



**IUSSP Research Conference on
Population, Poverty and Inequality**
Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan
Ann Arbor (Michigan), United States, 27-29 June 2019
With funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation



Plenary2 – Friday, June 28th 3:30pm to 5:00pm

FROM RESEARCH TO POLICY: INFLUENCING DECISIONMAKERS

Introduction [5 minutes] – Informed perspectives on how policy relevant to labor market outcomes (inequality and poverty) is created, piloted, and implemented. This is actually quite broad because health, education, and a range of factors affect labor market outcomes. During this guided discussion, we hope to share experiences and ask questions about how researchers can influence policy and how policy can inform research. We will define policy and policymakers broadly. With respect to policy, there are broad overarching governmental policies and also, policy decision that are more programmatic. Policymakers go beyond those in country governments who declare initiatives and advance legislation. There are policy influencers who range from donors to development partners, to civil society organizations. **See short bios at end of document.**

Discussion leaders will have seven minutes each to share an example of successful efforts or failure to inform/influence policy. They will describe the example and give an assessment of what were the most important factors resulting in success/failure. Each discussion leader will take 2-3 clarifying questions from the audience (and/or other panel members). We can ask Eliya and Seema to focus on their experiences as researchers and Marcelo and Kathleen to focus on their experience with how policymaking/policy-influencing organizations they worked in accessed and used research. [45 minutes]

The 7-minute statements will be made in the order listed below. Notes following each name are thoughts shared during our planning discussion.

[Eliya Zulu](#) (African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP))

He works on evidence-informed decision making (EIDM), which involves supply of and demand for research/evidence, providing structured opportunities for EIDM. He could share some of the key messages from policymakers and information/examples about needs at different parts of policy/program pipeline, giving examples of research that helps and skills needed among researchers. He believes we (groups like his organization) have created a demand for research and now need to figure out how to fulfill demand created. He suggests promoting evidence looking from knowledge gap faced by policy makers and asks how to institutionalize a culture of evidence use. This would create long-term influence. He plans to raise questions and others (including the audience) might provide answers.

Also, there are big examples of policies that do not work well because creators/planners did not have evidence before programming; during programming, there might be lack of evaluation and course correction. An example of when evidence use stopped program in place.

[Seema Jayachandran](#) (Northwestern University and J-Pal)

Seema has been asked to put on her J-Pal hat and discuss RCTs. Her examples will draw from her research experience in health and education. Some initial thoughts include how to work with policymakers in the process of setting up randomized evaluations. RCTs may tackle a challenge that policymakers are facing and provide information by small scale innovation. She plans to talk about the process and problems in producing evidence for long-term problems faced by policymakers. Researchers can influence policymakers in other ways than results from one experiment. Sometimes, one has more influence by presenting broad perspective—here is how I would think about that—being a well-informed thought partner (knowing the literature).

[Marcelo Neri](#) (FGV Social - Fundação Getulio Vargas)

Marcelo Neri (Director of FGV Social, Brazil) was a policy maker in Brazil. He proposes here to explore opportunities to impact policies directly from the research environment.

Explore as a main example the implementation of Família Carioca a CCT from Rio City. Use administrative records not just to gather empirical evidence on policy impacts but also to build policies themselves.

Discuss other types of Initiatives such as:

- Generating quasi-policies from the academy through knowledge diffusion to the population (for example, on the labor market returns of different types of education).
- Mechanisms of hearing population concerns and preferences; the role of multiple stakeholders' forums and of representative surveys on population perceptions on public policies and institutions.
- Knowledge exchange across experiences (example: World Without Poverty initiative). The potential of international references such as SDGs and MDGs to foster and frame the policy debate.
- Creation of a population development committee (example: CNPD -on Demographics and Development). Building an evaluation protocols within the State. The need to build secrecy rooms.

[Kathleen Beegle](#) (World Bank)

Kathleen is thinking about where stakeholders want to see research and how this influences researchers.

With respect to the influence of researchers, some of her thoughts follow. Within the World Bank, there is an influence of research on projects and priorities, particularly in gender; documents used to propose a project are assessed on how they reflect research knowledge; the state of knowledge feeds into decisions about pursuing a project. Researchers need to repeat messaging even with a particular paper or study because of changes in leadership and

policy maker's bandwidth. The message needs to be present in different formats. Also, sometimes, the timing is just not right the first time the message is delivered. For example, 10 years ago, there was not the scope to consider the role of social norms in development. Now, we are talking about how to influence social norms in order to close gender gaps on development indicators.

