

Workshop on The Role of Information in Improving Rural Services and Governance

Friday, April 7, 2017

Jointly organized by the International Food Policy Research Institute's (IFPRI's) Strengthening Institutions and Governance (SIG) group and the CGIAR Research Program on Policies, Institutions, and Markets (PIM) led by IFPRI.

DESCRIPTION OF EVENT

High quality rural governance has the potential to significantly improve the productivity and welfare of the poor—70 percent of whom live in rural areas. Government has at least two important roles: providing services and supporting economic activity through good economic governance. Important rural services include infrastructure and agricultural and social services. Good economic governance entails supporting formal and informal institutions that promote economic activity and transactions by protecting property rights and enforcing contracts. However, rural governments in developing countries often fail in these roles. Service providers often lack full information on the preferences and needs of service users, and may also lack incentives to exert effort and refrain from corruption. Weak local institutions fail to support economic activity and foster distrust in government.

Several recent institutional and technological innovations that influence the information available to both government and citizens have the potential to improve rural governance dramatically. Providing information to government may help overcome information asymmetries between service users and service providers. Information in the hands of citizens may enable them to better monitor and thus reward or sanction service providers. Recent institutional innovations include decentralization, changes in the roles of the public vs. private sectors, government transparency initiatives, and efforts to increase citizens' involvement in government decision-making, among others. Recent technological innovations include more widespread use of Internet, cell phones, cameras, and other monitoring devices.

This workshop aims to shed light on whether and how greater access to information stemming from institutional or technological innovations can improve rural service delivery and governance. The event brings together a diverse group of researchers who will present work examining a variety of different services and aspects of rural governance and exchange feedback.

DRAFT AGENDA

8:30 - 9:00 am	Registration and Breakfast
9:00 - 9:10 am	Welcome by Katrina Kosec – IFPRI
9:10 - 9:50 am	“Media’s Influence on Citizen Demand for Public Goods” (Philip Keefer and Stuti Khemani) [discussant: Danielle Resnick]
9:50 - 10:30 am	“Awareness and Utilization of Public Entitlement Schemes: The Role of Women’s Self-help Groups in India” (Neha Kumar and Agnes Quisumbing) [discussant: Berber Kramer]
10:30 - 10:50 am	Coffee Break
10:50 - 11:30 am	“Migration, Political Institutions, and Social Networks” (Catia Batista , Julia Seither, and Pedro C. Vicente) [discussant: Kate Ambler]
11:30 - 12:10 pm	“Experimental Evidence on the Use of Water Monitoring for Conservation, Productivity, and Conflict Reduction” (Paul Christian , Florence Kondylis, Valerie Mueller, Tobias Siegfried, and Astrid Zwager) [discussant: Dawit Mekonnen]
12:10 - 12:50 pm	“Building Bridges? ICT for Political Communication and Service Delivery” (Guy Grossman , Melina Platas, and Jonathan Rodden) [discussant: Alan de Brauw]
12:50 - 2:00 pm	Keynote Address by Leonard Wantchekon : “Information, Constructive Social Capital and the Quality of Governance” Lunch will be available
2:15 - 2:55 pm	“Policy Preferences of Rural Citizens in Emerging Democracies: Evidence from Nepal” (Jordan Kyle and Danielle Resnick) [discussant: Maria Recalde]
2:55 - 3:35 pm	“Can Information Outreach Increase Participation in Community-Driven Development? A Randomized Field Experiment near Bwindi National Park, Uganda” (Mark T. Buntaine and Brigham Daniels) [discussant: Vijayendra Rao]
3:35 - 3:55 pm	Coffee Break
3:55 - 4:35 pm	“Electoral Incentives to Combat Epidemics: Evidence from Zika in Brazil” (Taylor Boas and F. Daniel Hidalgo) [discussant: Tewodaj Mogues]
4:35 - 5:15 pm	“Video-based Agricultural Extension: An Analysis of the Digital Green Approach to Promoting Smallholder Technology Adoption in Ethiopia” (Tanguy Bernard, Simrin Makhija , Kate Orkin, Alemayehu Seyoum Taffesse, and David Spielman) [discussant: Ghazala Mansuri]
5:15 pm	Closing Remarks

Note: Names of all authors of the papers are listed in parentheses. Presenters’ names appear in bold. Each presentation (20-25 min.) will be followed by a discussant (5 min.) and Q&A from participants (10-15 min.)

PRESENTERS

1. **Kate Ambler**, Research Fellow, IFPRI
2. **Catia Batista**, Associate Professor, Nova School of Business and Economics
3. **Alan de Brauw**, Senior Research Fellow, IFPRI
4. **Mark T. Buntaine**, Assistant Professor, University of California, Santa Barbara
5. **Paul Christian**, Economist, World Bank
6. **Brigham Daniels**, Professor, Brigham Young University
7. **Guy Grossman**, Assistant Professor, University of Pennsylvania
8. **F. Daniel Hidalgo**, Associate Professor, MIT
9. **Stuti Khemani**, Senior Economist, World Bank
10. **Katrina Kosec**, Senior Research Fellow, IFPRI
11. **Berber Kramer**, Research Fellow, IFPRI
12. **Neha Kumar**, Senior Research Fellow, IFPRI
13. **Jordan Kyle**, Associate Research Fellow, IFPRI
14. **Simrin Makhija**, Senior Research Assistant, IFPRI
15. **Ghazala Mansuri**, Lead Economist, World Bank
16. **Dawit Mekonnen**, Research Fellow, IFPRI
17. **Tewodaj Mogues**, Senior Research Fellow, IFPRI
18. **Vijayendra Rao**, Lead Economist, World Bank
19. **Maria Recalde**, Research Fellow, IFPRI
20. **Danielle Resnick**, Senior Research Fellow, IFPRI
21. **Leonard Wantchekon**, Professor, Princeton University