Project Information Brief 3 – May 2015

In this third Project Information Brief of the *Poverty Reduction and Regional Integration* (PRARI) project we report on selected highlights from the project so far.

Regionalism, Health and Poverty: Our project asks to what extent regionalist policies and programmes of action on health are instituting an embedded *pro-poor* focus? How do the responses of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to poverty and social inequality compare with those of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR)? What do they have in common and how do they differ? How are these differences playing out in terms of access to healthcare and medicines? Read more about the project and our reported findings at http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/prari

Connecting regional integration and inclusive development: The connections between the prospective Sustainable Development Goals, rejuvenated global social protection and health agendas, and regional integration processes may always be evident, but the PRARI team is working hard to make these links better understood and prosecute the case for a sharper, stronger focus on the critical role of regional governance in realising socially inclusive development.

PRARI blogs and podcasts

Pia Riggirozzi and Erica Penfold discuss why we can't hope to solve global ills without action against poverty, via The Conversation UK. **Erica Penfold** discusses why the World Health Assembly needs to renew its focus on regional governance, via SAIIA opinion editorials. **Stephen Kingah and Ana Amaya** explain why regional governance is the weakest link in global health governance and what can be done to fix it, via OurWorld, United Nations University. **Ana Amaya and Belen Herrero** discuss why regional organisations matter in the fight against non-communicable diseases, via OurWorld, United Nations University. And in a short video available from the PRARI website, **Erica Penfold** discusses what we can learn from Ebola and what it means for action to strengthen health systems. You can read these - and others we have written - via the PRARI website.

PRARI Policy Briefs

Tackling poverty through regional action (PRARI Policy Brief 3)

Regional organisations can play a key role in achieving socially inclusive and equitable development. They can mobilise a wide range of development partners within and beyond their regions, lead poverty reduction strategies, monitor achievements, and facilitate the sharing of good practice. Regional programmes of social investment can support social protection strategies to prevent poverty and mitigate its devastating effects on present and future generations. A better

understanding of how regional organisations pursue pro-poor policies is vital to identifying, sharing and incorporating good practice into concerted social action.

Strengthening the right to health and health equity (PRARI Policy Brief 5)

Regional organisations can play a vital role in advancing health equity, within regional contexts as well as in global fora. The case of UNASUR shows the extent of activism that is possible for regional organisations in campaigns to support health equity and the human right to health. This Policy Brief details how the experiences of UNASUR have been informed by a sharp sense of engagement by national stakeholders including activists and policy makers involved in cross-border working groups. While regional specificities matter, good practice can be identified and shared in the cause of greater health equity.

Regional indicators of pro-poor policy success and change

We are using participatory action research methods to develop regional indicators of pro-poor policy success and change in collaboration with key stakeholders in South America and Southern Africa. In February and May 2015, we published two Policy Briefs on *Monitoring Pro-Poor Health Policy Success* in the contexts of UNASUR (PRARI Policy Brief 6) and SADC (PRARI Policy Brief 7). Co-authored between the UNU-CRIS team and UNASUR- and SADC-based stakeholders, these Policy Briefs were a key outcome of monitoring indicator workshops held in Brazil and Botswana a few months previously, and are part of the process of building regional ownership of regional monitoring systems that this project aims to achieving. All our Policy Briefs are available in English and Spanish.

A new Working Paper *Multi-level pro-poor health governance, statistical information flow, and the role of regional organisation in South America and Southern Africa* focuses on the organisation of statistical information flows at and between different levels of governance, and the emerging role of regional organisations therein. It discusses the extent to which statistics are regionally coordinated and the role regional organisations are playing with respect to national health information systems. Access it via this link:
http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/prari/files/working_paper_1_en.pdf

Coming soon: Working Papers on Participatory action research methods; Comparing UNASUR and SADC; the Social and solidarity economy in MERCOSUR and UNASUR; SADC regional social governance and policy; Regional health governance; Regional medicines regimes; Social equity, poverty and health…all available from the PRARI website at The Open University.

PRARI Workshop @ Bruges: Our *Research and Policy Methodologies of Poverty Reduction and Regional Integration* took place on 29th April 2015, successfully bringing together some 20 junior and senior colleagues from academic and policy organisations all working on regional integration, social policy and health in relation to Africa, North and South America, Europe, and Asia. Workshop materials are on our website now, and many of the papers presented will be published on our website and elsewhere in due course. We look forward to continuing the dialogue.

If you have ideas for features, an event or an article, or if you simply want to make contact with us, we'd love to hear from you. Contact us at PRARI@open.ac.uk

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