



COMBATING PERSISTENT POVERTY IN AFRICA

BASIS CRSP Policy Conference, November 15-16, 2004
Four Points Hotel, Washington, D.C.

Organized around a set of innovative studies of persistent poverty in Africa, this conference will bring together leading researchers and key development professionals and policymakers in a two-day format designed to facilitate productive interaction between poverty research and development programming. Day 1 will take a critical look at new research findings on persistent poverty, drawing out their implications for policy and programming. Day 2 will then focus on new programming and policy efforts designed to alleviate persistent poverty, reflecting on what they do well and their likelihood of success given what we know about persistent poverty.

An earlier generation of research on persistent poverty has shown that there is a significant amount of turnover amongst the poor as some households exit, and others enter, poverty over time. Some of this mobility can be attributed to regular movement back and forth (a “churning” along the poverty line) in response to variability in climate, prices, health, *etc.* However, other crossings of the poverty line reflect permanent shifts in long-term well-being associated with gains or losses of productive assets. Distinguishing this churning from true structural mobility is important because it clarifies which policy interventions will facilitate effective and sustainable impacts on poverty. Conversely, it also helps identify the constraints that may leave some households caught in a trap of persistent, structural poverty.

The *Combating Persistent Poverty in Africa* conference is designed to disseminate recent BASIS research findings on long-term, structural poverty transitions. The first day of the conference will be dedicated to the discussion of a series of specially-commissioned background papers. Presentations will provide insight into the findings of research on movement into, and out of, poverty in several countries in Africa including Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Madagascar and South Africa. A full list of papers and authors is provided at the end of this document. These studies are unified by a focus on the ways in which households are able (or unable) to take advantage of new opportunities such as market liberalization, expanded trade or new technology, as well as on the ways they can recover from major shocks such as drought or political crisis that limit their options. The objective of this first day will be to extract from this research the broader policy and programming themes, such a safety nets, which directly reduce the risks that drive households into poverty, and cargo nets, which build asset bases that lead to pathways out of poverty.

The second day of the conference will provide a forum for applying these broader themes to specific policy and programming interventions. Panel discussions will be organized around three specific programming areas: Famine relief and food aid; Small farm agricultural policies; and, HIV/AIDS. To help ground the discussion, each panel will be centered on a specific policy or programming effort: the Ethiopian Famine Relief and Safety Nets Program; the Program on Agribusiness Linkages (PAL) in South Africa; and, efforts to enhance assets and Livelihood Security in areas hard hit by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Discussants and conference participants will have the opportunity to discuss these programs, and identify what lessons they have taught us about Combating Persistent Poverty.

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PRESENTATIONS:

Day One

Christopher Barrett (Cornell University): “Welfare Dynamics in Rural Kenya and Madagascar.”

Christopher Barrett and Michael Carter (BASIS/University of Wisconsin): “Poverty Traps and the Asset Poverty Line: Concepts and Implications for Measurement and Policy.”

Michael Carter: “Persistent Poverty in South Africa: Severity, Sources and Solutions.”

John Hoddinott (IFPRI): “Shocks and their Consequences across and within Households in Rural Zimbabwe.”

Peter Little (University of Kentucky): “‘Churning’ on the Margins: The Social Dynamics of Poverty in Northeastern Ethiopia.”

Pauline Peters (Harvard University): “The Challenge of Achieving Food Security in a Poor Agrarian Country: The Case of Malawi.”

Ann Whitehead (University of Sussex): “Persistent Poverty in North East Ghana.”

Day Two

David Hulme (Manchester Chronic Poverty Research Centre): “The Chronic Poverty Report, 2004-5”

Beth Dunford (USAID/Ethiopia): “Ethiopian Famine Prevention and Safety Nets Program”

Gary Mullins (ComMark): “The Promoting Agribusiness Linkages (PAL) Program in South Africa”

Richard Strickland (USAID/Africa Bureau): “Property Rights and Livelihood Security in an Era of HIV/AIDS”

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Co-sponsored by the USAID Offices of Agriculture and Poverty Reduction, and the BASIS Collaborative Research Program

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