Tenth Plan recognises that developmental inequalities feed the conflict and thus emphasise the importance of continued efforts to devolve resources and control to communities affected by the insurgency. Sri Lanka's PRSP recognises that conflict-induced poverty and vulnerability extend well beyond the key war-affected areas – and that many female headed households in poor urban and rural areas of the South are female-headed as a result of the conflict. Their poverty is to be addressed primarily through the social assistance system. In Nepal, similarly, widows and people displaced by conflict are among the key groups targeted by social safety nets.

Improving governance and security are other key ways in which PRSPs attempt to tackle conflict-related poverty. In Sierra Leone's PRSP, attempts to ensure representation in democratic institutions and public awareness campaigns on citizenship issues attempt to rebuild people's stakes in society, while in Cambodia, improvements in governance and instituting local level conflict resolution mechanisms, particularly related to land and water use are intended to forestall recurrences of conflict. The land titling programme is also intended to contribute (WB, 2005). In Uganda's 2004/5-2007/8 PEAP, there are plans to mainstream refugees into district planning; Sri Lanka's PRSP and Nepal's Tenth Plan stress the importance of participatory approaches throughout. In Sierra Leone's PRSP, there is a strong emphasis on security, to be achieved by consolidating state authority and dealing with bandit movements, border controls and crime. Similarly, security is a new pillar of Uganda's 2004/5 –2007/8 PEAP. Several of the PRSPs also mention the importance of peace-building initiatives – Sri Lanka's PRSP details both the high-level negotiations, and practical initiatives to reduce grievances and promote integration, such as multi-language teaching in multi-ethnic areas, while Sierra Leone's PRSP includes measures such as peace-building and citizenship education in schools and its youth development policy is specifically intended to promote the social integration of former combatants and prevent recurrence of conflict.



4.11 Conclusions to Section 4

In summary, as this section shows, and Curran and Booth (2005) found in their review of social inclusion in PRSPs, there are a range of positive examples of commitments to tackling the manifestations and causes (both structural and idiosyncratic) of chronic poverty, though they are rarely identified as such. Though any individual PRSP could undoubtedly be more comprehensive, our review of policy content suggests that most PRSPs should make some difference for chronic poverty. This however, depends on how implementation takes place, and what is prioritised in practice.

Where matrices of priority actions and outline budgets form part of PRSP documents, these generally show that actions that should impact on chronic poverty are being funded. APRs, however, suggest that some actions to tackle chronic poverty may be being deprioritised, or only partially implemented. To take the example of disability, though both Cambodia’s and Senegal’s PRSPs are committed to more extensive actions than most other PRSPs, in neither case does the APR reporting closely match the strategy. In Cambodia, where the priority actions include enhancing the supply of orthopaedic devices and vocational training, the APR reports on microcredit supplied to disabled people and notes that disabled women have been a target of a more general programme to promote womens’ employment. Senegal’s APR reports on centres for physically and mentally disabled people in the report of budget disbursement but not on any of the other substantial priority actions in the spheres of education, employment, access to health services and combating prejudice against disabled people.

While the JSAs we examined have a number of suggestions on areas of importance to chronically poor people, including growth, employment and livelihoods, macroeconomic management and some sectoral issues, they are surprisingly quiet on several issues core to tackling chronic poverty. Our analysis of two sectoral policy areas (social protection and nutrition), and two disadvantaged groups (ethnic minorities and disabled people) reveals very limited attention to these issues in most cases (See Table 18), implying that they are seen as fringe, rather than core concerns. Where these policy areas or issues do command JSA attention, it would be instructive to find out why, and how governments have responded to these suggestions.

Table 18: Number of times certain chronic poverty issues mentioned in JSAs and JSANs

STRATEGY/APR	DISABILITY	ETHNICITY	NUTRITION	SOCIAL PROTECTION
Albania June 04	0	1	0	0
Albania June 03	0	0	0	0
Albania June 02	0	0	0	2
Bangladesh 03	0	0	0	0
Bolivia 01	0	2	1	2
Burkina Faso 04	0	0	7	0
Burkina Faso 01	0	0	0	1
Burkina Faso 00	0	0	0	0
Cambodia 04	0	1	0	0
Cambodia 03	1	3	2	0



Ethiopia 04	0	0	0	0
Ethiopia 02	0	0	0	0
Mozambique 05	0	0	0	0
Mozambique 01	0	0	1	1
Nicaragua 03	0	0	0	0
Nicaragua 01	0	2	3	3
Pakistan 04	0	0	0	0
Senegal 04	0	0	0	0
Senegal 02	0	0	1	0
Sierra Leone 05	0	0	5	0
Sri Lanka 03	0	0	0	0
Uganda 05	0	0	0	0
Vietnam 03	0	12	3	0
Zambia	0	0	11	0

The next section discusses the key issues related to institutional arrangements and implementation that may impact on chronic poverty.



5 Implementing PRSPs to Tackle Chronic Poverty: Institutional and Budgetary Issues

The current aid consensus suggests that ownership of PRSPs is central to implementation, with ownership essentially referring to central government ownership of the strategy (Maxwell, 2005). Booth (2005b) helpfully distinguishes between two elements of ownership: sentiments of attachment to a PRSP and its institutional mainstreaming. In this section, we concentrate on the latter, and draw on recent analyses of the political and institutional issues surrounding PRSP implementation to tease out some key issues with a bearing on the scope of PRSPs for tackling chronic poverty. We focus on the following issues: the extent to which chronically poor people's stake in PRSP processes is institutionalised; the linkage between PRSPs and other strategies and budgets; the allocation of responsibilities between different actors; commitments to public sector capacity building to enhance implementation; and decentralisation and participation in implementation. Space limitations prevent us discussing issues related to donor support, alignment and conditionality, though clearly these have important implications for implementation. They are well summarised by Booth, Christiansen and de Renzio (2005) and Driscoll with Evans (2005).

