

SADRN

Trade and Poverty
Thematic Working Group

Principle Supply Driven Activities

- Selection of Researchers for Thematic Working Group
- Preparation of Inception Workshop on Trade and Poverty in Gaborone in March 2009 . Held with assistance of World Bank and Tufts .
- Following this some 7 projects (of an expected 9) were received by BIDPA
- In the end only 5 supply driven research projects proceeded.
- Close follow-up with researchers- proposals reviewed and commented upon and further developed
- All drafts reviewed on at least two separate occasions

Research Subjects Included

- *Small-scale Mining and its Impact on Poverty in Namibia: A case study of miners in the Erongo region.*
- *The Impact of imported GMO Chickens on Zimbabwe's Poultry Industry*
- *The Effects of the EU-Imposed Livestock Identification and Trace-back System on Botswana's Beef Exports, Revenue and Rural Poverty*
- *Do conservancies help alleviating poverty? A case of the Torra Conservancy*
- *Impact of EU Sugar Reforms on the Livelihood of Sugar Cane Workers.*

Problems of Supply Driven Research

- **Only the paper on poverty in the sugar industry was genuinely up to a publishable standard.**
- An inability to bring poverty analysis into the studies of activities that would generate trade and economic growth.
- An unwillingness by researchers to incorporate the comments of experts on how to conduct the research or how to revise the paper. There was no mechanism for halting research that was deemed to be below standard
- Many of the researchers were, as is often the case in the SADC region, undertaking green fields research and thus they were preoccupied with obtaining primary data. As a result the work did not focus on the relationship between trade and poverty but rather on whether an activity generated economic growth.
- As there was no adequate data on many of the poverty measures (and in the case of Zimbabwe no data at all) it was difficult for much of the very sophisticated econometric research being conducted in developed countries to be of the slightest relevance to the research capacities in SADC.
- Some of the projects that were presented were not research subjects at all and in a couple of cases were almost certainly attempts to get double funding for a much larger piece of analysis. As a result some proposals were not acceptable for funding.
- The advice and training given to researchers was inappropriate. The first workshop provided a framework for those undertaking research in a more developed country context. Most of the researchers came to subjects (small scale mining) or from countries (Zimbabwe) where no data existed. The gulf between developed country econometric research and what was possible for those doing research was too large.
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Demand Driven Research

- We had put on our web site the existence of funding for research subjects in this theme but there were no takers
- Instead we contacted SACU Secretariat and discussed including trade and poverty themes a consultancy project on food prices in the SACU region
- Undertook research on bio-fuels and poverty as well as impacts by income group of price increases.
- Enhanced the work undertaken but policy impact to be seen.

What was achieved ?

- A network of trade researchers was created throughout the region
- Important primary research on trade and poverty was initiated in SADC
- Researchers were trained in the techniques of trade and poverty research
- Demand driven work on bio-fuels and food prices was undertaken
- Work on the distributional effects of food price increases was incorporated into research on trade
- A brief was prepared on staple food prices in Botswana

What was not achieved

- Originally the project had budgeted for nine and only five supply driven research projects were accepted. The reason for this is that no more researchers came forward. Only one research project was rejected because it was obviously part of a much larger.
- Three demand driven projects were envisaged and only two were implemented with the agreement of the SACU Secretariat. These were both on food prices and the poor. There were no unsolicited requests from government for research in this area. The call for proposals was posted on the BIDPA web site and was discussed with government officials.
- The decision over publication rests with IDRC/TIPS
- The original project envisaged honoraria for policy makers to attend. These were not paid because of ethical and moral hazard concerns. However, directly as a result , policy makers did not participate of their own volition.
- SADC Briefs were not prepared as these depended on final papers which did not lend themselves to policy briefs .

Lessons for the Future

- Limited capacity and limited number of potential researchers.
- Need much closer supervision of researchers and a dedicated staff member to visit with all researchers.
- ‘Tough love’- no research to standard , no money
- Incorporating policy makers will remain a major challenge unless there is a pecuniary benefit.