



PRARI poverty reduction and
regional integration
RePIR reducción de la pobreza
e integración regional



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Southern regionalisms, Global agendas: Innovating inclusive access to health and medicines in a context of social inequity

An international conference of the PRARI project

Friday 4th December 2015

The global system that has emerged in the early 21st century has generated vigorous debates amongst scholars, policy-makers and activists worldwide about how to enhance social standards, extend the coverage of social provision, strengthen health systems, and improve population health, well-being and security. These debates, long aired in national spheres of governance, are also now being taken to *regional* fora where state and non-state actors are mobilising around a set of policy agendas that ask how regional integration can be harnessed to support social equity in development. Regional perspectives and regional-level actions are emerging in response to questions such as:

- What kinds of social innovations are needed to support the means of social participation and inclusive social development?
- How can a socially responsible and sustainable relationship between economic and social standards be forged and sustained?
- How can national and international social solidarity, standards and rights be maintained in the face of international competition?

Southern Regionalisms, Global Agendas mobilises research evidence in support of open and participatory discussion about the contributions, opportunities and challenges of regional cooperation, coordination and positive action capable of responding effectively to pressing health and poverty issues. It focuses on the regional *health* policies of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) in wider international context. Both SADC and UNASUR have clear mandates in relation to health (and other social policies), and include many of the world's most impoverished populations, for whom unfavourable access to basic health care and medicines is both a persistent issue and a key social determinant of morbidity and mortality. We address three principal questions:

1. Are social policies and programmes of action on a regional scale by Southern regional groupings of countries instituting approaches to access to health and medicines that meet the needs of all?

2. What scope there is for strengthening regional policy in the interests of poverty reduction, social equity and inclusive development?
3. What can local, national, regional and international actors do to strengthen equitable access to health and medicines?

These questions are especially timely given renewed commitments poverty eradication by 2030 which foresee a greater role for regional frameworks in global development. The conference gives dedicated attention to collectively considering what it means to act *regionally* in relation to social policy in development contexts and what innovations in current approaches to poverty and health regionally could achieve the poverty, health and equality goals and targets by 2030.

Southern Regionalisms, Global Agendas brings invited academics, policy officials, and practitioners and advocacy workers from Europe, Southern Africa, South America and North America into dialogue with each other to discuss research from PRARI and consider actual and potential strategies, initiatives and partnerships supportive of global poverty elimination. Sharing perspectives, knowledge and ideas from delegates bringing expert knowledge and experience on matters of health, medicines, poverty, international development, welfare states, health systems, policy making and reform, nationally, regionally and internationally, facilitates knowledge exchange, dialogue and mutual learning.

We consider:

- Why is the 'regional' agenda significant in relation to issues of health, poverty and social development?
- What is regional social and health policy in principle and in practice?
- What are regional actors and organisations already doing in relation to access to health and medicines? What different approaches are evident? And what are the key challenges?
- How can participatory approaches to research and policy development 'translate' to the regional level?
- What innovations in regional governance and policy may be desirable strengthen the Means of Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and enable the goals and targets on poverty, health, and inequality to be achieved? and
- What can local, national, and international actors, North and South, do to support effective social policy innovations on a regional scale that meet the health and social protection needs of all?

Please note this event is by invitation only. If you would like further information about this conference please contact the conference organisers: PRARI@open.ac.uk.

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