5.1 Chronically poor people's stakes in PRSP processes

In examining this issue, it is useful to distinguish chronically poor people's direct involvement in PRSP processes and the existence of spaces where their interests may be put forward by others. It is largely civil society organisations who play this representative role; as a review of participation in PRSP processes in Zambia and Malawi puts it, 'in the absence of CSOs "speaking on their behalf" the poor would have few means of interest articulation' (Bwalya *et al.*, 2004). This raises the question of how far the CSOs that engage in PRSP processes (which are often urban-based (Driscoll with Evans, 2004) and may or may not speak from grassroots experience) are articulating the interests of chronically poor people, in contexts where these differ from those of poor people as a whole.⁵⁹ Government ministries and departments with mandates for particularly disadvantaged groups (typically Ministries of Social Welfare) should, in theory, also be articulating their interests. In this context, their generally limited representation and power compared with high status ministries may well contribute to the marginalisation of chronic poverty.⁶⁰

Assessments of the extent to which PRSP processes offer genuine opportunities for citizen influence diverge sharply. On the one hand, several PRSPs and APRs detail some or all of the following: the numbers and locations of consultations held, the numbers of particular kinds of organisations participating, the percentage of women involved and the key issues raised. Examples include Senegal, Albania, Burkina Faso and Cambodia. The tone of these papers implies that substantial efforts to understand the views and priorities of poor people have been made and, where possible, to reflect this in PRSP policies. On the other hand,

⁵⁹ One example which suggests they may not is cited in Section 4 of this paper: in PRSP consultations, Sri Lankan civil society organisations argued against cash transfers on the grounds that they create dependency, a view that may not be shared by chronically poor people, or indeed even people in temporary poverty.

⁶⁰ See Marshall with Ofei-Aboagye (2004) who make this point in relation to childhood poverty.



many civil society critiques are scathing about the extent of representation of poor people, and the lack of genuine opportunities for influencing policy content to the extent that in some countries, civil society coalitions have publicly disassociated themselves with the process.⁶¹ It is widely accepted that macroeconomic frameworks have effectively been 'off-limits', even to parts of government,⁶² though the 2005 PRS review acknowledges this is a problem and recommends wider debate on these issues. Effective 'closure' of macroeconomic policy discussions does not, of course, invalidate tangible policy changes resulting from citizen involvement in other areas.

Possible points of influence in the PRS cycle include: formulation (via initial consultations or PPAs, PRS Working Groups, and post-writing 'validation' exercises where draft PRSPs are presented for comment); performance monitoring and review processes; and budget formulation and monitoring processes. The descriptions of participatory and consultative arrangements in the PRSPs and APRs we have reviewed show extensive consultations in pre-formulation stages (for example, in Burkina Faso, 13 regional consultations took place involving over 3,000 people; in Ethiopia, around 6,000 people participated in 117 local consultations, and an additional 2,000 in regional consultations) and some indicate policy changes made as a result. For example, the varied dialogue processes in Bolivia are widely credited with increasing attention to the productive sectors (World Vision, 2005).

The documentation we have reviewed does not allow us to draw firm or comprehensive conclusions about the extent of chronically poor people's participation in PRS consultations, their voice or influence. It does, however, show that in some contexts, certain groups of people prone to chronic poverty were represented – either directly, or by civil society organisations. For example, Senegal's PRSP has an annex indicating the extent of participation in different parts of the PRSP development process by, among others, disabled people's organisations, youth organisations, women's organisations, farmer's organisations and labour unions.⁶³ Bangladesh's NSAPR details the direct consultations that were held with poor people, and lists some of the groups who attended, including snake charmers, potters, housemaids, cobblers, sweepers, tea garden workers and adivasis (ethnic minority tribal people). Conversely, several barriers to (groups of) chronically poor people's participation are not discussed – for example, where the languages of consultation are not specified, one can surmise that they mostly took place in national languages, potentially excluding linguistic minorities, particularly women of those communities, whose fluency in national languages is often lower. Driscoll with Evans (2005) and Driscoll *et al.* (2005) (cited in Booth, Christiansen and de Renzio, 2005) suggest that to date APR processes have made little contribution to promoting government accountability to their citizens for a range of reasons, including a perception that they primarily exist to fulfil donor requirements, while Booth, Grigsby and Toranzo (2005) find that in Latin America, the impacts of broad-based

⁶¹ See for example, an open letter by Pakistani civil society organisations (<http://www.eurodad.org/articles/default.aspx?id=430>, accessed on 25/11/05).

⁶² Holmes with Evans (2003) cites the example of the Ugandan Minister of Health criticising the Ministry of Finance's refusal to accept aid in dollars in a parliamentary committee.

⁶³ This is one of the most detailed breakdowns of participation among the PRSPs reviewed.



consultations on policy change have been minimal, and significant only where they have been used to assist in implementing a specific policy measure that is supported from within government.⁶⁴ PRSP observers suggest that the trend in second- or third-round PRSPs may be for more limited, more focused consultation (Curran and Booth, 2005). Articulating chronically poor people's interests in this context may be increasingly challenging.

Some of the PRSPs and APRs reviewed also mention civil society inputs to thematic or sectoral working groups (e.g. Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania). These are important fora in that their inputs to PRSP policies and budget formulation processes is more direct than that of consultations, for example. Also they have a performance monitoring, which can extend to budget scrutiny. Booth (2005a) suggests these are one of the most important institutional arrangements for PRS implementation; primary research could reveal how far, in practice, the interests of chronically poor people have been advanced in these fora. Finally these PRSPs and APRs do not report in detail on citizen involvement in PRS monitoring. Roles range from participation in PPAs and surveys, to involvement in activities such as local budget monitoring (Driscoll with Evans, 2005). The latter are rarely discussed in PRSPs and APRs even though such initiatives are occurring in many of the countries examined here. Further research would be needed clarify the potential of local budget monitoring initiatives to promote accountability to (chronically) poor people; initial evidence is promising (World Vision, 2005).

