

Interactions between social protection programs and rural development projects: how can we all help?

Session abstract

Evidence from the literature suggests that there are connections between social protection and rural development, through different channels. In particular, an important body of it suggests that some social protection policies would have the ability to promote or strengthen productive activities. Then a social program could leverage agricultural policies pushing up the economic development of rural areas. The potential of these findings allows considering it one of the key elements in the current discussion about the design of rural-development policies. It could take advantage of this potential in order to accelerate the impact on the most vulnerable and the poorest groups. Rigorous evaluations are becoming available, seeking for this connection, its paths and the ways it may be strengthened. But it is worth asking how this connection is perceived from the political perspective. This session brings together three multilateral agencies with expertise in the subject so as to share their experiences on the topic and discuss the potential and limitations of its application.

Invited agencies have experience in both generating research on the topic and in supporting financing and designing of rural poor alleviation programs. The International Fund for Agricultural Development - IFAD also seeks to combat rural poverty by sustainably improving rural population's food security levels, income and productive capacities. To this end, IFAD has committed resources for research and implementation of rural development programs in developing countries. The Food and Agriculture Organization – FAO, is a multilateral agency that seeks to reduce rural poverty, food insecurity and starving. FAO has been a source of knowledge and information for developing countries, as well as a promoter of various rural development projects for the most vulnerable populations. The International Development Research Centre - IDRC seeks to gather research and innovative practices to solve different problems in developing countries. In particular the Supporting Inclusive Growth Program has put effort in supporting programs for the alleviation of rural poverty. The experience of these three presenters is complemented by the diversity of regions in which they work, allowing identifying whether there are regional differences on the assessment done about the connections between social protection and rural development. In addition to the views given by these presenters, the session will have a discussant providing an academic and political perspective for these complementarities.

This session may be an interesting space for inquiring about the future of the research on the topic, the practical implementation of social protection and rural development programs, and the expected innovations in policy design to enable this potential connection. In particular, it is a session that seeks to discuss the institutional and practical challenges facing the implementation of these potentials, observed from the technical analysis. It is highlighted the role of multilateral agencies as innovators in the program design and in their support to implementing countries. This session also lets see how much of the research done on the subject have permeated public policy decisions, the design of the countries' agencies responsible of rural development and protection, and on the multilateral organizations' agendas.

Chairperson: Jorge Maldonado (Universidad de los Andes)

Jorge is associate professor in the Department of Economics at Universidad de los Andes (Bogotá, Colombia). He is also deputy director of the Latin America and Caribbean Environmental Economics Program (LACEEP). His main research interests are economics applied to environment, natural resources and development, in particular in the nexus with poverty and livelihoods. He has published in different journals such as Ecological Economics, American Journal of Agricultural Economics, World Development, Environment and Development Economics, among others. He teaches environmental economics, natural resource economics, and microeconomics at both undergrad and graduate level. Currently, he is the director of the project Conditional Cash Transfers and Rural Development in Latin America, funded by FIDA.



Discussant: Nora Lustig (Tulane University)

Nora Lustig is Samuel Z. Stone Professor of Latin American Economics at Tulane University and a Nonresident Fellow at the Center for Global Development and the Inter-American Dialogue. Her current research focuses on assessing the incidence of taxation and social spending in over twenty countries around the world, and on the determinants of income distribution dynamics in Latin America. She is a founding member and past president of LACEA and was a co-director of the World Bank's World Development Report 2000/1, Attacking Poverty. She is currently the director of the Commitment to Equity project, editor of the Journal of Economic Inequality's Forum and Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors of the GDN. Lustig received her doctorate in Economics from the University of California, Berkeley.



Details on speakers and presentations below



Tomas Ricardo Rosada

Executive director

International Fund for
Agricultural Development

Tomas Ricardo Rosada's short bio

Doctor en Economía Agrícola de la Universidad de Guelph, Canadá. Actualmente es Economista Regional de la División América Latina y el Caribe del Fondo Internacional de Desarrollo Agrícola. Posee vasta experiencia en los temas de pobreza y desigualdad, política social, microfinanzas y desarrollo económico, con énfasis en América Latina. Anteriormente fue Consejero Senior de la Oficina del Director Ejecutivo para Centro América y Belice del Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, Director del Instituto de Investigaciones Económicas y Sociales de la Universidad Rafael Landívar, Gerente de Monitoreo y Evaluación del Proyecto Alianzas de USAID y Director del Departamento de Economía de la Universidad Rafael Landívar. Además, ha sido consultor del Banco Mundial, FLACSO y de la Secretaría de Planificación y Programación de la Presidencia de Guatemala.

