

The relevance of institutions and people's preferences for social protection

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Addendum on valorisation to the dissertation

This addendum presents how this research creates value by making knowledge suitable and available for social and economic use. It focuses on the main implications, the relevance of the research, and the various forms in which its results have been and will be disseminated.

This study's findings are relevant to the current public and policy debate on social protection. Although over the last years evidence in social protection design, planning and policymaking has been increasing, the research findings expand the understanding on how and to what extent the quality of institutions and people's preferences affect the level of expenditure and the quality of implementation of social protection programmes. It provides practical recommendations on how to strengthen the quality of institutions and make more inclusive people's participation in the implementation of social protection programmes in developing countries.

This research provides evidence of interest to policy makers, development agencies and government authorities responsible for the design and implementation of social protection programmes. It is very relevant for developing countries in general and timely in the case of those countries which have been part of this study. This is because both Nepal and Ethiopia have been experiencing in the last years a rapid expansion of social protection policies, not necessarily accompanied by inclusiveness in the programming and improved governance, and therefore the study can contribute to the debate on the effectiveness of these social protection programmes.

The research shows that, after controlling for economic, demographic, legal, historical and geographical factors, proxies for the quality of institutions and people's preferences influence the level of expenditure in social protection in low- and middle-income countries. In addition, government revenue and maturity of social protection systems positively contribute to the overall level of social expenditure. This confirms the assumption that the level of social protection spending cannot be considered separately from tax policy considerations.

The research highlights how governments, donors, development organisations and civil society organisations should advocate and consider the quality of institutions and people's preferences in the design of social policy and social protection interventions. Furthermore, the research argues that the planning and budgeting process is a key step through which people's preferences are gathered, priorities identified and resources allocated.

This research has been developed building on discussions with policymakers and practitioners on the field. It allowed the research, especially the part implemented through case studies in Nepal and Ethiopia, to be of practical relevance. At the local level, the research findings confirm that strong collaboration among service providers, capacity of local institutions to effectively manage funds and the establishment and regular functioning of community structures are associated with better social protection interventions. Furthermore, the extent to which people are able to engage and manifest their preferences to local

authorities and community structures may affect the type of social protection interventions implemented. The case studies conducted in selected villages highlight the challenges that lowest social classes in Nepal and female community members in Ethiopia face in engaging with local authorities, because they feel that their voice is not heard.

These findings are important and will be shared and discussed in debates related to the development of social protection interventions at national and international conferences. The time and the investment required for the dissemination will be available within the context of the author's current position as Social Policy Specialist at UNICEF Ethiopia.

Throughout the PhD, at various occasions the author had the opportunity to share these important points with a larger and non-scientific audience. He was invited to the international conference on "Political Economy Aspects of Income (Re-Distribution)" in Venice, organized by CESifo in collaboration with Venice International University, and with Prof. Franziska Gassmann to the International Symposium on "Social Protection Systems - Tying the Knots", organized by the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences in Bonn.

Evidence from this research will provide an important contribution to the author's current work which supports, among others, the advocacy for inclusive social policy and social protection programme design. Some of the findings of this research have been shared with UNICEF Ethiopia's technical experts involved in the implementation of social protection interventions and have contributed to increase the quality of governance and the functioning of community structures. For example, increasing attention has been given during the design of IN-SCT programme evaluation to the quality of institutions at the village level, the establishment of community structures and the social protection's clients capacity to engage in the implementation of social protection interventions.