Chair/Moderator facilitates discussion among panel members [10 minutes]

The chair has listed some questions below that he/she will use to advance the conversation if it lulls. The discussion will start with pushing the discussion leaders to provide specifics that there might not be time for in each 7-minute overview (e.g., How did you get to know the Minister of Health?) and soliciting comments or questions from the discussion leaders.

- -When is research relevant to policymaking that has the potential to reduce inequality and/or poverty? What point in the policymaking process provides the best window of opportunity for researchers? At what point in the policymaking process is research most useful for policymakers/implementers?
- -How does a researcher access decisionmakers interested in issues of inequality and poverty reduction? How does someone in government or a policy-influencing organization access relevant research?
- -What is the "payoff" for researchers who engage with policymakers or the policymaking process?
- -Who is a policymaker anyway? How do you spot a policy influencer? How do policymakers identify credible researchers/research?

Audience questions/discussion format: chair fields 3 questions at a time from the audience for panel members [25 minutes]

Closing and logistics [5 minutes]

Short Bios

[Eliya Zulu](#) (African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP)). Dr. Eliya Zulu is the Executive Director of the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP), whose mission is to promote evidence-informed public policy making in Africa. Zulu has extensive experience in research, capacity building, and policy engagement on population change and sustainable development, urban poverty, reproductive, child and maternal health. He is leading a programme to support African governments determine strategic investments to enable them harness the Demographic Dividend. Zulu is the former President of the Union for African Population studies, has served on many international development panels and given various keynote addresses, including at the UN General Assembly. A truly international scholar, he earned his Ph.D. in Demography from the University of Pennsylvania, a Master's degree in Demography from the Australian National University, and Bachelor's degree in Economics from the University of Malawi.

[Seema Jayachandran](#) (Northwestern University and J-PAL). Professor Seema Jayachandran is a professor in the Department of Economics at Northwestern University in the United States. Her work focuses primarily on gender equality, health, and fertility in developing countries, and she also has research interests in education, labor markets, and the environment. She is currently conducting randomized evaluations in India, Burkina Faso, and Ghana related to child development, gender attitudes, family planning, and environmental conservation. She serves as a co-editor for the American Economic Journal: Applied Economics and associate editor for the Quarterly Journal of Economics. She co-directs the Development Economics program at the National Bureau of Economic Research and is a board member and chair of J-PAL's Gender sector and was previously co-chair of J-PAL's Health sector from 2012 to 2018. Seema earned her PhD from Harvard University.

[Marcelo Neri](#) (FGV Social - Fundação Getulio Vargas). Professor Neri is Director of FGV Social and founder of the Center for Social Policies at the Getulio Vargas Foundation in Brazil. FGV is a 75-years-old highly ranked think tank, (worldwide) whose mission is to foster Brazilian development. His research focuses on social policies, education, micro-econometrics, and wellbeing. He holds a PhD in Economics from Princeton University. Previously he was the Secretary-General of the Council of Economic and Social Development (CDES) and President of the Institute for Applied Economic Research (Ipea). He was also Minister of Strategic Affairs linked to the presidency of Brazil (SAE/PR) where he was also responsible for the Academic Forum on the BRICS, revived the National Commission on Population and Development (CNPd), co-founded the International knowledge hub World Without Poverty, and created a secure room at IPEA to work with confidential data sets. He also represented Brazil in the World Economic Forum and was Brazilian National Security Advisor (NSA) in the BRICS. He has evaluated policies in more than a dozen countries and also designed and implemented policies at three government levels in Brazil.

[Kathleen Beegle](#) (World Bank). Dr. Kathleen Beegle joined the World Bank Gender Group as a lead economist in 2018. She was previously a World Bank Human Development Program Leader for Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, based in Accra, Ghana. Her research includes the study of poverty, labor, economic shocks, and methodological studies on household survey data collection in developing countries. She has expertise in the design and implementation of household surveys and their use for

poverty and policy analysis. She recently co-led the World Bank reports *Realizing the Full Potential of Safety Nets in Africa* and *Poverty in A Rising Africa*. Previously, she was Deputy Director of the World Bank's World Development Report 2013 on Jobs and a member of the Living Standards Measurement Study team. She received her Ph.D. in Economics from Michigan State University and completed a post-doctoral fellowship at RAND.