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ISSUE 1 January 2007

Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty Research Brief



**Chronic Poverty
Research Centre**

INTRODUCING THE RESEARCH BRIEF

Over the next four years, the **Chronic Poverty Research Centre (CPRC)** (www.chronicpoverty.org) will undertake research and policy analysis on the intergenerational transmission (IGT) of poverty. This twice yearly Research Brief will keep you up to date with our work and link you to key publications and events.

The **CPRC** is a virtual Centre made up of universities, research institutes and NGOs around the world. Our work seeks to

- focus attention on chronic poverty
- stimulate national and international debate
- deepen understanding of the drivers, maintainers and interrupters of chronic poverty
- provide research, analysis and policy guidance that will contribute to its reduction.

The CPRC brings together economic and socio-political analysis of the factors that influence poverty status over long periods, sometimes even causing it to be passed from one generation to another.

What drives the intergenerational transmission of poverty? Individuals' assets, capabilities and agency come together to shape life-, family- and household histories. Our work explores the interaction between these factors and the key moments and decision making points in a life course. They may combine to affect the likelihood that an individual moves into poverty in the future, lives in poverty for the rest of their life or escapes poverty. Falling below a particular threshold of well-being may, in some cases, create *irreversibilities* - those effects that are impossible or extremely difficult to change. For example, *in utero* and early childhood malnutrition can create life-long cognitive impairments. Outcomes may also affect the rest of an individual's household and *their* future life chances. It is clear that disadvantage experienced by an individual can negatively affect their children, subsequently increasing their risk of being poor. It may also limit the assistance an affected adult can provide the older generation.

What interrupts the intergenerational transmission of poverty? We know some of the ways that



Bangladeshi brothers with their maternal and paternal grandmothers. They are a poor and vulnerable family, but the women are proud of their grandsons and hopeful for their future.
© Karen Moore

chronic poverty can be reduced (building people's assets through education and health care; increasing real opportunities for employment and livelihoods through improving the functioning of key labour markets; reducing risk, protecting consumption and supporting investment through social protection), and all of these processes can be central to the interruption of parent-to-child IGT poverty processes. But it is less clear *which* interventions are the most likely to facilitate children of poor parents to escape poverty and thus prevent poverty from passing between generations.

WHO IS WORKING ON IGT POVERTY?

The CPRC draws on a flexible team of researchers from around the world to work to improve our understanding of the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Kate Bird is a socio-economist whose research and advisory work focuses largely on poverty analysis and the tracing of policy impacts to the household and sub-household level. Her work leading the CPRC's research into spatial poverty traps delivered insights into intrahousehold and intergenerational drivers of poverty. She now leads the Centre's interdisciplinary and multi-country work on IGT poverty. Kate has also taken a leading role in the development of resources for re-

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searchers wishing to use life history methods and for those wishing to engage effectively in policy processes. She works mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa (particularly in Uganda and Kenya) and has supported the development of Kenya's own Chronic Poverty Research Centre.

Caroline Harper is an anthropologist whose doctoral research in Northern Thailand has been followed by a sustained focus on child poverty. Caroline worked with the UN in China on anti-poverty programmes and then with Save the Children on poverty, economic adjustment and participation - mainly in South East Asia. This work ran alongside a directorship role of CHIP (Childhood Poverty Policy and Research Centre) and co-directorship of Young Lives, a longitudinal study of childhood poverty. She has brought this experience to her role as Associate Director of the CPRC, where she leads on Policy Engagement and Health, and con-

tributes to work on IGT poverty.

Karen Moore is a social development specialist who takes a multi-disciplinary approach to her work with the CPRC, and has a particular interest in poverty and well-being in childhood and youth. Her work has spanned a range of topics, including poverty concepts, disability, gender, and microfinance. She has been centrally involved in developing frameworks for understanding IGT and life course poverty, and has developed an interest in the key transitions during adolescence. Karen has research experience in Bangladesh, Pakistan and South Africa.

David Neves is a psychologist with an interest in human development and the microdynamics of social change. His recent work on vulnerability, labour markets and social protection focuses on improving understanding of the determinants, mediators and trajectories of poverty in South Africa.

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OUR WORK

Poverty is not simply transferred as a 'package' from one generation to the next. Instead a complex set of factors contribute to the likelihood of a person being poor at some point in their life, and influence the likelihood of that they will become chronically poor, or experience 'irreversibilities'. The CPRC has developed frameworks to examine IGT poverty in developing countries (Moore, 2001; Harper et al., 2003; Moore 2004 & 2005; Bird 2006 - see below) to disentangle this complexity, and identify priorities for policy and intervention.

Several of the questions set out in **Karen Moore's** 2001 Working Paper remain essential for the work we will do over the next 4 years:

- What are the benefits of an approach which focuses on intergenerational factors rather than on individuals?
- Could a focus on IGT poverty encourage a more holistic approach to development policy?
- Do policies to limit IGT poverty risk undermining human rights?
- Are the drivers of IGT poverty different to those of persistent and chronic poverty?