5.2 Linkages to other strategies and frameworks

In most of the PRSPs reviewed here, links to other strategies and frameworks are spelt out. Three broad patterns can be discerned:

1. the PRSP is intended as the over-arching framework for other strategies and/or is the national development plan. Of the strategies reviewed here, only Nepal's Tenth Plan, which also serves as the PRSP falls into this category, but examples include the Kyrgyz Republic's NPRS (2002-5). However, this approach is more likely in the future as the Bretton Woods Institutions have indicated their willingness to take national plans in lieu of a PRSP in some countries, such as Vietnam in this 'round' of PRSPs.
2. The PRSP is intended to operationalise the national development plan or national development goals (e.g. Vision 2025s), especially their poverty-focused elements. This may well represent creative thinking about how to make the most of an exercise perceived by many governments as principally for satisfying donors or managing aid relationships. This is the most common approach among this sample e.g. Albania, Cambodia, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam.
3. The PRSP appears relatively divorced from other strategies and frameworks or its relationship is not made clear e.g. Bolivia, Pakistan.

Table 19 gives further examples.

⁶⁴ Booth (2005a) also suggests that the expectation that PRS processes might contribute to fostering domestic accountability is unrealistic given the nature of political processes in most PRS contexts.



Table 19: Examples of linkages between PRSs and other frameworks and strategies in selected countries

Country	Relationship of PRS to overarching national frameworks and strategies and planning system	Examples of sector strategies related to PRS	Key international frameworks and processes related to PRS
Vietnam	CPRGS seen as roadmap for implementation of first period of 10 year Socio-economic Development Strategy 2001-2010. Annual socio-economic development plans based on CGPRS.	Various – agriculture, health, education, women, children etc.	MDGs (Vietnam Development Goals); WTO accession
Uganda	'The Poverty Eradication Action Plan is Uganda's National Planning Framework' (PEAP 2004/5-7/8, p27) – a framework to guide poverty reduction. MTEF based on PEAP.	Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture, Medium-Term Competitiveness Strategy, Strategic Export Programme	MDGs, East African Community, NEPAD
Senegal	PRS intended to serve as basis for sector plans and budgets; consistent with 10 th Economic and Social Development Plan.	Education, health, transport	NEPAD, MDGs
Albania	Responds to national goals and is medium term strategy, informing Medium Term Budgetary Framework.	Agriculture, food, exports, health, labour and vocational training.	EU integration, NATO membership, MDGs
Nepal	PRSP is 10 th 5 year plan; MTEFs based on it.	Education, health	MDGs

Of these, approaches 1) and 2) seem more likely to generate commitment to implementation and as such, are more likely to impact on chronic poverty than rather delinked strategies. It is an empirical question as to which of approaches 1) or 2) is more likely to be effective in poverty reduction; arguably a less poverty focused strategy that is actually implemented may achieve more than a highly poverty focused but unimplemented PRSP, though it is not necessarily the case that a national strategy will be more fully implemented than a separate PRSP. It is likely that a range of other issues will be more important, including the extent to which sector strategies and budgets are aligned with the PRS, the relationships between the PRS and other elements of the planning system and the degree of implementation capacity, often contingent on public sector reform programmes. The descriptions given in these PRSPs, and a review of secondary literature, where available, suggests growing alignment over time between PRSPs and sector strategies (cf Booth, 2005b), prompted by line ministries' inputs into PRSPs during formulation, or more often, budgeting processes. In some countries, such as Albania, the PRSP has served as a tool for making the planning system more focused and effective (GoA, 2005); where linkages between the PRSP and the national planning system are weak, PRSPs are likely to be a sideshow and implementation limited.

5.3 Budgets

Two sets of issues appear particularly critical for PRS implementation – the effectiveness of public expenditure management processes and the overall availability of resources. Both have a potential bearing on the extent to which a PRSP can reduce chronic poverty. This, of course depends on the extent to which PRSP policies redistributes resources to chronically



poor people, and on the progress of anti-corruption and decentralisation reforms. In this section, we discuss one aspect of public expenditure management – linkages between the PRSP and annual budgets.

There is growing emphasis on the centrality of effective linkages between PRSPs and annual budgets for PRS implementation (Booth, 2004; Roberts, 2003). In practice, this usually means a 'donor-sanctioned model in which a medium term expenditure framework, consistent with macroeconomic stability and reflecting PRS priorities, guides annual expenditure programmes which form part of the budgetary package voted by the national assembly' (Roberts, 2003:29). Thirteen of the PRSPs examined here were linked to partial or full MTEFs, and MTEFs were under development in four others. Booth, Grigsby and Toranzo (2005) argue that one reason for the lack of purchase of PRSPs in several Latin American countries, including Bolivia and Nicaragua, is the lack of linkage to date between the PRSP and national budgets.⁶⁵ In general, where the PRSP and MTEF are co-ordinated by the same body, linkages between the two are more effective (Roberts, 2003).

Though most of the PRSPs examined here were linked to an MTEF, in several cases (e.g. Albania, Sierra Leone, Cambodia), JSAs and JSANs criticised the limited extent of PRSP and budget alignment. From a desk review which did not involve examining MTEFs directly, it is not possible to identify areas where PRSP priorities are not translated into budgets, or why, and thus to conclude whether the areas of non-alignment have particular significance for chronically poor people. However, this is clearly an important issue for the primary research. Nor could this study examine broader issues of accountability on public expenditure issues; there may be specific issues for chronically poor people, or particular groups of them, in that particular efforts may be needed to ensure that funds allocated to tackling key problems of chronically poor people are spent as intended. Even where public expenditure management reforms have taken root, these areas of expenditure may need champions in order to prevent funds being reallocated to areas or issues with greater political pay-offs.

