

## PSE 2011 Second Townsend Conference Tackling poverty - international perspectives

### **Brian Perry**

The way that poverty is measured matters a huge amount. For example, if you're measuring it using income then in terms of policy a government is going to want to have an incomes policy, which reduces poverty on an incomes base. If, however, you're measuring poverty using non-monetary indicators, then a government will have to develop policies that have a range of objectives like, you know, cheaper doctor visits, help for parents with reading to their kids, education and all that.

### **Maidor Fall**

I want to, to find right policies and efficient policies. That's my, my obsession. When I'm measuring poverty I'm saying that yes, it's okay, I have the measurement of poverty but what is a policy recommendation I can give to the policy makers?

### **Pedro Sainz**

Most governments now have accepted to establish targets, compromises of reducing poverty in certain percentages. So therefore, they need measurements; the public need measurements to see if the government is attaining those targets. And if you don't, don't arrive to solve the problems and to reduce these problems then you will have a political cost

### **Julio Boltvnik**

The government of Mexico, as many governments, always tries to minimise poverty. So they use very low thresholds. The government says: Piped water? But it might be outside the house. It doesn't have to be inside. The people when they were asked said "piped water inside the house is necessary" 95 percent, all the people who were interrogated said nine or 12 years of education depending on your age they decided six years of education and so on.

### **Pedro Sainz**

One of the features of Latin America is that public expenditure on the poor has increased dramatically in the last 20 years. This means that problems of health, problems of hunger, problems of education, problems of dwellings have become part of the agenda of many governments. For example when you have old people without pensions this is not only the problem of the people without a pension, it's all the family that's trying to help them. So when in the case of Brazil in the constitution of the '90s, the right old people to have a minimum pension was established. That was a big change in the welfare and in the political conscious of the country

**Aye Abe**

To enact a political change it's going to cost money, and then we have to convince the public that they have to pay higher taxes to do poverty, poverty alleviation policies and then they have to accept this is what is needed. And that's why our kind of research is very important to convince the public that they, you know, we have to do something about poverty.

**Bjorn Hallerod**

I think that results from research is very very slowly, makes its way into politics. And it does so because it becomes not research, but it becomes knowledge, common knowledge in one way. Once it's accepted, then it's part of the political discourse.

**Pedro Sainz**

When people discover that it is possible to solve problems that were very old and the, the families thought that there was, there was no possibility of changing, then they start asking for more. Because now they believe that problems can be solved.

**Julio Boltvnik**

Being poor in modern times is, is a paradox. We have the ability to produce infinite amounts of goods and services. Nobody should be poor with the technological advances we have.

Letting so many people live in poverty is like destroying human life.