Module “Introduction to rural development”
Course: Introduction to rural development

1st semester EMP 2019-20

Module manager: Prof. Johan BASTIAENSEN

Planning

Part 1: Prof. Ranjula BALI SWAIN

Part 2: Prof. Johan BASTIAENSEN & Frédéric HUYBRECHS

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
<th>Guest speaker</th>
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<td>03/10/2019</td>
<td>6 pm – 9 pm</td>
<td>Prof. R. Bali Swain</td>
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<td>04/10/2019</td>
<td>6 pm – 9 pm</td>
<td>Prof. R. Bali Swain</td>
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<td>05/10/2019</td>
<td>2 pm – 5 pm</td>
<td>Prof. R. Bali Swain</td>
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<td>19/11/2019</td>
<td>6 pm – 9 pm</td>
<td>Prof. P. Van Damme</td>
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<td>23/11/2019</td>
<td>9 am – 12 pm</td>
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<td>A. Alemayehu (WASASA MFI)</td>
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<td>28/11/2019</td>
<td>6 pm – 9 pm</td>
<td>Prof. J. Bastiaensen</td>
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<td>29/11/2019</td>
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<td>03/12/2019</td>
<td>6 pm – 9 pm</td>
<td>Prof. J. Bastiaensen</td>
<td>Dr. F. Huybrechs and D. Morel (SOS Faim)</td>
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Part 1: Prof. Ranjula BALI SWAIN

Objectives of the course

The objective of this course is to introduce, discuss and frame aspects of rural livelihoods and to relate these with socio-economic inequalities and the usage of financial services.

We start with presenting rural development in the theoretical debate on economic development. Then we discuss issues of rural livelihoods. Next we present the specificity of past and new models to rural and agricultural financing. We finally highlight several experiences from South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa in providing financial services to rural poor and to small-scale farmers.

Four sets of key questions will be debated: (1) Why are rural areas different from urban areas in terms of potential clientele for a microfinance institution? (2) How does poverty and inequalities relate to risk and finance? (3) Why are farmers a difficult group to reach for a microfinance institution? 4) Why is it instrumental to take into account the local social and political framing of financial services?

Topics covered and recommended readings

1) Introduction to rural development
   - Rural and agricultural development in the development agenda
   - Rural livelihoods and socio-economic inequalities
   - Some characteristics of small-scale farming activities
   - Diversity of financial needs among the rural poor

2) Past and new approaches to rural finance
   - Public policies and agricultural development banks
   - The building of financial markets in rural areas within the broader context of socio-economic inequalities

3) Self Help Groups Bank Linkage Program in India
   - Constraints faced by (micro)finance to reach-out rural areas (incl. agriculture finance)
   - Impact of Self Help Group (SHG) Bank Linkage Program in India on poverty and vulnerability
   - SHG program and women empowerment

References:

**Part 2: Prof. Johan BASTIAENSEN/ Dr. Frédéric HUYBRECHS**

**Transformative microfinance for inclusive and sustainable rural/agricultural development.**

**Objectives of the course**

The objective of this course is to introduce and analyze the difficulties and opportunities for rural and agricultural (micro)finance. The course discusses specificities of rural areas, and agriculture in particular, in terms of the potential and challenges for financial services. Microfinance is presented and analyzed in light of its interaction with broader socio-institutional processes of rural development, allowing us to discuss and reflect on its potential transformative role to promote a more socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable rural development. We will conceptualize microfinance and ‘microfinance plus’ as an inevitably embedded and path-dependent instrument of socio-institutional transformation. These ideas will be illustrated with successful and unsuccessful cases of ‘micro-finance plus’ interventions aimed at transforming agricultural production, value chains (meat) and/or landscape dynamics towards social inclusion, environmental sustainability/climate change adaptation in rural Nicaragua.

**Topics covered and compulsory (!) readings**

1) Understanding ‘MF for rural/agricultural development’ in local institutional context (Johan Bastiaensen)

- Making rural microfinance work: transaction costs and social embeddedness
- Exploring the challenges of rural microcredit for agriculture at the level of supply and demand
- Sustaining ‘credit culture’ and how to survive repayment crises?
2) A transformative role for microfinance in rural development? (Johan Bastiaensen)

- Reconceptualizing the creation, maintenance and impact of microfinance (plus) as a contribution to broader socio-institutional transformation of dominant rural pathways – going beyond microfinance narcissism: microfinance (plus) as inevitably articulated within broader governmental assemblages of **culture/ideas** (preferred subjectivities, (gendered) ideas of a good life, ‘moral landscapes’, …), **rules and norms** (gender roles and practices, property rights, market regulation, inherited governance practices,…) and **actor networks** (value chains, community organizations, cooperatives, …).
- Ideas about value chains, territories and transformative microfinance.

3) **Microfinance and (environmental) sustainability – microfinance as an intervention in social-ecological systems** (Frédéric Huybrechs)

- Drawing lessons from debates on social performance/impact and environmental governance in terms of reaching the social and environmental bottom line.
- Building further on the introduction to green microfinance, we point to the social and political dimensions of dealing with environmental concerns.
- Expanding and unpacking the Green Index in light of recognizing multiple sustainabilities in different contexts. This is guided by the presentation of short, illustrative cases of microfinance’s interaction with social-ecological dynamics.

4) **Microfinance for sustainable rural development – cases** (Frédéric Huybrechs)

- **Extensive case:** Financial and non-financial services for the transformation of rural territorial pathways in the context of climate change (illustration of approach & examples from practice in coffee and cattle regions of Nicaragua)
- Example of ongoing project “TRansforming Unsustainable PATHways in agricultural frontiers”
- A closing section explores how a perspective of complex socio-institutional interactions also opens up spaces for discussing other innovations in financial inclusion.

5) **Guest speaker, Dominique Morel – SOS Faim**

- Relevance of family farming financing
- Constraints faced by (micro)finance to reach-out rural areas (incl. agriculture finance)
- Microfinance seen from farmers’ side: farmers’ associations strategies to access finance
6) Guest speaker, Amsalu Alemayehu – Wasasa MFI (Ethiopia)

- A methodology to reach out remote rural areas in Ethiopia: the Rural Savings and Credit Facilities
- Other practical aspects in the financing of agriculture

References:

**Recommended readings**


**Evaluation**

Written assignments:
A) One for Prof. R. Bali Swain’s part
B) One for Prof. J. Bastiaensen’s part

Two marks A (Prof. Bali Swain) and B (Prof. Bastiaensen) must set the final mark C of the module.

- if A and B are greater than or equal to 8/20, then C = (A + B)/2
- if A < 8/20 or B < 8/20, then C = min (A,B).