5.3.1 Ringfencing of poverty-focused funds

With the increasing institutionalisation of MTEFs, and integration between sector plans and PRSPs, ringfencing poverty-oriented expenditures, for example in a Poverty Action Fund (PAF) is no longer a common approach. Experience in Uganda, which had tried this approach in its second PEAP (2000) suggests that it can limit the integration of poverty reduction into sector plans, and the role of the PAF is to be reduced in the third PEAP. Zambia's PRSP states that it will create such a fund, though it is not clear whether this occurred. Several countries, including Tanzania and Zambia continue with social-fund style programmes where funds are ringfenced for community development.

5.3.2 Overall availability of resources

Relatively few of the PRSPs examined (Senegal, Sierra Leone, Vietnam and Burkina Faso) provide detailed breakdowns of the level of domestic and external financing needed for different policy areas, or for the strategy as a whole. This may simply be because this

⁶⁵ However, an MTEF is being developed in Nicaragua which may help rectify this.



analysis has not been summarised in the PRSP, or it may reflect the fact that much costing activity had not occurred at the time the documents were written (e.g. Pakistan). Senegal's and Vietnam's strategies state that around one-third of PRSP costs will be met from external resources (loans or grants), Burkina Faso's strategy was likewise approximately two-thirds funded at the time of PRSP writing; in Sierra Leone, however, EURODAD (2005) estimates a funding gap of around 58 per cent. It is not clear from the documents examined here how far funding gaps have been filled. Analysis of documents produced for Consultative Group meetings or in-country discussions would be needed to do so. As well as insufficient pledges, funding gaps may also be created where donors withhold funds on performance or political (e.g. human rights) grounds. If areas of expenditure that particularly benefit chronically poor people are cut and funds switched elsewhere, there may be specific and severe implications for chronic poverty;⁶⁶ otherwise, the impacts are likely to be similar for chronically and transitorily poor alike. Holmes and Evans's (2003) study of MTEF implementation in nine countries suggests that aid flows are the major source of budget volatility in PRS contexts and that donors thus need to prioritise making aid more predictable.

In addition to external resources failing to materialise, the availability of resources for implementation may be reduced by overoptimistic revenue projections, and/or macroeconomic shocks and the consequent need to make budget cuts mid-year. Analyses of MTEF implementation and of results-based budgeting (Holmes with Evans, 2003; Roberts, 2003) have found this affected PRS implementation in Burkina Faso; the 2003 JSA of Senegal's PRSP criticises what it sees as unrealistic spending plans. Many of the PRSPs studied have developed alternative spending scenarios, in some cases, high, medium and low projections. Analysis of the areas that are safeguarded and those that are cut or expanded if countries shift between scenarios during implementation might be revealing of the extent to which expenditure benefiting chronically poor people is prioritised.

Finally, implementation may be undermined by absorptive capacity lagging behind resource flow, as in Zambia, for example (JSA, 2004). Where PRSPs mandate a resource injection to tackle poverty in particularly disadvantaged districts or in seriously underfunded programme areas (e.g. social protection systems), limited absorptive capacity may be undermine policies that should, at face value, help reduce chronic poverty.

5.4 Delineation of responsibilities

While most of the PRSPs reviewed here indicate the range of stakeholders they expect or hope will be involved in implementation, detailed responsibilities are generally not delineated. This may well be appropriate for a strategy, and clearly a government cannot compel the private sector or NGOs, for example, to contribute to implementation, however much it might wish to. However, arguably, an expected outline of implementation roles is an important level of detail that one might expect in action matrices. Several countries, such as Tanzania and

⁶⁶ We recognise the intrinsic problems of designating certain expenditures as 'poverty-focused' and others as not, and that poverty, including chronic poverty is significantly affected by non-spending reforms. As noted earlier, the critical importance of redistributive public expenditure for chronically poor people may make this task slightly easier as far as chronic poverty is concerned.



Burkina Faso, outline broad principles for collaboration and partnership between different actors involved in implementation.

As observed in Section 4, there are strong expectations of private-sector led economic development (Ethiopia, Cambodia, Zambia, Sri Lanka, for example), and of increased private sector involvement of areas of service delivery (e.g. urban water supply in Uganda and Senegal and tertiary health care in Sri Lanka). CBOs and NGOs are expected to undertake much caring work, in particular supporting orphans and vulnerable children (Uganda, Zambia). Ethiopia’s SDPRP makes clear its expectation of community and NGO contributions to realising the strategy’s goals. Overall, however, the onus of responsibility clearly lies on central and local government and on line ministries and implementing agencies, and in many countries, there are capacity building programmes aiming to enhance implementation capacity (see Section 5.7).

The implications of roles and responsibilities outlined need to be assessed in context. All have their potential benefits and risks for chronically poor people – private, for-profit services are likely to exclude the poorest, but might be effective in freeing up state resources for investment in services accessed by poor people. CBOs and NGOs may provide community-based services that are locally sensitive and cost-effective or which suffer from similar problems of quality and reliability to state-run services, and may or may not contribute to empowerment of chronically poor people. Services and programmes in any sector may perpetuate or challenge discrimination and exclusion.

5.5 Degree of decentralisation of decision-making power and resources

Decentralisation is often mandated on the assumption that local-level decision-making is essential to offset cumbersome and unresponsive decision-making at the centre (Grant, 2002). Most PRSPs acknowledge, at least to some degree, an important role for decentralised decision-making in poverty reduction, and in some cases this is a core strategy to achieving the poverty reduction objectives of the PRSP (e.g. Albania, Bolivia, Cambodia, Burkina Faso, Sri Lanka, Mozambique, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Zambia). There are three main ways in which these PRSPs tend to link decentralisation with poverty reduction: by redressing regional resource imbalances; increasing the representation of the poor and marginal groups in policy processes; and specific poverty reduction functions devolved to the local level. See Table 20 for an indication of emphases in different countries.

