

The Centre for Comparative and Public Law Faculty of Law, The University of Hong Kong

Seminar

Poverty and Rights

Dr Dan Banik

*Associate Professor, Centre for Development and the Environment
University of Oslo*

Friday, 27 February 2009

1:00 - 2:00 pm

Room LG105, LG1 Floor, KK Leung Building, HKU

A key feature of poverty - not explicitly addressed in the MDGs - is that a large majority of the world's poor are a part of the informal or 'extralegal' sector and consequently lack effective legal protection and recognition of their rights and assets. Given that this has profound consequences for development and poverty reduction in most poor countries, the movement advocating 'legal empowerment of the poor' (LEP) has gathered momentum in the past few years. While the relationship between law and development in the international development discourse has traditionally been too narrowly focused on law, lawyers and state institutions, the concept of 'legal empowerment' apparently goes beyond the confines of the purely formal legal system and entails identifying and providing the poor with legal and institutional tools. But what are the inter-linkages and distinctions between human rights-based approaches (currently popular in the development discourse) and legal empowerment? And how can the poor be empowered to actively participate in decision-making processes and consequently influence policy outcomes?

Dan Banik is an Associate Professor and Research Director at the Centre for Development and the Environment, University of Oslo. His research interests include poverty, development theory, human rights and legal empowerment of the poor, policy studies and implementation, development ethics, political philosophy, undernutrition, famine, corruption, civil service reform, and media in developing countries. Prof. Banik's recent books include *Rights and Legal Empowerment in Eradicating Poverty* (Ashgate 2008) and *Starvation and India's Democracy* (Routledge 2007). He serves on the Advisory Board on child rights, Norwegian Central Bank; the Board of CARE Norway and the Board of Directors, the Norwegian Crown Prince and Crown Princess's Humanitarian Fund.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

**Please register on-line via www.hku.hk/ccpl/ or
email Flora Leung at fkleung@hku.hk if you would like to attend.**