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Enhancing Knowledge for Renewed Policies against Poverty

nopoor Conference Flash, EDD2015

Brussels, 04.06.2015

Research for Change: First Results from the nopoor project

Conference Flash from the European Development Days in Brussels

»Wherever poverty persists, there is space for improved policies.«
Xavier Oudin, Scientific Coordinator

nopoor: Results for Action

June 3rd, 2015: In the energetic and interactive setting provided by the European Development Days (EDD), **nopoor** researchers and stakeholders discussed how scientific results can be translated into action. The frame for the discussion was the EU's Global Partnership for Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development after 2015 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The brainstorming session

Six out of more than one hundred researchers involved in the **nopoor** project discussed first preliminary findings with stakeholders at five roundtables:

Inequality – Xavier Oudin, IRD

Quality Jobs – Kirsten Sehnbruch, UChile

Employment and subsidy Schemes – Basudeb Chaudhuri, CNRS

Trade – Fatou Cissé, CRES

Empowerment – Heidi Dumreicher, OIKODROM

Policy-making – Edgar Aragón, ITES

Please find the results of presentations and debates summarised below.

For more information please contact

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SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Led by Edgar Aragón from Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, Mexico
Session Moderator: Nick Ishmael Perkins, SciDev.Net

Inequality - Xavier Oudin, Vietnamese Academy of Social Sciences, Hanoi.

nopoor research: Why do policies fail to reduce poverty significantly among the most vulnerable groups? One of the case studies for this issue is Vietnam, where a large gap arises between those working in the formal and the informal sector.

Given the broadness of the topic, the debate focused on countries where poverty has reduced and where inequality becomes a rising issue. This is the case for countries with rapid economic growth, f.e. in East Asia or Latin America, since it allows poverty reduction together with rising inequalities. At the roundtable, people discussed the significance of research results for policy-making. Research might help to identify vulnerable groups in order to formulate target policies. Furthermore it turned out that efforts to bridge between research and policy-making need to be strengthened. Within the framework of the European Union, research could be associated with policy-making in the call for projects and in the consortium which respond to these calls. Academics and practitioners should be associated in mixed projects.

Quality obs - Kirsten Sehnbruch, Universidad de Chile, Santiago de Chile.

nopoor research: How to compare the parallel development of the quality of employment measures in the EU with the ILO's Decent Work agenda. The methodological approach showed that "decent work" remains a very broadly defined concept, difficult to evaluate across countries.

One of the major problems in comparative approaches is the comparability of available data, especially when focusing on developing countries. Different institutions and organizations in developed and developing countries produce a tremendous amount of data associated to the buzzword 'decent work'. Indeed 'decent work' is praised to be the alternative, a better way for future growth, but often lacks confirmation in data sources. For researchers, but also for regional, national and international entities, it has become increasingly difficult to compare data without paying tribute to minor differences in the data collection. In terms of policy-making, the EU is a key-player collecting and harmonizing statistical information about their member states since decades. But also other stakeholders, such as NGOs, could help collecting reliable data.

Employment subsidy schemes - Basudeb Chaudhuri, Faculté de Sciences Economiques et de Gestion, Université de Caen Basse Normandie.

nopoor research: What is the difference between target and universal policies in poverty alleviation? The NREGA employment subsidy scheme in India highlights the debate between the ideas of targeting poverty with specific measures, as opposed to universal measures, such as public goods of uniform quality.

India's employment subsidy scheme is one of the largest programmes worldwide. Every Indian citizen can apply to work for 100 days at a minimum wage in the rural areas. Since it is only the



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really poor people in need who necessitate this sort of support, the subsidy scheme benefits only relatively deprived people but remains a universal policy. Critical questions were raised according to the programme's focus on agriculture. Furthermore, the roundtable discussed the limits of universal policies without efforts to enhance skill-formation, but focusing on short-term poverty alleviation in the Indian society. In terms of policy-making it is necessary to recognize the efforts undertaken by the national authorities which financing the programme on their own. The only way how European stakeholders (including researchers) can support India in its fight for poverty eradication is by continuing their researches in the country, ensuring they can draw conclusion on their own. Another possibility to support people is the enhancing of knowledge exchange, focusing on good-practice examples.