Table 20: Frequency with which decentralisation-related issues are discussed in selected PRSPs

Word search	Albania	Bangladesh	Bolivia	Burkina Faso	Cambodia	Ethiopia	Senegal	Sierra Leone	Sri Lanka	Tanzania	Uganda	Vietnam	Zambia
<i>Decentralisation</i> <i>/decentralisati</i>	64	26	51	70	52	3	14	24	19	1	26	8	23



<i>on</i>													
<i>Local government</i>	113	62	4	44	11	11	0	19	36	11	129	5	15

5.5.1 Addressing regional resource imbalances

Decentralisation is often a core response to redressing regional resource imbalance, notably through mechanisms such as equalisation grants. For example, it is hoped that using a transparent and equity-based formula grant system to allocate central government transfers across councils will improve equity in resource allocation and improve people’s trust in the state in Sierra Leone. Redistribution of resources through the Law of Popular Participation and administrative decentralisation in Bolivia is credited with achieving increased social investments in regions that had previously never received transfers from the state. Current allocations procedure poorly supports disadvantaged districts in Uganda, and the PEAP concedes that other mechanisms are also likely to be important to poorer districts. Equalisation grants currently make up only a very small share of the total allocations to districts in Uganda, and the PEAP suggests special allowances as a way to address imbalances; notably allowances to poorer districts to pay higher wages or other incentives for staff to come from other parts of the country, and specific allowances to insecure regions that bear heavy costs of reinstating services.

5.5.2 Increasing representation of poor people in decision-making

Most PRSPs (including Albania, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Uganda and Zambia) directly connect decentralisation to poverty reduction, through bringing decision-making closer to the poor. It is asserted, for example, that these reforms will create decision-making processes that are ‘fair, open and inclusive for all social groups, especially for the poor and for all other weak and unprotected groups’ (Albania, NSSD). This emphasis tends to relate to ‘bottom-up’ participatory planning processes, which in reality place considerable new demands on local governments. In the case of Cambodia, for example, the NPRS details a five stage process with eleven steps of planning that begins with the involvement of local need identification and priority setting. Such processes require effective and capable local decision-making structures, within which decision-makers can be held accountable. However, studies have shown that this can not be assumed, and that such high expectations are often misplaced and misleading (Grant and Devas, 2004; Blair, 2000; Moore and Putzel, 1999).

Decentralisation reforms often go hand in hand with increased proportional representation of specific groups in decision-making structures. In Burkina Faso, for example, the PRSP reports an increase from 12 per cent to 21 per cent of women elected between 1995 and 2000. In Pakistan, women have 33 per cent seats in local councils (at the union, *tehsil* and district levels) and a further reservation is made for minority, peasant and worker seats. This is directly linked in the PRSP to representation of vulnerable and poor groups. Village Development Committees in Cambodia have a 30 per cent reservation for women. Similarly, Uganda’s PEAP reports a legal requirement that 30 per cent of the Parliament and Local Councils is comprised of women representatives in addition to provision for representatives of youth and people with disabilities. This requirement does not however apply to administrative positions.



Despite these provisions, Hughes (2005) argues that many local governance structures do not consider cultural differences in their design, nor do they necessarily level out long-standing power differences, citing Bolivia, where little effort has been made to ensure that decentralisation is combined with the specific participation of minorities and indigenous people. Bolivia's EBRP recognises itself, however, that the current scope of Popular Participation⁶⁷ and distribution of public resources need addressing so that both are less concentrated in the cities.

5.5.3 *Devolving specific poverty reduction functions*

Local authorities are sometimes required to take on further poverty reduction roles. In Bangladesh, for example, the NSAPR details local agencies' responsibility for 'dispute resolution, protection⁶⁸ and social mobilisation'. In Sierra Leone decentralisation is firmly linked to national plans for sustained peace. The PRSP recognises that civil war in Sierra Leone related strongly to the antagonism between a large, marginalised population, excluded from the political process and deprived of social services and economic opportunities, and those who controlled resources through absolute power and corruption. By bringing government closer to people it is hoped that such alienation can be addressed. Expectations that local agencies will be able to foster socioeconomic and cultural transformation simply due to their greater proximity to the grass-roots, may often be overly ambitious, however.

Decentralisation initiatives continue to proliferate, however, delegating new functions to weak institutions (Driscoll with Evans, 2005). This is despite considerable evidence that there is no inherent reason why local governments should be more pro-poor than national governments. Crook and Sverrisson (1999) conclude that decentralisation *can* positively increase government responsiveness to the poor and pro-poor development but this is dependent upon the relationship between central and local governments, the level of accountability through participation, the existence of secure and adequate systems for allocating both administrative and financial resources, as well as the length of time reforms have been in place. A number of PRSPs (Cambodia, Senegal, Uganda) recognise that there is not an automatic correlation between decentralisation and poverty reduction, linking this discussion to broader institutional development and change.

5.5.4 *Monitoring decentralisation*

Monitoring indicators for decentralisation are often linked to the clarification of roles and responsibilities between different levels of government and local agencies (e.g. Albania, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Uganda), and often captured through revised local authority acts or codes. Bangladesh's NSAPR identifies a plethora of often outdated and contradictory laws and circulars that govern existing local governments, and which need streamlining. Tanzania's NSGRP goes further in also recognising the need to address overall incentive environments.

⁶⁷ Under the Law on Popular Participation, resources were transferred to 311 municipalities throughout Bolivia. The municipalities were delegated responsibilities to provide and administer basic services, with a strong emphasis on participatory planning.

⁶⁸ Of whom/what is not clear in the document.



Despite articulated commitments, there are often real obstacles to reform. These are political and bureaucratic, and result in failure to transfer authority and resources. Burkina Faso's PRSP for example reports that decentralisation has only affected 18 per cent of the population and covered only 20 per cent of the country. Uncertainty about the availability of resources and the decentralised authorities' effective control over them makes it difficult to draw up public plans that meet local needs. Weak commitments are often reflected in very weak or vague decentralisation indicators in PRSPs (particularly in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Zambia). In some cases, there are no indicators although action points are developed (e.g. Bolivia). Findings from selected PRSPs are summarised in Table 21.

