

**Perspectives on Poverty in Swaziland:
Historical and Contemporary Forms.
Report of Swaziland National Workshop.**

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1. INTRODUCTION

On 7th and 8th December 2000, a national workshop which was sponsored by the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) and organized by the Swaziland National Chapter was held at Mountain Inn, Mbabane. Participants came from the University of Swaziland, UNDP, UNESCO National Commission, and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs). The NGOs which were represented were the Women's Resource Centre (Umtapo wa Bomake), Coordinating Assembly of NGOs (CANGO), Women and the Law in Southern Africa, World University Service - Swaziland (WUS-SD), Save the Children Fund, World Vision International and Red Cross Society. Thirty-four participants attended on the first day and twenty-nine participants were present on the second day and thirteen papers were presented at the workshop.

The theme of the workshop was: *Perspectives on poverty in Swaziland: Historical and contemporary forms*. The objectives of the workshop were the following:

- (a) To provide an opportunity for sharing the results of the most recent research on the nature of poverty in Swaziland;
- (b) To promote dialogue between various stakeholders as a contribution to the process of adopting appropriate remedies on poverty;
- (c) To promote comparative insights into the nature of and strategies adopted to address poverty in Swaziland; and
- (d) To advance academic activities which OSSREA sponsors and supports in Swaziland.

The following were sub-themes of the workshop:

- (a) Definition and nature of poverty in the 20th century
- (b) Women and poverty
- (c) Children, youths and poverty
- (d) Poverty and Politics in Swaziland
- (e) Comparative perspectives on poverty in Swaziland
- (f) Strategies to alleviate poverty in Swaziland.

The Acting Vice-Chancellor of the University of Swaziland, Prof. B. M. Dlamini, opened the workshop on 7 December through a speech, which was read on his behalf by Dr. B. A. B. Sikhondze, Dean, Faculty of Humanities. The Acting Vice-Chancellor expressed deep gratitude to OSSREA for supporting research in Swaziland, and also in Eastern and Southern Africa. In particular, he congratulated OSSREA on the workshop. In December 1989, OSSREA had

sponsored a regional conference in Swaziland whose theme was *Agricultural history in Eastern and Southern Africa*. In April 1997, OSSREA had also sponsored the first national workshop in Swaziland whose theme was *Issues in the economy and politics of Swaziland since 1968*. The Acting Vice-Chancellor also commended OSSREA and the local organisers for choosing the theme of poverty for the current workshop because this demonstrated an awareness of serious problems facing, not only Swaziland, but also many countries in the region. He also appreciated the idea of encouraging a broad range of participants from the University of Swaziland and those who came from outside the University. It was important that there was a constant dialogue between academics, policy makers, implementers and those with the means to mobilise local and international resources for poverty reduction.

The papers presented at the workshop reflected diverse academic backgrounds. The theme of the workshop was so relevant and interesting that every participant was able to contribute to the discussions.

One fundamental aspect of the workshop was its drawing together people and institutions involved in reducing poverty. It was appreciated that an intellectual ritual which academics usually keep to themselves in university seminar rooms was brought out into the open and called for the participation of people and institutions directly involved in eliminating poverty. The workshop was found to be enlightening as representatives of the NGOs commented on the papers by drawing on the first-hand experiences they gained from working with various communities in Swaziland. In general, there was much appreciation that this workshop was organised because it provided for a debate of an important subject by people who normally do not share their experiences.

In the end it was resolved that such meetings should be organised frequently because other people's experiences are important lessons and the workshop was a useful way of channelling these experiences into a common pool.

2. SUMMARY OF PAPERS PRESENTED

2.1 Some Perspectives on Poverty and Land Degradation on Swazi National Land

(Hezekiel M. Mushala)

In his opening paper, Prof. Hezekiel M. Mushala brought out a relationship between poverty and land or resource degradation in rural Swaziland. He argued that because poor people have limited access to resources such as a good financial income, they fail to protect natural resources. He demonstrated that certain cultural practices lead to over utilization of resources and thus eventually create poverty. Mushala pointed out that because Swazi custom entitles every Swazi male to have a piece of land through a system called *khonta* (i.e., pledging allegiance to a chief who allocates land), small pieces of land are allocated.

These lands on Swazi National Land are usually small and are predisposed to over-cropping and overgrazing, which lead to land degradation. In this situation incomes from land utilization are small and smallholder farmers are unable to invest in land rehabilitation strategies. In the end, both landowners and the land on Swazi National land become impoverished. However, Mushala also observed that it is not in every case that poverty should lead to environmental degradation. Both poverty and environmental degradation could be tackled successfully through the central government's policies that encourage adoption of appropriate and environment-conserving technologies.

