

Development Economics

What are the effects of food aid on food production?

It has commonly been believed that the provision of food aid acts as an disincentive to food production in communities and economies receiving such aid. A recent paper by Abdulai, Barrett, and Hoddinott on Ethiopia challenges this conventional wisdom. It would be of interest to do a critical analysis of their findings, and to see if their findings are also brought out in other countries where food aid plays a large role, e.g. Malawi.

References:

Abdulai, Awudu, Christopher B. Barrett, and John Hoddinott. 2005. Does food aid Really have disincentive effects? New evidence from sub-Saharan Africa. *World Development* 33 (10):1689

Supervisor: Ragnar Øygard (ragnar.oygard@umb.no)

How much of observed mobility in and out of poverty is measurement error?

Many developing countries are undertaking large surveys to monitor changes in poverty and other aspects of living standards. Of primary interest is changes in the prevalence of poverty, but also the duration of poverty for individual households, where the notion is that for a given prevalence of poverty, persistent poverty is worse than when there is large movement in and out of poverty. Typically living standards surveys find high levels of mobility. Paul Glewwe has developed a methodology for analysing how much of this mobility in Vietnam is measurement error. It could be of interest to test this methodology also for other developing countries, e.g. on the 1998 Integrated Household Survey and associated panel data available for Malawi.

Reference:

Paul Glewwe.2005: How Much of Observed Economic Mobility Is Measurement Error? A Method to Remove Measurement Error Bias, with an Application to Vietnam.
(Accessed on: <http://www.apec.umn.edu/faculty/pglewwe/research.html>)

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Analysis of new Malawi Integrated Household Survey

The National Statistical Office of Malawi (<http://www.nso.malawi.net/>) is about to release its new Integrated Household Survey. This can be analysed for a number of interesting questions, e.g.

- How effective are traditional methods of income redistribution among kin for ensuring livelihood security, and how do these interact with publicly provided safety nets?
- How does the HIV/AIDS pandemic affect household livelihoods?

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Markets for agricultural products

Lacking access to markets can be a major constraint on poverty reduction and to economic development: A study of one particular product market in one area could reveal different problems of market access for the peasantry. Risk and poor infrastructure, lacking social infrastructure in the marketing process, financial constraints or other problems like missing human capital or monopsonistic behaviour.

Supervisor: Carl Erik Schultz

The effects of improved international market access for agricultural products Inside the WTO some developing countries try to improve the access for imported agricultural products in the markets of the industrial countries. This will make changes to both consumption and production in the developing countries. How will this work in the rural areas you study? What is the effect on poverty, and may this trigger economic development and redistribution?

Supervisor: Carl Erik Schultz

Water and poverty

How

is water supplied for agriculture and residential consumption? Is it possible by use of economic policy measures to improve the use of water? How can such measures influence poverty and income distribution?

Supervisor: Carl Erik Schultz

Conflicts of agriculture and the environment

How

does agricultural land use influence the environment, and can we measure the economic impacts of production on the environment?

Supervisor: Carl Erik Schultz

Evaluating the bottlenecks for development in a rural area

Agriculture faces different bottlenecks for development. Is it possible to indicate the main economic problems for an area, and to use some theoretical discussion to find the main ones?

Supervisor: Carl Erik Schultz

Public health and poverty

Budget constraints in the public sector may lead to missing public health care. However, bad health has a cost both to the individual, the community and to the public sector. How can we try to calculate the costs of 'non treatment' in the rural areas?

Supervisor: Carl Erik Schultz