Table 21: Indicators of Decentralisation, selected PRSPs

Country PRSP	Selected indicators for decentralisation
Albania (NSSED, 2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhancement and consolidation of local autonomy ▪ Enhanced governance performance at local level ▪ Increased transparency, accountability, and participation of community in local government
Bangladesh (NSAPR, 2005)	<p><i>Input indicators:</i> Functional and resource strengthening of Union Parishads and Pourashavas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective steps to establish elected upazila <p><i>Process indicators:</i> Promote national consensus on a comprehensive approach to decentralisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote decentralised service-delivery • Coordination and monitoring made effective and regular at local level <p><i>Outcome indicator:</i> Pro-poor resource utilisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capable local governments
Bolivia (EBRP, 2001)	<p><i>Action points:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review of division of functions and powers among municipal governments, prefectures and national government ▪ Transfer of responsibilities for human resources management in education and health to the municipal governments ▪ Territorial system
Cambodia (NPRS, 2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 9,000 Village Development Committees (VDCs) in the whole country trained in primary responsibilities ▪ All existing VDCs (about 4,000) revalidated ▪ 1,000 new VDCs established in selected villages ▪ Formulate and pass necessary legal instruments for deconcentration: legal instruments in place
Ethiopia (SDPRP, 2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Start implementing district level decentralisation ▪ Implement capacity building programs designed to improve the performance of public sector in Regional Governments and deepen decentralisation. ▪ Encourage community participation in the process of social and economic development ▪ Enhance decentralisation and democratisation process through capacity building at Woreda levels towards poverty reduction and overall economic and social development.
Senegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishment of local tax provisions allowing local



(PRSP, 2002)	<p>authorities to finance local public investments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reform of the code of local authorities
Sierra Leone (PRSP, 2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build capacity to ensure the effective implementation of the decentralisation programme. ▪ Clarify roles and responsibilities between Local Councils and Chiefs. ▪ Build an effective anti-corruption agenda. ▪ Strengthen public financial management, fiscal decentralisation and procurement. ▪ Build capacity for effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the PRSP. <p>Indicators: Capacity building of local councils for service delivery.</p>
Uganda (PEAP, 2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthened Local Government System for service delivery ▪ Per cent of local government revenue as share of local government Budget ▪ Per cent of transfers as a share of local government Budgets that is un-conditional
Vietnam (CGPRS, 2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Per cent of communes having staff to monitor the poverty reduction strategy. ▪ Per cent of communes that are provided with information on poverty reduction programs. ▪ Per cent of communes with complaints and lawsuits. Per cent of petitions to be settled. ▪ Per cent of communes with no social evils. ▪ Per cent of communes with libraries of law. ▪ Number of coaching and propagating courses on State laws and policies.

Bangladesh’s NSAPR acknowledges that prospects for devolution of power remain remote, but claims that incremental strengthening of existing local government functions can have potentially powerful political changes. In this case, new, younger, more educated and outward-looking leaders are beginning to emerge in local agencies, as a direct result of decentralisation.

In some cases, decentralisation is still very recent and much is expected within a short time frame (e.g. Cambodia, Ethiopia, Pakistan). Albania’s NSSD plans within three years to decentralise public functions and responsibilities. In other cases (e.g. Bolivia, Tanzania, Uganda) positive impacts have been felt over time, particularly when decentralisation is firmly linked in with other reform processes, such as local government reforms. Uganda’s PEAP asserts that successes have, over time, bred new challenges as popular demands for enhanced political representation have become stronger, and international standards of good governance have become more explicit. It is clear that reforms of this nature need to be given sufficient time to bed down and be supported by wider institutional strengthening processes, before they can be really assessed for their poverty impact.

5.6 Capacity building

Concurrent capacity building measures often accompany decentralisation strategies, as capacity limitations in local governments are acknowledged in many cases to be a major constraint (e.g. Albania, Cambodia, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Senegal,



Vietnam, Zambia). A Capacity Building Ministry is even being established in Ethiopia to support decentralisation reforms; and Zambia's National Capacity Building Programme for Good Governance outlines in detail the required steps for improving governance in these and related areas. Capacity limitations are identified on political, administrative, organisational, financial and human resources fronts.

Specific capacity priorities include staff training, clarifying or instituting staff and job guidelines, enhancing policy frameworks and administration capacities, but they also include broader institutional changes including improving incentives, motivation and wider structures of inspection and curbing corrupt practices. Pakistan's AGPRS refers to a 'big bang' approach underlying its World Bank-assisted public sector capacity building programme, which focuses on creating 'champions of change' at senior levels, alongside more technical training packages.

Responses to weak capacity are sometimes only vaguely worked up into indicators for change (such as 'Enhancing implementation Capacity' in the Bangladesh NSAPR). Pakistan's AGPRS, Sri Lanka's VSAD and Tanzania's NSGRP have no capacity building indicators outlined. In other cases or within specific sectors, however, clear indicators are now evident. For example, Cambodia's NPRS presents detailed goals and indicators for capacity building within different sectors. In the irrigation and drainage sector, for example, these include providing on-the-job training for technical staff, development of courses, working up clear job descriptions, and to ensure a minimum number of engineers and technicians in each Provincial Department. These rarely have a specific poverty or chronic poverty focus, however.

An indirect exception would include emphases on institutional capacity building within sectors that arguably benefit the poor, such as agriculture (Cambodia, Ethiopia), justice (Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Ethiopia), services (Bolivia), social protection (e.g. capacity to deliver micro-credit in Ethiopia) and community development sectors (Cambodia, Pakistan). Bolivia's EBRP identifies institutional development as a cross-cutting issue included in each strategic component through legal standards and enforcement, as well as institutional reforms, notably decentralisation. Ethiopia's SDPRP mentions capacity building with civil society organisations and NGOs, although the purpose of this is not clear. There is very little direct discussion or indicators for increasing capacity for responding to specific poverty or even vulnerable groups' needs. This is however implied perhaps through the emphasis on decentralisation and participatory consultations in most PRSPs.

