



Peru

Changing Dimensions of Poverty

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Professor Jeanine Anderson, Social Science Faculty, Pontifical Catholic University of Peru

Winning the award was a major event

Jeanine Anderson’s application for the Global Development Network’s Outstanding Research on Development (ORD) award was based on a long history of research. It proposed a third round of evaluation of the effects of government development policies on gender relations and community organization in the Pamplona Alta shantytown on the outskirts of Lima. Anderson studied the community in 1977, focusing on family life and child development; and again in 1992, when she further explored the positions of men and women within the family and community. In the latter study, she noted big differences in male and female positions and perspectives, as well as generational differences, compared to the 1977 study. She hoped to use the Global Development Network award to see if there had been any further changes a decade on.

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A reversal of fortunes

Findings from the new study showed significant changes in the Pamplona Alta shantytown. Anderson notes that in the first two studies, women were preoccupied with household tasks and caring responsibilities, and subordinate to

Jeanine Anderson served as a professor at the Social Science Faculty of the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru until her recent retirement. In 2000, she received the Japanese Award for Outstanding Research on Development (ORD), which has allowed her to continue her work in the Pamplona Alta shantytown in Lima, Peru. Her research focuses on the changing dimensions of poverty over a period of several decades.



men, who were benefiting from new opportunities in the urban economy.

“By 2000, the picture [had] changed quite a lot and it seemed like a reversal of fortunes of men and women had taken place. This was mostly an effect of [the] economic crisis during the 80s and 90s, in which formal unskilled employment practically disappeared and men suddenly lost their social status within [the] family as the main source of income. At the same time, an era of development of women had begun and initiatives stimulating women’s entrepreneurship were increasing in the town. This made a lot of men feel left behind.”

According to Anderson, the value of her study lies in the insights into poverty and social programs that only a longitudinal study can provide: “What does poverty mean? What does it look like and how does it evolve over time for a man or a woman? And what does it mean to have anti-poverty development within policies or programs?” Her analysis over the years has led to the conclusion that many of these anti-poverty policies and programs failed to address the needs of impoverished communities. “Most projects were focused on providing infrastructure and services within the town itself. But what community members really wanted was to get

structural access to better social services, in areas like health and education, outside of their own community in more privileged sectors of their society.” The projects were seen as fueling a system of social segregation that restricted the community’s free movement and enjoyment of the city.

Disseminating results

With GDN funding, Anderson was able to produce a popular book portraying life in the shantytown through the eyes of the local community. She gave it to members of the community, who were very appreciative: “The book served as a kind of legitimation for [the] community. They used in when they went to [the] local government to demand social services such as garbage cleaning. I felt, however, that they could have employed it more. These people invested so much over the years and built the whole town themselves, including all [the] water systems, houses, health posts, community centers and schools.”

Anderson was able to disseminate the study results through several publications and has participated in numerous policy dialogues, including with local governments and the Economic Commission for



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Latin America. The local and global gender research community have been following her study with interest. She remarks modestly, “I must have made changes in peoples’ thinking about particular issues in this mix of themes.”

Future ambitions: a book

Professor Jeanine Anderson’s biggest regret is not writing a book to present all her research findings, which she feels has left her out of some debates. Although she has officially retired, she hopes to achieve this in the coming years, but first wants to go back into the shantytown for a fourth round of interviews.

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that ignores the daily struggles and psychological wear and tear of the lives that people are still leading in the shantytowns. Although their poverty might be less lethal and stressful than in 1977, their relative unequal position in Peruvian society and their understanding of their citizens’ rights [has not changed].”

Anderson is particularly interested in following up on something she discovered in the study financed by the GDN Award. In 2000, a number of young adults had completed their education and were moving into better employment. Surprisingly, they did not leave the community but stayed to take care of their families, many of whom – in the absence of pensions, disability benefits and health insurance – remained in extreme poverty. “It would be interesting to investigate if young people are still giving up on opportunities in order

to take care of their families, even in a context where social services have improved, or if they have become more individualistic and focus on themselves first.”

A generous award

For Anderson personally, the award meant her work received more attention and she was able to take her research a step further: “Although I was already known in Peru as a researcher, it was a top-up for my reputation. The award was also very generous compared to the regular funding standards in Peru and allowed me to do things I would have not been able to do otherwise, such as take on board a group of young psychologists to work with me and a photographer [to capture] the shantytown during the research.”

With the help of GDN, Anderson was able to conduct a piece of research unique in its timespan and approach. In a region where longitudinal studies of poverty, families and communities are rare, her work has served as an example of the possibilities for adding dimensions, concepts and theoretical propositions not found in simpler, synchronic approaches.

Award

Japanese Award for Outstanding Research on Development, 2000

This is one of nine stories produced in partnership with Aidenvironment to document the outcomes of GDN's awards and medals program, generously supported by the Government of Japan, the World Bank for implementation and a host of donors over the years for the medals.

About the Global Development Awards Competition

The Global Development Awards Competition is an award scheme that identifies talent, supports the career advancement of researchers in developing countries, and funds innovative social development projects, implemented by NGOs, to benefit marginalized groups in the developing world. Since its inception in 2001, the competition has supported more than 340 individuals, research organizations and NGOs with roughly US\$3.8 million worth of awards, placing it as one of the most important global competitions targeting development and research. It currently has three categories of awards: Japanese Award for Outstanding Research on Development (ORD), Japanese Award for Most Innovative Development Project (MIDP), and Japan Social Development Fund Award (JSDF). The Medals for Research on Development (MRD), funded every year by a

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Interviewees

Prof. Jeanine Anderson

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Images

From first to last:

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different pool of donors, were discontinued in 2015. Over the years, the competition has built a community of excellence among researchers and development practitioners. The Global Development Awards Competition receives annual funding from the Ministry of Finance, Government of Japan. The World Bank manages the trust fund that makes these activities possible.

About GDN

The Global Development Network (GDN) is a public international organization that supports high quality, policy-oriented, social science research in developing and transition countries, to promote better lives. It supports researchers with financial resources, global networking, access to information, training, peer review and mentoring. GDN acts on the premise that better research leads to more informed policies and better, more inclusive development. Through its global platform, GDN connects social science researchers with policymakers and development stakeholders across the world. Founded in 1999, GDN is currently headquartered in New Delhi.

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