

Human rights and pro poor growth

Marta Foresti

Millennium Development Goals Public Lecture
Trinity College, Dublin - 18th March 2010

Human rights and development

- Since the 90s recognition that HR matter for poverty reduction and development
- Poverty as deprivation of freedom and lack of capabilities (Sen, 1990)
- Multidimensional of poverty and human development (90s)
- Millennium declaration and link development, HR and security (2000)
- Vienna Declaration: universality of HR (2003)

Governance, politics and rights (i)

- State/society relations key component of governance
- What would realistic accountability and legitimacy of the state look like?
- Limitations of 'western models' and 'gold standards' for democracy
- Informal rules and fabric of society key: what role for external actors?
- Aid still about 'helping them'

Governance, politics and rights (ii)

- Making rights real. What does it mean to have rights, what does it take to fulfil them?
- Move away from generic 'rights based approaches' and engage on specific rights in specific countries
- Rights as dignity and ingredients for social justice
- Face up to the empirical challenge: where is the evidence?

Where have we got to

- Rights and poverty reduction are compatible frameworks. Time to move on
- Understand what is the problem, do something about it. A more strategic approach
- Be selective, identify operational, realistic entry points. No global recipe, acknowledge limitations
- Focus on ES rights. CP strategies may not work/be effective

Why HR and PPG?

- Address similar concerns: inequality, poverty and role of policy
- A good test for HR –DEV linkages
- Get a sense of what economists actually think about HR
- Explore operational synergies

Background on HR and PPG project

- Commissioned by OECD DAC (November 08-March 09)
- Purposes:
 - ✓ to analyse the relationship between HR and PPG: synergies, complementarities, tensions or contradictions
 - ✓ to build the foundations for effective collaboration between different constituencies
- Literature review, semi structured interviews with 30 economists (80% from operational agencies, 20% academics)
- Report to OECD, Project Briefing and a book chapter

PPG: an overview

Pace and pattern of growth that enhances men and women participation, contribution and benefit from it

Agreed principles and priorities.

- inequality limits poverty reduction
- centrality of policies
- accountability of institutions
- participation and active engagement of the poor
- OECD policy guidance common framework
- Despite wide acceptance, highly contested concept among economists

PPG: controversies

- Income vs holistic approach;
- ‘Any growth that reduces poverty’ vs additional policies;
- Agency vs participation in productivity;
- Means or an end
- Overall, it is a political matter which requires paradigm shift
- Very difficult to operationalise in practice

HR and PPG: compatible frameworks (i)

- Both frameworks widely accepted and central to development. **Compatible** in theory
- Linkages vary in nature and strength
 - **Equality** the strongest, though income inequality not enough
 - **Voice, power and participation** potentially key but less explicit
- **Accountability** of economic institutions and access to justice for the poor potentially useful contributions by HR.

HR and PPG: compatible frameworks (ii)

- Concerns over affordability and fiscal space for ES rights.
- Confusion over CP and ES rights status.
- Lack of evidence on how in practice HR can contribute to achieve change.
- HR as entry point not easy
- HR language + lack of understanding of how HR framework works in practice a barrier for taking forward

Institutional dimension of HR and PPG

- Policies do not matter much
- HR and PPG face similar challenges in agencies
- Institutional culture and incentives key for integration
- Size, structure and underlying culture all important
- Dialogue between disciplines and organisations fundamental yet rare

Operational entry points: the way forward

- The crisis: opportunity or threat?
- HR language and PPG controversies a barrier
- Operational level is the key, a real sense that it can be useful to integrate HR and PPG
- Operational entry points –: taxation, land rights, budgeting, employment, social protection,
- HR as outcomes: a way forward, needs exploring

Conclusions

- Focus on operational level. No more theoretical debates. Demonstrate benefits as well as limitations
- Work with institutional incentives and be aware of blockages
- Promote open dialogue to improve mutual understanding
- Specific issues and priorities, not general frameworks/principles