Some PRSPs also identify capacity and institutional strengthening requirements to develop strong monitoring and evaluation systems (Albania, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cambodia). Albania's NSSD talks of creating the technical capacities to monitor the effects of policies and programmes. Many statements are made of future intent for increasing PRSP monitoring capacity. This is often planned alongside the development of detailed sectoral policy plans and corresponding monitoring indicators. Tanzania's NGPRS discusses integrating PRSP monitoring across all national policy frameworks, using the recently established Poverty Monitoring System. The JSA notes, however, that monitoring implementation has proved more difficult than originally foreseen due to capacity weakness. In many cases, monitoring government performance is expected through strengthened capacities in civil society or



interest groups to monitor, supervise and access government policies (Burkina Faso), however the details of this are rarely determined. As discussed in Section 3.3, there is a convincing argument for increasing the monitoring of input and processes, to better reflect actual resource allocations and implementation, as well as poverty outcomes. The tying of disbursements more directly to monitoring activities can also improve policy-makers demand for and engagement with poverty information. This is an important area for empirical research in the next stage of this work.

5.6.1 Concluding remarks

In addition to the issues outlined here, implementation may be affected by a range of 'shocks', many of which are foreseen in PRSP documents, and which could serve to drive many people into (deeper) poverty. Most crucially they include continued conflict (Sri Lanka, Nepal), macroeconomic shocks, and changes in the political climate, leading to deprioritisation or abandonment of a PRSP. These are reminders of the contexts in which PRSPs are expected to operate, and the fact that they cannot be insulated in a technocratic bubble delivering poverty reduction. Bangladesh's NSAPR devotes a whole section to analysis of past non-implementation and to strategies for overcoming structural pressures that work against implementation. There may well be useful lessons for other countries here. The primary research could usefully examine scenarios where implementation has taken place against the odds of a major shock or institutional pressures, and where implementation has been derailed, and try to identify what drives effective implementation of strategies for poverty reduction.



6 Conclusion

This paper has discussed the findings from a review of 18 PRSPs and relevant wider literature. We summarise key findings and conclusions concerning poverty analysis, policy choices, implementation and monitoring of PRSPs for chronic poverty reduction, before briefly outlining an important gap in empirical research. .

6.1.1 *Poverty analysis*

Only four of the 18 PRSPs examined here analyse long-term, persistent or chronic poverty, and despite wide-ranging commitments to children, only three PRSPs explicitly or implicitly mention intergenerational transmission of poverty. Most, by contrast differentiate extremely poor or destitute people from other poor people, and many present quantitative data indicating the depth and severity of income poverty. Partly this reflects the absence of relevant panel data, which is being remedied over time in many poor countries. However, very little qualitative information on long-term poverty is also included, suggesting that chronic poverty is not yet sufficiently embedded on policy makers' 'radar screens' as a key problem.

The building blocks of chronic poverty analysis are, however, apparent in most PRSPs. All indicate the multi-dimensional nature of poverty, implicitly or explicitly acknowledging the multiple disadvantages facing chronically poor people. Several PRSPs discuss the persistence of particular aspects of poverty, in particular chronic malnutrition and food insecurity, and also unemployment. All identify groups who are particularly vulnerable to poverty, on the basis of livelihoods and occupations, social exclusion, geographical location or as a result of specific shocks such as illness or conflict. Most identify a wide range of causes of poverty, both structural maintainers of poverty, and specific shocks which propel people (deeper) into poverty.

However, the depth of causal analysis varies even in later or second-round PRSPs, and in some cases, is only informed by limited social analysis. Though governance issues are discussed in all PRSPs, the details of political analysis are also generally absent. These twin biases, reflecting the dominance of economic analysis in thinking about poverty reduction, and the technocratic character of many PRSP processes serve to limit the depth of causal analysis. Potentially this also limits the range of thinkable policy options. In that tackling chronic poverty may require innovative policy thinking based on strong analysis, the quality of analysis in PRSPs is of policy significance, not simply of academic interest. This points to a continued role for those concerned about chronic poverty to engage with PRSP processes.⁶⁹

6.1.2 *Policy choices*

Of the PRSPs examined, only Bangladesh's NSAPR explicitly aims to reduce chronic poverty. How far it matters whether chronic poverty is specifically identified and addressed by particular policies, and how far pro-poor general policies can improve the situation of

⁶⁹ Indeed, the fruits of CPRC's engagement can be seen in Uganda's PEAP and Bangladesh's NSAPR.



chronically poor people is a critical question for the next phase. We surmise that it does matter, that where chronic poverty is not an explicit concern, it can only be addressed by happy accident, and that systematically tackling chronic poverty will require more deliberate action. Explicitly and deliberately attempting to reduce chronic poverty may be particularly important in contexts where 'mainstream' policies are not 'lifting all boats on a rising tide' (Mkandawire, 2005). However, this needs to be established by examining the empirical record of PRSPs and other anti-poverty policies.

These PRSPs contain a range of positive examples of commitments to tackling the manifestations and causes of chronic poverty, though they are not identified as such. Undoubtedly, any individual PRS could do more to tackle chronic poverty, and some PRSPs are much more nuanced than others. However, all strategies attempt to strengthen the livelihoods of poor and vulnerable people, usually based on analysis of where poverty is concentrated – geographically, sectorally and socially. Most plan to focus some resources on particularly poor regions, often through multidimensional programmes to address spatial poverty traps. All aim to promote broad-based or pro-poor growth though it is not always clear that sectoral strategies genuinely flow from this orientation. A few PRSPs explicitly attempt to prevent the intergenerational transmission of poverty via interventions in nutrition or education; several others contain actions in these and other areas that could help prevent poverty being passed from one generation to the next.