The discussion welcomed the paper because it addressed a fundamental area, land, where poverty in Swaziland originated. It was pointed out that the land tenure system in Swaziland preserved a certain power structure that was not always willing to carry out radical land reform which would rearrange the power structure. Considering that 71 per cent of the population lived on Swazi National land and that the majority of the poor who made up 66 per cent of the National Population who are poor live in rural areas, there is the sheer enormity of how much employment has to be created as a consequence of land reform which will release many people from the land.

2.2 Poor Environmental Management: A Cause of Rural Poverty in Swaziland

(Bonginkosi B. A. B. Sikhondze)

Dr. Bonginkhosi A. B. Sikhondze supplemented Mushala's paper. Sikhondze examined how poor environmental management caused poverty in rural Swaziland and also degraded the environment. For Sikhondze, environmental mismanagement appears to be the main cause of poverty because land is the platform from which all human, social, political and economic activities issue. Overgrazing has been a major human contribution to environmental degradation. This diminution of resources contributes to and compounds the problem of poverty in rural Swaziland. Sikhondze also noted that overpopulation by both humans and domesticated animals degraded the environment and thus constrained the ability to sustain increased agricultural production. Low and poor yields did not promote trade in commodities produced in rural areas where the majority of the poor are found. In addition to human agents of environmental degradation, and causes of poverty, Sikhondze also acknowledged natural causes of environmental degradation. For Sikhondze, 'violent changes in weather conditions which led to drought conditions also led to declines in food production, and all these phenomena have bred poverty in the long run' (p.5). On the other hand, heavy rains that washed away the top loose soil particles reduced the quality of the soil, and thus the environment. In brief, heavy or inadequate rain has an adverse impact on the soil, vegetation and crops. Sikhondze argued that this physical impoverishment translated into the human poverty in terms of poor social conditions and inadequate financial or economic resources.

In reaction to Dr. Sikhondze's presentation, the discussion in the workshop appreciated the complex relationship between environment, human need and usage of the natural resources. The workshop felt that it was necessary to explain why the Government of Swaziland appeared powerless to make strategic interventions intended to protect the environment which, and people who, represent Swaziland's renewable resources. It was important to explain the class nature of

the Swazi society and the class content of public interventions. Dr. Sikhondze articulated the dilemma that the search for development has at the same time generated much impoverishment. It was particularly instructive that Sikhondze's paper demonstrated a complex combination and evolution of deterioration in the social and economic conditions of the Swazi population since independence despite the country's having maintained its middle-income status all along. The workshop noted that while economic growth and physical expansion of the economy were visible, there was a growth in the percentage of the population who were in serious poverty.

2.3 The Concept of Poverty: Its Analysis and Application to Swaziland

(John K. Ngwisha)

Professor Ngwisha started his presentation by drawing attention to efforts in the past two hundred years to explain poverty. This historiographical exploration led Ngwisha to see the concept of poverty as 'complex, multidimensional, and difficult' to define and identify. This presentation was a summary of extensive literature dealing with poverty in its historical and contemporary forms. While being poor is 'loaded with underlying subjective political and value assumptions', Ngwisha presented poverty as a social condition, portraying notions of 'scarcity and deprivation'.

In addition to providing a historical perspective in defining contemporary poverty, the paper was fascinating for its methodology. The paper started with a review of intellectual reflections on poverty over time. This led to a synthesis of the conceptual definition of poverty which guided a critical exploration and analysis of how poverty expresses itself in many parts of Swaziland. The discussion is based upon data from a report on poverty undertaken by a team of scholars in the Faculty of Social Science in the University of Swaziland.

A qualitative research method which is called *participatory assessment or appraisal* was used in collecting data for the report on poverty in 1995. Ngwisha pointed out that people participated in defining and assessing ways in which poverty affected them.

2.4 Children and Holistic Strategies to Reduce Poverty in Swaziland

(Ackson M. Kanduza)

The picture of a generalised poverty in Swaziland was advanced in another direction in Prof. Ackson M. Kanduza's paper which sought holistic interventions for reducing poverty. The paper is divided into three parts. Part One is an introduction which sets out what social historians have done on poverty in Southern Africa. The introduction also cites recent studies which show that about 47 per cent of the population in Sub-Africa is below 15 years of age. There is a growing body of research on children because of their relative significance in national populations. In the oral presentation, Kanduza emphasised that his paper was a contribution to a search for a radical strategy for alleviating poverty in Swaziland.