Our **future research** will draw on a range of methods to explore these questions, but panel data and life history analysis will be central. Studying long-run phe-



A grandfather in rural Zimbabwe raising his grandchildren. Some are AIDS orphans, others have parents in the city too poor to support them, to visit or to send remittances. Poverty prevents the grandparents from accessing health care leaving them debilitated by treatable illnesses. Unable to cultivate their land effectively, they rely on food aid for much of the year. Makoni, Zimbabwe © Kate Bird

nomena provides researchers with a set of unique challenges and a series of **Methodological Notes** have been commissioned to provide 'how to' and 'when to/when not to' guides on using different methods and forms of analysis.

Jere Behrman (University of Pennsylvania) has produced a Methodological Note on how **micro data**



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may provide information on the factors which drive and maintain poverty across generations. Micro data sets can include: panel data, parent-child studies, life histories, family histories, cohort studies using time series of cross-sectional data, experimental and "quasi-experimental" data. Given data limitations in many developing countries, the paper focuses on what this range of data options and related analytical techniques have to offer.

See: <http://www.chronicpoverty.org/pdfs/68Behrman.pdf>

Stephen Jenkins and **Thomas Siedler** (ISER, University of Essex) have produced a Methodological Note focusing on the **analysis of panel data** in researching IGT poverty. Their paper outlines the data requirements and the advantages and disadvantages of panel data and they review estimation methods, before identifying developing country panels which meet the data requirements for meaningful IGT-related research.

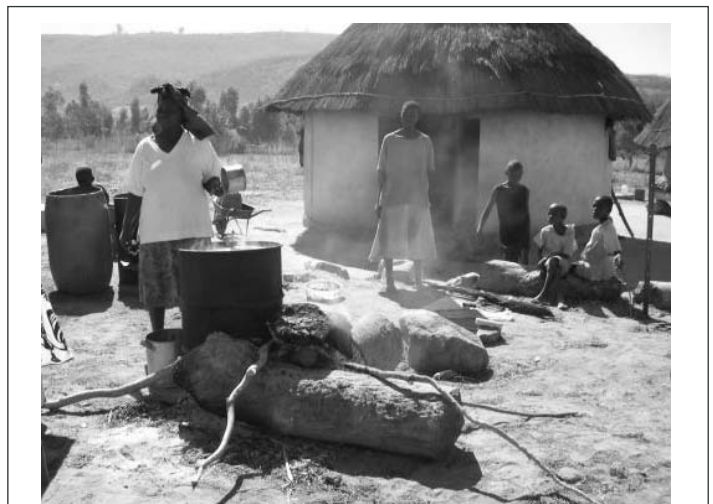
This series will be extended with Methodological Notes on the collection and use of **recall data**, **life histories** and **family histories** in the study of intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Jenkins and **Siedler** have also recently produced a paper reviewing research into **IGT poverty in OECD countries**. They found that there is strong evidence that growing up poor has a negative impact on future life chances but the degree of impact depends on the variables that are explored and the analytical approach. The authors suggest that work in the US may be useful for generating hypotheses for work elsewhere, but that local specificity is important so care needs to be taken in transferring findings from the US to other contexts.

We are currently launching several new research projects. Themes include the importance of **physical assets**, **human capital assets** and **conflict** as drivers in the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Specific projects are being launched in **Bangladesh** and **Uganda** - and we will report on progress later this year.

NEWS

Youth and Development: Learning the Lessons of the World Development Report 2007 was hosted by ODI, Peacechild International, CPRC and APGOOD on 5th December 2006 at Portcullis House, London. Speakers: Rt Hon Hilary Benn (MP, Secretary of State for International Development, UK) and Andrew Mitchell (MP, Shadow Secretary of State for International Development, UK). The meeting discussed issues raised by the World Bank's World Development Report 2007 'Development and the Next Generation', and explored whether youth-related issues are on government and donor agendas. There were discussions about appropriate policy responses and the



This woman is brewing home made beer for local sale. Selling beer has enabled her to augment her income and educate all her children. One of her adult children has become a teacher - illustrating the importance of education as an interrupter of IGT poverty. Makoni, Zimbabwe © Kate Bird

roles to be played by the wider development community, including researchers, NGOs and young people themselves. See link:

www.odi.org.uk/PPPG/poverty_and_inequality/events.html

1.3 Billion Youth: Is the Research and Policy Community Prepared? This roundtable was hosted by ODI, CPRC and Peacechild on 21 November 2006 at the Overseas Development Institute. See link: www.odi.org.uk/PPPG/poverty_and_inequality/events.html

The **World Development Report 2007 'Development and the Next Generation'** was launched in September 2006. The report suggests that governments in the developing world should invest more in their young people, which now number more than 1.3 billion - more than at any time in history. If they do not, the countries risk falling behind in the global economy and experiencing serious social tension. Many developing countries have a fantastic opportunity to capitalise on a demographic dividend with proper investment - given the large number of youth set to move into the labour force. The report identifies five critical lifecourse transition periods during adolescence and youth that can be examined through the policy lenses of opportunities, capabilities and second chances.