Presentation Abstract: The role of IFAD exploring synergies between social protection and rural development projects.

As a multilateral organization interested in overcoming rural poverty, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) finds a huge potential in the interactions that may exist between social protection and productive development programs. Traditionally, the Fund has financed development projects and only recently began to explore from an analytical and programmatic perspective the synergies that may exist between these two rural development approaches. This presentation seeks to expose some of the institutional reflections emerging from IFAD in this effort to recognize and adapt the Fund operation model to new conditions and demands emerging from developing countries.



Arjan de Haan

Supporting Inclusive
Growth Program Leader

International
Development Research
Centre – IDRC

Arjan de Haan's short bio

Arjan de Haan is Program Leader of the Supporting Inclusive Growth program. Before joining IDRC, Arjan worked at the Institute of Social Studies (Erasmus University Rotterdam) in The Hague, where he was convenor of the master's program in social policy and led the development of the Indices of Social Development database. He previously worked for 10 years with the UK Department for International Development in London, India, and China. He also managed the Poverty Research Unit at the University of Sussex (UK). He has published widely and is co-editor of the Canadian Journal of Development Studies. Arjan holds a PhD in social history from Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Presentation Abstract: Linking social protection and productive development: lessons from Latin America from research supported by IDRC.

With growing budgets and a broad acceptance of the impact of cash transfers on reducing poverty, Latin America saw a rapid expansion of cash transfers programs. This trend was then followed by African and Asian countries. This expansion has created higher levels of protection against risks, and increased welfare. However, policy debates have emerged. Critics argue that social grants generate dependence and disincentives to work. This presentation builds on the policy-oriented research supported by Canada's IDRC Supporting Inclusive Growth Program that seeks to answer these questions. It will share insights from a recent seminar co-organized by IDRC to discuss what is known and knowledge gaps on social protection and its linkages to jobs and entrepreneurship with a specific focus on interventions targeting rural households. The presentation will be based on a special issue of the "Poverty in Focus" publication highlighting findings from the research and debates held during the seminar.



Benjamin Davis

Deputy Director,
Agricultural Development
Economics Division

Food and Agriculture

Benjamin Davis's short bio

Benjamin Davis is Deputy Director of the Agricultural Development Economics Division at FAO and team leader of the From Production to Protection (PtoP) project. He has served as Social Policy Advisor for the UNICEF Regional Office in Eastern and Southern Africa and as a Research and Post Doctoral Fellow at IFPRI. He holds a PhD in Agricultural Economics and a Masters in Public Policy from UC Berkeley. Benjamin Davis is Deputy Director of the Agricultural Development Economics Division at FAO and team leader of the From Production to Protection (PtoP) project. He has served as Social Policy Advisor for the UNICEF Regional Office in Eastern and Southern Africa and as a Research and Post Doctoral Fellow at IFPRI. He holds a PhD in Agricultural Economics and a Masters in Public Policy from UC Berkeley. Benjamin Davis is Deputy Director of the Agricultural Development Economics Division at FAO and team leader of the From Production to Protection (PtoP) project. He has served as Social Policy Advisor for the UNICEF Regional Office in Eastern and Southern Africa and as a Research and Post Doctoral Fellow at IFPRI. He holds a PhD in Agricultural Economics and a Masters in Public Policy from UC Berkeley.

Presentation Abstract: FAO and the PtoP project: insight into policy analysis.

Both social protection and agricultural policy are important in poverty reduction, but little attention has been paid to the interaction between them and the implications for design and implementation of policies and programs. Poor rural households are often affected by limited resources, low agricultural productivity, poorly functioning markets and repeated exposure to risks. The regularity and predictability of social protection instruments can help households to alleviate financial constraints, manage risks better, take advantage of new opportunities and engage in more profitable livelihood and agricultural activities. Agricultural programs can help smallholder households manage risk by stimulating overall household welfare. This presentation will explore a variety of contexts in which social protection and agricultural policy come into play, and discuss issues around coherence between these interventions and their articulation in a coordinated strategy for rural development.