In part two of the paper, Kanduza sketches out a 'historiography of Swazi Poverty' from the 1930s. He notes that a British Government report on financial and social conditions in Swaziland

in 1932 attributed poverty among the Swazi to negligence of the colonial administration. Kanduza's reference to a 1939 study by the anthropologist, Hilda Beemer (later Mrs. Hilda Kuper), on the diet of the Swazi, brought out two important and perceptive observations on poverty in Swaziland. First, Beemer's study indicated that 'famine marauds' in small Swazi communities and children were usually the worst victims. Second, it dealt with how colonial intervention had reduced 'security in times of dearth' among the Swazi.

Kanduza further considered studies in the 1960s which were undertaken by conservative scholars from the Natal Institute for Social Research. According to Kanduza, these studies divided the Swazi society into two sectors, namely, the modern and dynamic world of white settlers and the 'backward, traditional and in-ward looking' sector which comprised the indigenous population. The prescription on backwardness, that is poverty, was to transform the latter sector into a modern and dynamic system of outward-looking production. Kanduza pointed out that these researchers from the Natal Institute of Social Research lacked Beemer's awareness that the so-called modern sector had contributed to the impoverishment of the Swazi population. Kanduza disagreed with the prescription that poverty would be eliminated by modernising the economy associated with the indigenous population. The strategy carried poverty along with the so-called development. In his view, it was necessary to recognize the uneven levels of economic change in an economy which was integrated and to deal with factors which deepened impoverishment. It was an analytical and sociological error to assume that there existed some inherent constraints to development in the Swazi population. Kanduza further pointed out that it was unfortunate that the Swazi post-colonial administration embraced the modernization approach from the attainment of independence in 1968 to the early 1990s.

Kanduza stated that the modernization approach was either a blunt instrument or a misconceived strategy for promoting development. In justifying this criticism, Kanduza relied on the work of Robin Palmer and Neil Parsons which was published in 1977 and identified the uneven process of capitalist development and the poorly conceived policies of colonial administrations in Central and Southern Africa as the major causes of rural poverty. In the early 1990s, there was a clear pattern in government documents to stay away from notions of modernization of what had previously been considered as traditional and retarding economic advancement. Kanduza's historiographical approach noted how the Government of Swaziland had encouraged research on poverty recently as a basis for development policies.

Kanduza noted that despite this research, there was still some serious confusion in the statistics on poverty in Swaziland. He pointed out that while the report on poverty in 1995 indicated that 66 per cent of the Swazi population lived below the poverty line, a 1999 report based on the 1995 report indicated that only 45 per cent of the population lived below the poverty line. The confusion was compounded, according to Kanduza, when two explanatory models used by a group of economists who interpreted the 1995 report indicated that, based on an income of E71.00 a month, 66 per cent of the population lived below the poverty line. However, 45 per cent of the population were said to live below the poverty line when it was considered that the monthly individual income in the country was E48.00.

The third part of the paper tried to justify why it was recommended that Swaziland should focus on children as a way of evolving holistic strategies for reducing poverty. First, it was a radical

and ethical consideration to focus on the most vulnerable social group. Second, children were not special cases but are points of integration in any society. Third, the roles of children have changed radically and thus transformed them from being dependents to being significant contributors in areas such as the informal sector and military activities. Fourth, the powerlessness of children meant that they absorbed the worst experiences of poverty. Fifth and finally, tackling poverty with strategies that identified children as a take-off point was an important investment in the future social and economic reproduction of the Swazi society.

The reaction of the workshop centred on whether the paper advocated child labour and on the position of the United Nations Convention on Rights of Children. In response to the view that the paper appeared to advocate child labour, Kanduzi raised three points. First, that it was necessary to recognise that there was child labour, and that in many cases this was unavoidable. He elaborated that in Southern Africa, under capitalisation and the need to maximise profits by using cheap labour, influenced extensive use of child labour. Second, child labour partly reflected poverty. Children become adults in the labour market such as in the informal sector either because of traditional modes of socialising such as herding cattle or they were a means of generating income for poor families. Poor families use children in the informal sector such as in street vending. Third, indications are that there is a growing number of children who will not receive good quality education in Swaziland and that poor or inadequate education predisposes many people to poverty. On the UN Convention on the rights of children, it was pointed out that Swaziland, like any member state of the UN, is under obligation to provide good quality life for all children in the country.

2.5 Poverty and Raising a Child in Mental Retardation: Experiences of a Family

(Sifiso Ivalinda Sithole)

Ms. Sifiso Ivalinda Sithole presented a sequel on children in poverty. The paper 'Poverty and Raising a child in Mental Retardation: Experiences of a Family' brought the workshop down to a grassroots and concrete situation where poverty manifests itself. Furthermore, the paper focused on an extreme continuation of social and economic deprivation with physical incapacitation. Ms. Sithole explored how an individual impacts on the family and how the family impacts on the individual. The paper presented the difficulties of a poor family looking after a mentally retarded child. One of the major needs of mentally retarded children is medical services and care. These services are normally beyond the reach of poor families. These children also need education which they deserve to receive.

