



Nopoor Conference Flash

Mexico City, July 2016

Nopoor researchers and stakeholder shared results in an interactive way during 3-day Policy Synthesis Seminar in Mexico City (6-8 July, 2016). Parallel session presentations and Round Table discussion took place on the following topics: Applied Poverty Measurements, Financing social Development, External shocks, Globalization and Labor, Social Policies to Tackle Poverty, Future Scenarios, Inequality and Political Systems, Gender, and Poverty Determinants and Mobility¹.

For more information please contact:

Araceli Ortega-Diaz Edgar Aragon, ITESM - School of Government and Public Transformation

E-mail: araceli.ortega@itesm.mx

Key speakers (selection): Gerardo Leyva Parra (INEGI Mexico), Ricardo Fuentes Nieva (OXFAM), Miguel Szekely (PAN), Héctor Gonzales (Ministry of Development Netherlands), Marcelo de la Jara (CEEY), Alexandrova Kabadjova Biliana, Serafin Martinez (Central Bank of Mexico), José Maria Tapia (Ministry of Interior Affairs), Dora Llanes (National Agency of Energy and Protection Environment), Patricia López Rodriguez (UIA), Javier Omar Rodriguez, Maria Teresa Silva Porto Diaz (STPS), Ana Luisa Saavedra (DICOSNA), Carlos Guerrero de Lizardi (UNAM), Eduardo R. Huchin (National Institute of Elections), Mónica Orozco Corona (DG Gender CCAC), Mariá de la Paz López Barajas (National Women Institute Mexico), Williams Fernandez Lazo, Marco Fernandez (ITESM)



From left to the right: The Nopoor family at the Mexico Synthesis Seminar and Keynote Speaker Miguel Szekely © ITESM, 2016

¹ Special thanks go to the 2016 EU Nopoor Project Group at Willy Brandt School of Public Policy

Policy Synthesis Seminar: Parallel Sessions

nopoor Mexico

**Parallel Sessions:
6-8 July 2016**

Applied Poverty Measurements

Multidimensional indicators in existing low quality datasets renders agreement on and monitoring of poverty reduction goals difficult. The cross-country statistical variations also make comparisons less effective. Hence, institutions focusing on cross-country collaborations are needed. Additionally, global challenges, such as migration and natural disasters will increase poverty rates thus requiring a policy toolbox to bridge the gaps between local networks for swift responses. The focus must also be on target groups not in the agenda but those who will suffer by 2020.

Financing Social Development

Civil social organizations in Mexico emerge as effective service providers, but they face financial challenges after the tax reform, funding procedures and the lack of expertise of donors about the difference between development and poverty alleviation. They need support from the EU to increase fiscal capacity and transparency, and to advocate government to improve their performance. Some highly indebted poor income countries were affected by previous lending policies from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank although there are some frameworks to limit the negative impact. In the future, more flexible policies need to be considered to avoid over-indebtedness for low income countries. Mobile banking seems a good way to encourage the poor to take part in financial activities which previously exclude them. More m-banking services should be supported to help the poor to access to this financial aspect of the daily life.

External Shocks

In Mexico, natural disasters such as earthquakes aggravate poverty for low income communities and poor households. Natural disasters take human lives, destroy physical and natural assets that communities depend on to sustain their livelihoods. The destruction of economic assets reduces income generating capacities, and increases the vulnerability of poor households. Furthermore, without social safety nets or insurance, death and injuries too often compel poor households to rationalize their spending trends and divert already limited

resources towards recovering from the natural disaster. In the short term policy frameworks for rehabilitation, and the mobilization of finance for better social welfare systems are needed to cater for the vulnerable, and reduce poverty and suffering. In the long-term it is necessary for the Mexican government to create employment, and further promote disaster risk reduction capacity building programs.

