
EDITORIAL

THIS ISSUE INDICATES the preoccupation of many African scholars today with two overriding problems: poverty and the effects of globalization. Remedies proposed will be as multifaceted as the phenomenon itself, since poverty is the result of many overlapping causes. The complexity of the problem requires an immediate attack on all fronts but the sad irony is that each remedy requires quantities of money and vast numbers of effective administrators. These, it appears, are the very resources we most lack.

This leads to globalization and the degree to which this contributes to the impoverishment of sub Saharan Africa? Dr Makoa provides an overview of the characteristics of globalization in East and southern Africa. The democratization process in Africa is best understood as a capitulation of economic and thus, political self-determination, in which domestic economies are subordinated to the needs of global capitalism.

A third characteristic of African scholarship today is the increasing attention paid to children and women. Stella Nana-Fabu of Cameroon suggests that empowering women by giving them the political, economic and social means to control their own fertility will have immediate positive repercussions on the whole attempt to control poverty. In another study Victor Muzvidziwa describes strategies adopted by poor urban women to maintain their independence in town while securing their future long-term prospects in the village. Dr Muzvidziwa recommends that women be included, in their own right, in any programme involving land distribution and ownership.

In a very different vein, Kwaku Osei-Hwedie and Alice Hobona examine the extent to which teachers are aware of the emotional abuse of children by adults. They conclude that while there is some awareness, this needs to be developed.

Two articles deal directly with poverty in quite different ways. Gladys Bindura-Mutangadura's study of the ways in which poor urban households cope with the death and illness of household members leads her to recommend strategies for strengthening informal support mechanisms already being tapped by these households. She argues that

development must mean more than increasing national income at the macroeconomic level. Instead, an innovative enabling environment should be put in place to help people conduct the informal businesses upon which they depend when struck by household income shock. Resources should be directed to helping the poor succeed in the informal sector and existing voluntary societies could serve as a model for the disbursement of social protection funds.

Philip Rono and Abdillahi Aboud analyse the reasons why rural communities do not perform as well as hoped during community development programmes such as building schools and wells. The authors point out that the active attempts to encourage community spirit have been countervailed by individualism. As a result of their survey they show that the socio-economic profiles of the individuals have an effect on their willingness to participate in community programmes, and, in particular, suggest that the religious orientation of participants plays an interesting role.

Finally, Dr Gecau provides an account of audience responses in rural Zimbabwe to a film intended to encourage the education of girls. A lesson to be drawn from this article, as from others in this issue, is that development agents must take much more seriously the intellectual, cultural and economic resources, the experiences, desires and hopes, that the subjects of development bring with them to the development process. The recipients of the development thrust must be understood and their structures, such as voluntary societies, respected. They must therefore be taken as partners in the process, not *tabula rasa* on which the development agency can write what they will. As many of this issue's contributors say in different ways, African policymakers and other development agents should look to African realities and African resources for the problems that beset us.

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