Ms. Sithole illustrated her presentation with pictures of a family she had worked with. She gave details of her personal involvement which went beyond professional obligations. This identification with the family gave Ms. Sithole unusual insight into the problems of a retarded child in a poor family. In the end, Ms. Sithole became a permanent provider of services to the family. Poverty aggravates disability because families or individuals who cannot provide basic needs are unable to provide for extra obligations brought by incapacitation. There is no systematic provision of services by the government or any public body. For example, one would expect free education and medical services for physically handicapped children from poor

families. In dealing with their vicious cycle of poverty and disabled children, Ms. Sithole suggested a number of important recommendations.

These recommendations included: first, that education, health services and general welfare should be provided by the community or government agents. Second, There should be a preparedness to deal with social problems arising from poverty and physical retardation instead of waiting to act when things happen. There is a need to be pro-active instead of being reactive. Third, there should be an intense awareness campaign about the problems and needs of families with disabled children. Fourth, income-generating projects for families with handicapped children are necessary in order to empower the families and also to give children an opportunity to acquire appropriate skills and generate their own income. Fifth, there should be special and appropriate transport to ferry children to places where they receive services or to caregivers such as nurses so that they can visit and give services to incapacitated children in poor families.

The workshop expressed appreciation that Ms. Sithole brought out an example of poverty which is rare and often not considered when broad aspects of impoverishment are discussed. It was further noted that Ms. Sithole's work was pioneering in that a full picture of the phenomenon she discussed was largely unknown nationwide. For example, statistics are needed to demonstrate the national situation on various forms of physical or mental incapacitation. Something needs to be said about non-governmental organisations of incapacitated people or what NGOs are doing among this section of the Swazi society.

The debate also considered the nature of government policies and how much government was committed to those policies and ensuring the welfare of the handicapped people, especially those in poor families. It was noted that government action did not show a willingness to support incapacitated people in the manner they deserve. For example, the Government of Swaziland has not fully complied with international conventions or major resolutions of international conferences.

2.6 Revisiting Divine Providence in a Monetary Economy

(Joyce Nonhlanhla Vilakati)

In this global context, Ms. Joyce Nonhlanhla Vilakati interrogated in her paper the idea of 'divine providence' and evaluated its relevance in understanding poverty in Swaziland. The paper was remarkable for its theological perspective on poverty which is often regarded as a secular problem and one which can be solved through human intervention. The paper was an interesting historical and intellectual view which squarely fitted the theme of the workshop.

The historical presentation in Ms. Vilakati's paper included at least three important elements. First, she discussed the principle of 'divine providence' as anchored in the process of creation in which God as creator was bound to sustain the order He had created. In turn, human beings are obliged to exercise responsible stewardship. 'Divine providence' was thus a principle of seeking understanding about how God has provided for His creation over time. In particular, God gave all human beings land to use and to sustain procreation and reproduction. The second historical element in the presentation was how the principle of 'divine providence' was used in the course

of time to legitimise inequality by persuading acceptance of the fact that every social position was ordained by God as creator and provider of everything. In this regard she found the parable of the talents in Matthew 25: 14-30 and Luke 19: 12-27 as 'morally repugnant' because it appeared to justify unequal division of land which had emerged from the time of creation to the time of Jesus. Vilakati called for historical relevance and specificity in applying the concept of 'divine providence' because it could ordain and justify social injustice.

The third historical aspect which Vilakati presented was the application of the concept of 'divine providence' to Swaziland. She cautioned that Swazi history has its peculiar watersheds which could lead to serious contradictions and misunderstanding of essence in a message. She cited the vision of King Somhlolo, early 19th century Swazi ruler, about a Whiteman who had a scroll and a piece of metal. In subsequent explanation and interpretation of the vision, the scroll stood for the Bible and the metal represented money in coin form. The King advised his people to embrace the Bible and to avoid money. Vilakati contended that such historically distilled wisdom needed to be understood and applied to contemporary situations with considerable refinement and pragmatism. She argued that just as 'divine providence' did not justify unequal distribution of resources, Somhlolo's vision in contemporary Swaziland neither identified the Bible as the only answer to material impoverishment nor excluded money as a resource to overcome poverty. She concluded and pleaded that

...in order for the Christian faith in general and the doctrine of divine providence in particular not to degenerate into an irrelevant theological anachronism, it must be refined in such a way that it offers a moral incentive for formulating national policies; the implementation of which would correct imbalances in wealth distribution and thus restore human dignity.

