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Regional integration can play a key role in achieving innovative development. Regional activism is of growing significance in national and global politics and policy. Regional organisations have the capability to mobilise a wide range of actors within and beyond their regions, lead regional poverty reduction strategies, track policy innovations and 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.

Our project seeks a better understanding of how regional organisations pursue pro-poor policies in relation to health and reflects on what local, national, regional and international actors can do to support them. This is vital to identifying, sharing and incorporating good practice into concerted social action on a regional scale.

In this fourth Project Information Brief of the *Poverty Reduction and Regional Integration* (PRARI) project we report on selected highlights from the project over the summer. Read more about the project and what we are doing at <http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/prari> (ENG and SP versions)


PRARI online Congratulations to Erica Penfold (SAIIA) on the success of her blog ‘Lessons from Cuba on eliminating the transmission of HIV from mother to child’ published in *The Conversation* in July. In it she discusses the role of regional organisations like SADC and what more they can do to harness this successful innovation in medical care. It has received more than **30,000** hits so far – and rising! Access this piece directly from *The Conversation*, where others that Erica and other members of the PRARI team have written are also available. We now have some 25 features written by the project team freely available on our PRARI website.

Following Pia Riggiozzi’s presentation to the international conference ‘Consolidation of Democracy in Regional Organisations: Lessons from Latin America and EU’, held at the Mercosur Building, Uruguay, on 6-7th May 2015, the organisers released a **YouTube video** featuring Pia being interviewed on the topic: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLu6fWJmdnd_HLNRuP0Ga6YyJL2ff_7ubf.

In August the International Council on Social Welfare published a **feature article** by Nicola Yeates in its *Global Newsletter* which reaches to members in more than 70 countries worldwide. Drawing on an earlier PRARI Policy Brief, her article, ‘Global poverty eradication, post-2015: what can regional organisations do?’ highlighted how development actors may better respond to the growing significance of regional integration for poverty eradication and sustainable development.

PRARI events In July we organised a Policy Roundtable in collaboration with the Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar (UASB), Quito, Ecuador. Entitled *Políticas Regionales en Salud: La incursión de UNASUR en la Diplomacia en Salud (Regional Health Policy: the incursion of UNASUR in Health Diplomacy)* the event was organised by UNU-CRIS and chaired by Michel Levi, and speakers included Jaime Breilh



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(Director of Health, UASB), Mariana Faria (ISAGS-UNASUR), Carlos A. Emanuele (National Director for Cooperation and International Relations, Ecuadorian Ministry of Public Health), and PRARI team members Pia Riggiozzi and Ana B. Amaya.

The event was well-attended with participation from representatives from public health agencies in South America, postgraduate students and scholars from who discussed achievements and challenges of regional health integration as advanced by UNASUR, particularly in relation to health promotion, medicines, and the disabilities agenda at the WHO. The Director of International Relations of the Ministry of Health of Ecuador, Carlos Emanuele, stressed that health has ceased to have an exclusively curative approach in the continent in favour of 'a culture of rights', while Jaime Breilh proposed a reassessment of existing policies and a new framework for South-South integration that is not guided by power relations: "It must be based on the four 'S': sustainability, sovereignty, security and, above all, solidarity." Panelists also discussed the risks of excessive 'hyper-presidentialism' in integration processes and the need to involve partners from civil society in the development of social and integration agendas.

Further information on this PRARI event organised with UASB is available from our website, and from http://www.isags-unasur.org/it_materia.php?ev=3064&lg=3.

Earlier this month SAIIA hosted two SADC regional health workshops in at its premises at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. The workshops brought together members of the PRARI team and delegates from Botswana, Zambia, Swaziland, Zimbabwe and South Africa to discuss PRARI research into SADC regional health and medicines and make progress on pro-poor indicators-based regional health monitoring. Participants were excited to work together with PRARI and the SADC Secretariat to facilitate and accelerate policy change for better healthcare in Southern Africa.


October brings two further workshops hosted by the PRARI team at FLACSO in Buenos Aires. With participants from across the South America – Bolivia, Paraguay, Venezuela, Uruguay, Ecuador, Argentina and Brazil - it will discuss PRARI's UNASUR-focused regional health policy research, undertaken by Diana Tussie and Belen Herrero, and progress the next stage of UNU-CRIS' work to develop a South American regional indicators-based monitoring system. Materials from these events will be available from the PRARI website in coming weeks.

PRARI research into regional indicators of pro-poor policy success and change is nearing completion. On our website you can find out why we are using participatory action research to develop these, how we are doing this and who we are working with. Our Working Papers, Policy Briefs (Eng, Sp) and Conference Papers on this area of the project are also located there.

PRARI publications We are proud to announce the imminent (December 2015) publication of a journal special issue of *Global Social Policy: international journal of public policy and social development* (Sage Publications) on **regional health governance and diplomacy**. Co-guest edited by Pia Riggiozzi and Nicola Yeates, it has contributed articles from some twenty people spanning the PRARI project team, the PRARI Advisory Group, and a range of international scholars, activists and policy officials from around the world.

Global Social Policy special issue research articles

- 'Locating regional health policy: analytics, politics, and practices' Pia Riggiozzi and Nicola Yeates
- 'Stretching Health Diplomacy beyond 'Global' Problem Solving: Bringing the Regional Normative Dimension In' Andrew Cooper and Asif Farooq

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- ‘International and Regional Economic Rule-making and the Enforcement of the Right to Health: the Case of Colombia’ Liliana Lizarazo Rodríguez and Philippe De Lombaerde
- ‘Regional Health Governance: A Suggested Agenda for Southern African Health Diplomacy’ Erica Penfold and Pieter Fourie
- ‘UNASUR Health: A Quiet Revolution in Health Diplomacy in South America’ Diana Tussie and Belen Herrero
- ‘What’s in a word? The framing of health at the regional level: ASEAN, EU, SADC and UNASUR’, Ana B Amaya, Vincent Rollet and Stephen Kingah

Global Social Policy Forum articles

- ‘Advancing regionalism and a social policy agenda for positive change: from rhetoric to action’ Vivienne Taylor (University of Cape Town, South Africa)
- ‘Principles to guide a regional agenda on the right to health’ Dainius Puras (UN Special Rapporteur on the Right of Everyone to the Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health)
- ‘Unasur Health Council: an emerging global actor in health policy and governance’ Mariana Faria (ISAGS-UNASUR)
- ‘Health governance in sub-Saharan Africa’ Keneilwe Sadie Mooketsane and Molefe Phirinyane (Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis, Gabarone, Botswana)
- ‘The Post-2015 development agenda and South-South and triangular cooperation – how the partnership model should be?’ Mami Yamada Sakurai (Assistant Director for Partnerships and Triangular Cooperation, United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC).
- ‘Why a renewed focus on regional governance is needed post-2015’ Erica Penfold (SAIIA, South Africa)
- ‘Economic Policy - Public Health Linkage, and the Importance of a Regional Platform: the case of tobacco control’ Jenina Joy Chavez (Action for Economic Reforms - Industrial Policy Team, Philippines)

PRARI Announcements: Belen Herrero has been appointed to a tenured position with the National Scientific Council (Conicet) on the basis of the novelty of our PRARI research project and her publications during this time. Also, Diana Tussie has been appointed to the position of Investigadora Superior, the highest category at the National Scientific Council. Diana is one of the few women to have reached that rank. Congratulations to them both.

If you want to make contact with us, we’d love to hear from you. Contact us at PRARI@open.ac.uk, join us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter. Whichever you prefer, we look forward to continuing the dialogue.