Trade - Fatou Cissé, Consortium pour la Recherche Economique et Sociale, Dakar.

nopoor research: What is the impact of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on merchandising for West African countries (ECOWAS). The project assesses the short, medium and long-term impacts for ECOWAS in terms of economic growth, external trade, public finances and poverty.

The impact of trade and trade agreements are a salient issue for developing countries. As the research shows, the already signed free trade agreement between EU and West Africa can bring positive result. The relation between poverty and growth turns out to be good as long as it doesn't exceeds 75% of the overall traded goods.

Indeed economic partnerships and trade agreements turned out to be necessary tools in order to enhance the competition of goods and services. Nevertheless, the impacts differ from country to country and some of them have already experienced exploitation after implementing the agreement. In sum, in the case of trade agreements, the most important policy advice should come early during the negotiation process.

Empowerment - Heidi Dumreicher, OIKODROM – The Vienna Institute for Urban Sustainability, Vienna.

nopoor research: What are major facts and structures for empowering women? This empirical work shows beneficiaries of aid projects as actors of their present and future lives, with scenarios in a medium and long-term perspective.

In the case of women empowerment, research the applied method is part of the empowerment activities themselves. In Vietnam and Mexico, case studies research participants were invited to take in the role of local experts, narrating about their own interests, desires and thoughts; results are mostly unexpected. Most women explained strategies to face environmental burdens, domestic violence or precarious work conditions, but also highlighted the opportunities of their lives, like caring for the next generation or healing the earth.

In both cases it is therefore difficult to integrate policy-making processes from an early stage. Sometimes gender indexes don't correspond with the output from this qualitative research that is strongly related to local environments and/or the needs of their families and husband. Accordingly, the formulation of policy advices depends on the specific realities of women and



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integrates their perspectives, also including the men. This might be an interesting task to fulfil for upcoming research calls and implemented activities.

Policy-Making - Edgar Aragón, ITES Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey

Discussions at the roundtables showed the significance of research-based policy-making in the context of development. Starting from free trade agreements the idea is to enhance growth, to promote development. Even though this formula is working for some countries, the West-African case-study showed that free trade with Europe can reduce growth and increase poverty when more than 75% of the tradable goods are taken into account. This is due to trade diversion and loss of tariff revenues. Complementary actions need to be taken.

Free trade and foreign investment might create new jobs, for example in Chile, however focus should be placed in creating quality jobs! But how can 'quality jobs' be defined and measured in a comparative way? The recommendation is to apply a uniform employment survey from Eurofund in Dublin. These are all limits with regards to evaluation means. Reliable data will help to generate evidence-based policy options.

In a developing context, nevertheless, it is better to have a job than no job at all. India has spent 34 billion in the past eight years to provide 100 days-work to rural workers. The programme lacks a long-term perspective and it might have a political motif. Research questions whether the money can be used for alternative anti-poverty tools, or spending in universal rather than targeted policies.

Once poverty is reduced, a new set of challenges seem to appear, such as rising inequalities. Research shows that benefits of growth might not be equally distributed, even for a socialist country. Emphasis should be made on increasing social benefits and on enforcing the legal framework.

And finally, it comes to the issue of women empowerment and public policy. Policies do not empower women, women empower themselves. The challenge here is to create the tools that make the self-empowerment of women possible, a trick in development research.

The aim of the brainstorming session was to explore upcoming challenges for research with the aiming for impact on policy-making. How can results from **nopoor** researches invigorate the discussion about upcoming Millenium Development Goals (MDG's) ending in 2015?



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Why a research project at European Development Days?

In the discussion about new approaches to poverty alleviation, **nopoor** brings new insight into the changing global situation. Researchers present their evidence-based innovative results, looking for feedback from change makers in Europe in order to formulate reality-based recommendations for the future. The EDD's are one of the flagship events of the European Development Year and a great occasion for discussion, exchange and new insights into poverty alleviation - <http://eudevdays.eu/>

What were nopoor activities?

In a brainstorming session, researchers from four continents met for an exchange between grassroots organisations, governmental agencies and researchers. Together they debated on opportunities and threads concerning the disadvantaged people on the globe.

At the Practice Village Stand, the researchers welcomed visitors for in-depth dialogue about their results, gaining insights for future perspectives in the international development scene.

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

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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



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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

This **nopoor** Conference Flash is produced by OIKODROM – The Vienna Institute for Urban Sustainability, Austria / Michael Anranter, Heidi Dumreicher, Ina Ivanceanu



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