It was noted in the discussion that Christians appeal to God for courage, strength and wisdom so that they deal with the social realities facing them. There was an appeal that the scriptures should be read thoroughly and be understood in their specific and broad application. It was, however, recognised that the Church was more lenient with the poor than the Government was.

2.7 New Dimensions in Understanding Poverty

(Rajan Matthews)

Another presentation which confirmed that poverty was a multidimensional social condition was the paper by R. Mathew. The paper looked at the definition of poverty, culture of poverty, identification of the poor, causes of poverty, globalisation, poverty and HIV/AIDS, addressing poverty and finding solutions and making recommendations. In the introduction, Mathew pointed out that policy makers were the leading group who were not doing anything about poverty. He demonstrated this by showing that the summit of the seven richest countries in the world (G. 7) held in Japan in 2000 spent US \$7.8m in a 4-day meeting. Mathew further pointed out that the richest people appear not to be concerned with poverty in the world because the four richest people in the world could pay off the debt of all African countries.

During the discussion, the workshop noted that economic structural programmers of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund imposed conditions which generally worsened poverty in many African countries. It was further pointed out that there was a need for the empowerment of social groups or individuals through education and fundamental human rights. The workshop was informed that NGOs which assist with material aid offer short-term assistance. The NGOs provide long-term support in terms of empowering people by giving them information and skills about how to acquire that information, business skills and by teaching them how to tap resources in government and the donor community.

2.8 Adult Education for Sustainable Development and Alleviation of Poverty: A Case for Swaziland

(Joseph P. B. Mutangira)

This concern with mobilising resources for sustainable development and subsequent reduction of poverty was at the centre of Dr. Joseph P. B. Mutangira's paper. In using Swaziland as a case study of how adult education could contribute to sustainable development, Mutangira argued that the participation of adults is a requirement for eradicating poverty. Dr. Mutangira pointed out that poverty is a global problem of huge proportions and is also a serious problem in Swaziland because poverty shows the incapacity of adults to provide for their children and their families. He further pointed out that poverty manifests itself in the lack of political power and political voice. Education and training of adults was of paramount importance in any strategy to sustain human development and correspondingly to alleviate and eradicate property. Using a series of charts and tables on the overhead projector, Mutangira demonstrated that low investment in human resources leads to low skills and low income. He pointed out that a high investment in human resources leads to high levels of skill, productivity and income. According to Mutangira, a growing body of literature has demonstrated that there is a need for adults to continue to learn throughout their lives so that they adapt to changing demands in the economy and because advancement in skills also increases income earned. Thus, adult education should comprise a variety of skills and knowledge to ensure empowerment and their active participation in all aspects of society.

In the case of Swaziland, Mutangira drew attention to influences of the global effort by the United Nations and regional organisations such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to promote human development through development and advancement in skills. He pointed out that Swaziland adopted the Economic and Social Reform Agenda (ESRA) and the National Development Strategy (NDS) in which 'full development of human resources' will be a central measurement of development and reduction of poverty in Swaziland.

Mutangira, however, pointed out that providing appropriate adult education, and especially one relevant to Swaziland's changing needs for skills, will not be easy even if the Swazi society and the Swazi Government understood the importance of a skill-oriented education for adults. He cited two broad and global constraints, namely, national poverty in the Third World and myths about poverty. In discussing the issue of national poverty, he cited Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere's speech in Hamburg on the 27th April 1999. In that speech, the late and founding president of Tanzania called for cancellation of Third World debt as a strategy for reducing poverty.

Mwalimu Nyerere said that the money from debt cancellation would be used to provide education, medical services and socio-economic infrastructure. Mwalimu Nyerere used the case of Tanzania's debt and the reparation Germany was expected to pay at the end of the First World War and the Second World War to show how incapacitating the debt burden could be. Nyerere pointed out that while Tanzania had a per capita income of US \$210 per year, the per capita income in Germany was US \$29,000. Nyerere pointed out that, this means that it would take 138 years for an average Tanzanian to earn what an average German earns in one month. In global and comparative terms, poverty was severe. Mutangira, pointed out that although Swaziland may not be as indebted as most African countries, the declining levels of development in the 1990s, the growing unemployment, HIV/AIDS and the high number of Swazis living below the poverty line, justified serious rethinking about what role properly trained Swazi adults could play in restoring development levels experienced before the 1990s. In discussing FoodFirst Organization's *12 Myths about Hunger*, Mutangira pointed out that all forms of poverty emerge from unequal distribution of resources. This in part arose from myths which tend to take poverty or hunger as a social condition which cannot be eliminated because of certain innate conditions in human beings and societies. He observed that the problems of the poor were complicated by the fact that poor people are generally disorganised. It is difficult for them to act collectively and with a unified voice in the way that the wealthier people do. It was further observed that the experiences of the NGOs showed that levels of participation and problems of the poor must be defined by the people themselves. However, there was a tendency, especially among donors, to ignore ideas from these people. In the light of this, Mutangira observed that there was justification for his call for skill based and human rights based adult education, and for active participation of all adults in social economic and political affairs of the nation. Adult education should equip people for specialised and general participation.