All these PRSPs make some attempts to improve the situation of structurally vulnerable social groups, though some are much more comprehensive than others, and all try to tackle vulnerability induced by drivers of poverty, such as natural disasters, or conflict in some way. The growing emphasis on vulnerability, inclusion and social protection (forming specific pillars in many cases) is encouraging with regard to reducing chronic poverty. Most PRSPs attempt to address severe poverty and social exclusion through a combination of directly targeted programmes, mainstream services and sectoral action and an enabling context. However, many targeted programmes are small-scale and likely to be underfunded in relation to the scale of need. Furthermore, there is very little attention to the barriers to addressing social inequalities – it seems to be assumed that social mobilisation campaigns will be sufficient. Experience does not bear this out.

The commitments made in these PRSPs are not negligible. The packages of policies outlined in these PRSPs ought to make a difference for many chronically poor people – most are likely to enhance access to essential services, and many will make a difference to livelihoods. Whether, as packages, they are 'good enough' for chronically poor people must be determined in context, and will be an important issue for the next phase. It is possible that in some countries, macro or sectoral policies will undermine rather than strengthen the livelihoods of certain groups, creating or perpetuating poverty. This review found limited distributional analysis of policy options. Only three of the countries in this sample had planned PSIAs, considerably fewer than the upbeat conclusions of the World Bank and IMF 2005 review of PRSPs would suggest. This may simply reflect the sample of PRSPs chosen. Nonetheless, poor and vulnerable people should be the core constituency of PSIA concerns; if strategically chosen and conducted in a sufficiently inclusive manner, PSIAs could play an important role in advancing the interests of chronically poor people.



Any national anti-poverty strategy will leave some issues uncovered; that is to be expected. However, certain issues of importance to chronically poor people appear to be systematically underaddressed. Some of the most striking are as follows:

- Two vulnerable groups - disabled people and older people - receive notably little attention. In both cases this may reflect a productivist bias since both groups are (wrongly) assumed to be economically inactive. However, both groups are disproportionately likely to be chronically poor. CPRC research should investigate why these groups are paid so little attention, and examine ways in which PRSPs could more effectively improve their situation.
- Attention to inter-ethnic inequalities is also patchy except in a few PRSPs where they are given prominence.
- Social violence and criminality gain little attention, and in many strategies, attention to the consequences of HIV/AIDS, in particular the care of orphans, is probably inadequate.
- There is a strong emphasis on trade as a way out of poverty traps and on reorienting the structure of production to more profitable commodities. There seems a mismatch between this emphasis and the recognition of trade shocks as a key driver of poverty; few strategies seem to have adequate safeguards even with growing attention to social protection.

6.1.3 Implementation

A general conclusion from the wider PRSP literature is that the institutional context for implementation is slowly improving; most importantly, strategies are increasingly linked to budgets usually via MTEF processes, and in some countries, public sector reforms have contributed to implementation capacity. However, substantial political, institutional and financial obstacles to implementation remain. A central focus of the next phase should be on what is and isn't being implemented and why, and how chronically poor people are affected.

All the PRSPs examined combine legal, policy and institutional reforms with a changed focus of resources, in some cases, starting to redress historic underfunding patterns and bring expenditure levels closer to international minimum standards for basic services, e.g. WHO recommendations for health sector spending. In general, we found policy commitments reflected in action matrices and PRSP budgets. However, the budgets presented in PRSPs may be notional, and real budgets developed through MTEF processes frequently fall short of those outlined in PRSP documents. Examining which policies are financed and which ones are deprioritised in PRSP implementation and why is an important task for the next phase of research.

Most PRSPs directly connect decentralisation to poverty reduction through bringing decision-making closer to the poor. However, this places considerable new demands on local governments that often lack the institutional capacity or accountability structures to meet such expectations. There is no inherent reason why local governance structures are likely to



be more representative of the poor or better able to foster socio-economic transformations. That said, there is some evidence that incremental strengthening of local government functions hold potential for powerful changes, as more outward-looking leaders begin to emerge.

From a desk study it is not possible to draw strong conclusions concerning the representation of chronically poor people in PRSP processes. Few PRSPs and APRs provide much detail on who participated in consultative processes, though there are some exceptions, such as Senegal's PRSP. From this one can see that civil organisations that might represent chronically poor people's interests, such as associations of disabled people, for example have participated. There is a growing preference in thinking about participation towards poor people's direct self-representation in policy processes, rather than via intermediaries, such as NGOs. However, one can envisage scenarios where organisations of marginalised people represent an urban or better-off members' agenda, and where poverty-oriented NGOs represent the interests of chronically poor people more effectively. Further investigation of how best chronically poor people's concerns can be represented in policy processes would be helpful in the next phase of the research.

6.1.4 PRSP Monitoring

PRSP poverty monitoring largely responds to the MDGs. Indicators tend to be outcome/impact focused and aggregated to national levels. We concur with the argument that care is required in pursuing more disaggregation in monitoring indicators, both in terms of quality and capacity. However, we would argue for these discussions to remain on the table, although accept that there still remains considerable work that needs to be done to determine 'good enough' indicators for chronic poverty. Certainly, a range of data and studies outside the formal monitoring system inform knowledge about chronic poverty (and feed into iterations of PRSPs as detailed in progress reports). There is scope to support this through other innovative information gathering.

It has been beyond the scope of this paper to look in depth at input and process monitoring. Processes around implementation of the PRSP, including decision making processes around budget allocations, are absolutely key and need to be systematically and rigorously strategised. The extent to which this is happening should become the central focus for second stage empirical work.

6.1.5 Key Questions for Primary Research

This paper has concluded that PRSPs should have an impact on chronically poor people, if they are implemented. They're not perfect and some policies may also undermine wellbeing and research needs to look at both possibilities. However the critical issues are to do with what is being implemented, what isn't and why?

Empirical research therefore needs to consider

1. What general patterns of implementation/non-implementation are there?
2. What is driving these patterns of implementation/non-implementation?



How do these patterns of implementation/non-implementation affect chronic poverty and (different groups of) chronically poor people? Why?



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