- o *Learning period* - the period from childhood to adolescence is critical for learning. Inadequate training during this crucial period is very costly, if even possible at all, to reverse later in life.

- o *Work transition* - the transition from school to work needs to be smooth so that the skills learned in school can be put to productive use, so as to minimise youth disaffection.

- o *Health risks* - adolescence is a period of exploration. Youth commonly first experience sex, drugs and alcohol



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during this period. They need the information to be able to understand the associated risks and make informed choices.

o *Forming families* - the extent to which women are prepared and educated adequately before having children is very important for their children's outcomes - and thus for the intergenerational transmission of poverty.

o *Exercising citizenship* - providing adolescents with a way of participating in public life increases the likelihood that they maintain civic responsibilities throughout their life.

NOTICE BOARD

Courses

The National Centre for Research Methods is an ESRC initiative aimed at improving the UK's social science research capacity (see <http://www.ccsr.ac.uk/methods>). These courses have been identified as being of potential interest to those researching the intergenerational transmission of poverty:

Qualitative Longitudinal Research: Exploring ways of researching lives through time

Friday 16th March 2007,

London South Bank University

Bren Neale, Anna Bagnoli, Jon Prosser, Nick Emmel and Janet Holland

For registration, see www.ncrm.ac.uk/database or contact Victoria.Higham@manchester.ac.uk

Narrative Methods

Thursday 29th - Friday 30th March 2007

UEL Docklands, London.

Corrine Squire, Molly Andrews and Maria Tamboukou

For registration, see www.ncrm.ac.uk/database or contact [Jacqui Thorp \(jmh6@soton.ac.uk\)](mailto:jmh6@soton.ac.uk)

Conferences

3-6 September 2007 - European Sociological Association (ESA) Research Network - Sociology of Children and Childhood - invites submission of papers for consideration for inclusion in the 8th European Sociological Association Conference at Glasgow, Scotland. The general theme of the conference is Conflict, Citizenship and Civil Society and the various sessions will address how these topics specifically impact on the everyday worlds of children and their childhoods. Abstracts (200 words maximum) will only be accepted through completion of the online submission form available at the conference website at: www.esa8thconference.com. The deadline for receipt of abstracts is 28th February 2007.

17-19 September 2007 - Comparative Research

Programme on Poverty (CROP) and Childwatch International Research Network (CRIN) are co-hosting a workshop on Rethinking Poverty and Children in the New Millennium: Linking Research and Policy in Oslo, Norway. See www.crop.org/workshops/ for background paper and call for papers (deadline 11 April 2007).

PUBLICATIONS

Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty, CPRC

Kate Bird (2007) The intergenerational transmission of poverty: an overview. CPRC Background Paper. CPRC Working Paper, forthcoming.

Max Baldwin Orero, Charlotte Heime, Suzanne Jarvis and Sarah Mohaupt (2007) A select annotated bibliography for the examination of the impact of conflict on the intergenerational transmission of chronic poverty. CPRC Annotated Bibliography, forthcoming.

Stephen P. Jenkins and Thomas Siedler (2007) Methodological Note: Using household panel data to understand the intergenerational transmission of poverty. CPRC Working Paper, forthcoming.

Stephen P. Jenkins and Thomas Siedler (2007) The intergenerational transmission of poverty in OECD countries. CPRC Working Paper, forthcoming.

Jere R. Behrman (2006) Methodological Note: Using Micro Data to Understand Better the Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty in Low Income Developing Countries. CPRC Working Paper No. 68. www.chronicpoverty.org/pdfs/68Behrman.pdf

Briony Smith and Karen Moore (2006) Intergenerational transmission of poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. CPRC Annotated Bibliography 3 (CPRC Working Paper No. 59). [www.chronicpoverty.org/pdfs/59Smith_\(Moore\).pdf](http://www.chronicpoverty.org/pdfs/59Smith_(Moore).pdf)

Karen Moore (2005) Thinking about youth poverty through the lenses of chronic poverty, life-course poverty and intergenerational poverty. CPRC Working Paper 57. www.chronicpoverty.org/pdfs/57Moore.pdf

Karen Moore (2004) Chronic, life-course and intergenerational poverty, and South-East Asian youth. Paper presented to the UN Workshop on Youth Poverty in South-East Asia, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 2004.

Caroline Harper, Rachel Marcus and Karen Moore (2003) Enduring poverty and the conditions of childhood: lifecourse and intergenerational poverty transmissions. *World Development*. 31(3), 535-554.

Moore, Karen (2001) Frameworks for understanding the intergenerational transmission of poverty and well-being in developing countries. CPRC Working Paper 8. <http://www.chronicpoverty.org/pdfs/08Moore.pdf>

FOLLOWING UP This **Research Brief** will be produced twice a year. Contributions are welcome. Please send your short "opinion pieces", notices, comments and suggestions to: karen.moore@manchester.ac.uk. See www.chronicpoverty.org for copies of this Research Brief and other resources. To contact us, join the CPRC's mailing list or to receive this newsletter by email or post, email us at: karen.moore@manchester.ac.uk



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