2.9 Poverty and Agency in the Narratives of Women: The Case of Domestic Workers in Swaziland

(Sarah Dupont-Mkhonza)

In her paper, Dr Sarah Dupont-Mkhonza took up the theme of how poor people define themselves. She explained her case by focusing on female domestic workers in Swaziland. These female workers were forced to work in a low-income labour market because of poverty. Her paper sought to explain how these women constructed their social experiences and how various historical factors shaped the industry. The paper discussed how Swazi women interpreted their personal experiences and shared them with their counterparts in the industry. Their representation reflected their social and economic interpretation of their existence and work place. One of the major purposes of the paper was to influence '...policies that militate against abuses of people'. The workshop welcomed the paper in the light of participatory research methods that encourage the objects of research to present, explain and interpret their experiences. It was an approach similar to what was used in the study of poverty in 1995. It was an approach which created space for the empowerment of the poor. However, it was felt that more needed to be said about the workers in the domestic service, about the peculiar language they use to depict poverty and their other experiences or how to construct their own labour or cultural history.

2.10 Adult Education and Poverty Alleviation in Swaziland

(Zeblon M. Ngoitiamia)

Dr. Ngoitiamia noted that poverty is either relative or absolute. It is a description of inadequate material and social services available to an individual or family. This largely reflected the capacity of adults to generate income. The trend the world over was that the poor were increasing and they were also making their voices to be heard. Through tables 1 and 2 in his paper, Ngoitiamia showed the proportions of the world in relative poverty. In the case of Swaziland, he pointed out that poverty was perpetuated by professionals and policy makers who influenced the allocation of development resources. In Swaziland, there were more poor people in rural areas than in urban areas. He also pointed out that poverty was concentrated more among women than men. He demonstrated that women earned 40 to 60 per cent of the income of men. In this situation appropriate adult education for the working population was an important strategy to reduce poverty.

The discussion emphasised the importance of alleviating poverty among women in Swaziland because of their important role in child rearing. Similarly, NGOs have an important role in providing an enabling environment. The dual nature of Swazi cultural practices, such as in the cases where women are not allowed to own land or cattle, complicated and made the poverty of women worse than it should be.

2.11 Problems Facing Women in Poverty Eradication Efforts in Swaziland

(Donatilla K. Kaino)

Dr. Kaino was concerned about the deterioration in poverty levels in Swaziland. She stated in her abstract that 'with current population growth rate of 2.3 per cent, Swaziland requires a minimum growth rate of 5 per cent per annum in real GDP, or a growth rate of 2.3 per cent per annum in real capital GDP, in order to prevent the number of the poor from rising'. She underlined her concern by pointing out that the World Bank estimated that the economy would grow at the rate of 2 per cent per annum in the short-run. This general picture affected and hindered the initiative women adopted to improve their welfare. She recommended that effective poverty alleviation required reducing inequalities in income distribution, land distribution, improvement in the quality of education and health services, stabilising the exchange rate and appropriate population policy, especially in the light of HIV/AIDS, which has worsened the state of poverty.

The workshop questioned Dr. Kaino's correlation ship between economic growth and economic development. Growth on its own does not lead to development because distribution is neither fair nor even. Dr. Kaino's position was that while distribution affected relative poverty, a declining rate of growth could not be a positive aspect of development. Growth was integral to development. There was also concern to specify sources of certain data in order to strengthen validity.

2.12 Poverty and Food Problems in Swaziland

(Thuli M. Zwane)

Ms. Zwane's paper was an insight into the relationship between poverty and food production or food availability in Swaziland. There was food shortage among some sections of the Swazi population despite high levels of food availability at the national level because of either poor distribution or inability to buy food. There was fear that food shortage was also compounded by a high rate of population growth. She then proposed a series of measures to influence food availability and affordability. This framework needs a systematic intervention of the State and a pro-active population. At the centre of all this was the need to provide productive resources such as irrigation facilities, and promotion of income-generating activities among the poor so that they have money to buy food and other essential commodities which they cannot produce on their own.