Globalization and Labor

Discussion took place around a current development topic: *How can trade integration processes reduce poverty and be socially responsible? How can governments identify and compensate winners and losers of globalization?* Nopoor researchers recommended introducing labor standards in trade agreements and controlling labor conditions in Special Economic Zones, while also building capacity in developing countries to negotiate trade agreements and promote complementary policies (e.g. infrastructure). Moreover, datasets about labor market should be integrated into a single framework in order to better identify winners and losers. Finally, compensation mechanisms must be developed together with training programs to help workers find new jobs in other sectors.

Social Policies to Tackle Poverty

From the government perspective, one key challenge is the commitment of officials to build upon the research of NGOs in their country and to create effective social policies based on evidence-based research. Another challenge discussed was the high level of barriers of entry into public sector employment. The public sector should take the lead by creating equality of opportunity. Participants also discussed the option of creating an institutionalized universal social security program but not based on work status, as it is the case in different developing countries. They also analyzed ways to gradually eliminating cash transfers or to creating different conditional cash transfer programs that introduce productivity and labour insertion components or a base income for each citizen.

Future Scenarios

To create a sustainable future and engagement at the local levels, particularly with women, one must consider poverty in the long term. This can be done through empowerment and capacity-building approaches that will enable women to become a key driving agent towards sustainability. The spillover benefits to other actors such as husbands and children, and the collective community will ensure that everyone has a decent life. Additionally, the minimum wage in Mexico should be adjusted in a way that it can allow people to sustain their basic needs. And even so, this factor alone might not lead to a decent standard of living.

Inequality and Political Systems

The critical challenge in contemporary research on inequality stems primarily from a misclassification of the different types of inequality that prevail, as well as the different levels and degrees of inequality there are. The spillover effects of inequality and an unstable political environment are that these factors constitute catalysts for social unrest which in turn have the potential to affect the internal policies of countries within the EU. With regards to the external partners (particularly the European Union), it is imperative that reform agendas in the EU's partner countries include a commitment to combatting the sources of inequality, specifically when they stem from ingrained flaws within the political systems. Nopoor stresses that on the importance of information generation to deal with inequality. Partner institutions [EU] should help in the gathering of reliable data through transparent means and assist governments to make informed decisions and policies that can effectively address issues of inequality. In terms of elections, Nopoor suggests that the entire process of election should be closely monitored instead of focusing on the Election Day to determine whether the election was free and fair.

Gender

Women's empowerment is one of the most important elements of addressing poverty. At the conference, experts and researchers discussed many facets of the issue, ranging from social norms to public policy. While gender norms vary between cultures and countries, they are prevalent all across the globe; it will be necessary to address such norms and consider them when crafting policies in order to address social issues. Gender should be mainstreamed, but doing so is rather complex. For example, looking at marriage laws, there are multiple opportunities to consider how laws impact women unfairly, including the legal age of marriage, alimony payments, and division of property in a divorce.

Poverty Determinants and Mobility

With regards to migration, it was apparent through the panelist discussion that medium and long-term policies are needed. These policies must also be flexible and adoptable. The panelists also urged governments to look globally in terms of integration. Regarding social mobility, one of the main challenges faced by researchers today is coming up with a common definition for social mobility and a common measure. Education and access into the labor market were seen as key determining factors to getting people out of poverty.

The EU project *nopoor*

Five years of research, four continents, one vision

The research project *nopoor* aims at strategies that lead developing and emerging countries out of poverty. Over a period of five years, scientists from all over the world work together in this most relevant EU research programme dedicated to fighting poverty in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Project Coordinator:

IRD, Institut de Recherche pour le Développement, France

Contact:

- Xavier Oudin, Scientific Coordinator
oudin@dial.prd.fr
- Delia Visan, Project Manager
delia.visan@ird.fr
Tel.: +33 1 53 24 14 53
www.nopoor.eu

Project Type:

EU-funded research project in the Seventh Framework Programme FP7 – Social Sciences and Humanities

Funding scheme:

Collaborative project (large scale integrated research project) for specific cooperation action dedicated to international cooperation.

EU Contribution: 8 000 000 EUR

Duration: 5 years, April 1st 2012 – March 31st 2017

nopoor Research countries

Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Haiti, Mexico, Peru