2.13 The Poverty of Femaleness and of Blackness in Swaziland

(Thandekile Ruth Mason Mvusi)

Dr. Thandekile Ruth Mason Mvusi's paper was a unique discourse on poverty. The paper focused on literary expressions of lived experiences in Zimbabwe, the United States of America and Swaziland in an attempt to capture how poverty has historically expressed itself among women in different societies. A useful analytical approach to explaining poverty among Swazi women was one which showed awareness of interlocking social structures. In the case of Swaziland, Swazi cultural practices and values, attitudes to western education and human rights and their perceived impact on Swazi traditional values and global influences should be taken into account in explaining manifestations of poverty. It was widely acknowledged in the workshop that any methodology that captured reality in its natural, not manipulated, form was useful in understanding poverty.

It was also widely appreciated in the course of the workshop that all presenters had made serious efforts to discuss poverty from the point of view of the people affected. This helped in drawing relatively objective conclusions and recommendations. It was also important that the affected populations defined poverty with a view to participating in its eradication. It was widely recognised that NGOs had done a lot in Swaziland in trying to find working strategies for eliminating poverty. In so far as it was known that there were many stakeholders in the fight against poverty, it was important that these should deliberate openly and critically.

ANNEX I: ACTING VICE-CHANCELLOR'S OPENING SPEECH

I am delighted with the duty I have this morning at the National Workshop sponsored by the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA). OSSREA has its Headquarters at the University of Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. Since its formation in 1980, OSSREA has supported research and publication activities among scholars in universities in

Eastern and Southern Africa. I am therefore delighted because the activities of OSSREA are among the activities my job requires me to undertake in the University of Swaziland.

Given that special responsibility and my interest in scholarly research, I want to appeal to all participants in this workshop to take the workshop seriously. The first reason for my appeal is that we must complement OSSREA for its long history of promoting and supporting research activities in Swaziland through the University of Swaziland. OSSREA has been a reliable ally for more than ten years. In December 1989, OSSREA sponsored an international conference at the University of Swaziland. The conference was held at the New George Hotel and it attracted about fifty scholars from universities in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa. Most of the papers read at that conference were published in a special issue of the *Eastern Africa Social Science Research Review* Vol. VI, no. 2 and Vol. VII, no. 1 (June 1990/January 1991). Five papers from the university of Swaziland were presented. Two of the presenters whose papers were also among those published in this special issue, and who are still in this University, are Dr. B. A. B. Sikhondze, Dean of Humanities, and Prof. A. M. Kanduza. OSSREA also sponsored another workshop in April 1997. This workshop was only for scholars at the University of Swaziland. Today, we have a second national workshop. Since OSSREA has been so supportive, I do not expect anyone here to doubt my appeal that we must reciprocate to OSSREA.

There is more that OSSREA has done in this University and other Universities in the region. OSSREA sponsors two research competitions every year. One is on **gender issues** and the second one is a **general social and human science competition**. I have been informed that many scholars from the University of Swaziland have been successful. I am delighted to note that among the winners this year was Miss Tehlile Dlamini, a recent graduate of the University. In this act, OSSREA is sewing a seed that will produce future academics for the University and the Swazi Nation.

May I say, however, that this good relationship with OSSREA could still be improved. I have been informed that in 1996, OSSREA decided to support annual national workshops in each country whose universities are members of the Organisation. Therefore, now we should have had about four national conferences in Swaziland and not only the one held in 1997. It is good there is a second one today. I challenge you that I want to come back this time next year to open another National Workshop. OSSREA has assured me that they are prepared to support any good conference proposal every year. The papers you present in these national workshops can be published in UNISWA journals or the OSSREA journal, the *Eastern Africa Social Science Research Review*.

Members of OSSREA have an enormous task. I am delighted that with the clarity of vision demonstrated through this workshop you know the challenge before you. I am delighted that academics at the University invited members of the NGOs to participate in this important workshop. The NGOs are practitioners. These are the institutions that influence the formulation and implementation of policies which reduce poverty. The University may have its armchair critics or its ivory-tower theoreticians. However, a dialogue is needed between researchers and those who implement policies to reduce poverty in Swaziland and beyond. I commend the organisers for inviting NGOs, UNDP and UNESCO to this workshop. I hope that future research and publications will demonstrate an essential partnership between the University of Swaziland,

the NGOs and the UN institutions in this country. This collaboration should help in finding funding should publication be necessary.

I should further ask you to support OSSREA by paying for your membership. The fees are US\$10.00 (Ten US dollars). Membership of professional associations is valued highly in the University of Swaziland. I have also learned that you will elect a committee to run the affairs of OSSREA here. I wish you well in this important activity. In building up local scholarship, I am pleased to learn that OSSREA has decided that all liaison officers must be nationals of the country in which the OSSREA chapter operates. You should reflect the practices of the University of Swaziland which promote a partnership between local and non-local staff to reflect the true universality of a university. I caution that you should be sensitive to change. Prof. Kanduza was Liaison Officer for nine years. For change and dynamism, I appeal to you to give all members of OSSREA a chance to lead the Organisation.

In concluding my remarks, I must thank OSSREA for funding this workshop. This workshop promotes university involvement in national development. I look forward to your deliberations and conclusion. Therefore, it is my pleasure to declare this workshop officially opened.

ANNEX II: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Mawane Sithebe	BSRS, P. Box 377	Mbabane,	Swaziland
Simanga S. Ntando	WUS/SD	P. Box 1916	Manzini, Swaziland
Mutangira Joseph P.B	Dept. of Adult Education, Faculty of Education	UNISWA	P/Bag 4, Kwaluseni, Swaziland
Bonginkosi B. A. B. Sikhondze	Dept. of History, Faculty of Humanity	UNISWA , P/Bag 4, Kwaluseni	Swaziland
Vilakati Joyce N.	Dept. of Theology and Religious Studies	Faculty of Humanities, UNISWA	P/Bag 4, Kwaluseni, Swaziland
Sithole Sifiso I.	UNISWA	P/Bag 4, Kwaluseni	Swaziland
Ndlangamandla E.	CANGO,	P. Box A67	Swazi Plaza
Kanduza Esther	Women's Resc. C.	Box 3573, Manzini	Swaziland
Kaino Donatilla K.	UNISWA, P/Bag 4	Kwaluseni,	Swaziland
Hlanze Zakhe	WLSA, P. Box 508	Mbabane,	Swaziland
Thandekile R. M. Mvusi	Senior Fulbright Visiting Scholar	Dept. of History, Faculty of Humanities	UNISWA, P/Bag 4, Kwaluseni, Swaziland
Litter Dorothy	SNC/UNESCO	P. Box 39, Mbabane	Swaziland
Zwane Thuli M.	Dept. of Economics, Faculty of Social Science	UNISWA, P/Bag 4	Kwaluseni, Swaziland
Mkhonza S.	UNISWA	P/Bag 4, Kwaluseni	Swaziland
Dlamini Russell M.	World Vision International	P. Box 2870, Mbabane	Swaziland
Dlamini Babazile	Save the Children Fund	Swaziland	
Dlamini Dorah	Women's Resc. C.	Box 3573, Manzini	Swaziland
Mutonga Sitwala	CASCENT EDUCATION	Swaziland	
Mr. Rajan	Dept. of Sociology,	UNISWA	P/Bag 4, Kwaluseni,

Mathews	Faculty of Social Science		Swaziland
Magagula Phumzile	UNISWA/UNDP	Swaziland	
Hezekiel M. Mushala	Consultancy and Training Centre	Dept. of Geography and Environmental Science and Planning , Faculty of Science	UNISWA, P/Bag 4, Kwaluseni, Swaziland
Langa Pholisile	UNISWA	P/Bag 4, Kwaluseni	Swaziland
Khabo Nkambule	UNISWA	P/Bag 4, Kwaluseni	Swaziland
Mumba N. K.	UNISWA	P/Bag 4, Kwaluseni	Swaziland
Ngoitama Z. M.	UNISWA	P/Bag 4, Kwaluseni	Swaziland
Nhlabatsi David	UNISWA	P/Bag 4, Kwaluseni	Swaziland
Dlamini Phephelaphi	World Vision Swaziland		
Walwema Josephine	Women and Law		
Zigira Christopher A. B.	UNISWA	P/Bag 4, Kwaluseni	Swaziland
Mabuza Sibusiso	World Vision Swaziland		
Tembe Pholani	World Vision Swaziland		
Kanduza Ackson M.	UNISWA	P/Bag 4, Kwaluseni	Swaziland
Mulape Phiri	UNISWA	P/Bag 4, Kwaluseni	Swaziland
John K. Ngwisha	Dept. of Sociology, Faculty of Social Science	UNISWA, P/B 4	Kwaluseni, Swaziland
Eunice Lungu	UNISWA	P/Bag 4, Kwaluseni	Swaziland
Sarah Dupont Mkhonza	Dept. of English Language and	UNISWA	P/Bag 4, Kwaluseni , Swaziland

	Literature, Faculty of Humanities		
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