



CONFERENCE NEWS

Health and Social Protection: Meeting the needs of the poor

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Working together for health in a dynamic world

Links between the STEPS Centre, POVILL and Future Health Systems

The STEPS Centre is collaborating with the POVILL and Future Health Systems Consortia to generate knowledge about health in an era of dynamic change. This collaboration aims to support the design, implementation and evaluation of interventions to address health challenges.

The health sector in many countries has changed radically since the period of post-colonial and post-revolutionary construction of state-led services. Some residents of very poor or remote localities still have little access to skilled health workers, drugs and information about science-based health care, but this is becoming increasingly rare.

Meanwhile complex markets have emerged for a wide variety of health-related goods and services and people have access to many sources of health-related information. Their predominant problems now concern the quality of care and its cost.

The STEPS Centre's work in the areas of health, dynamics, governance, innovation and environmental sustainability resonate with many POVILL and Future Health Systems themes including: the dynamics between household livelihoods and ill-health; market innovation; governance and regulation.

WHOSE HEALTH IS IT ANYWAY?

Understanding and responding to poor peoples' own knowledge and experiences of severe illness, and the ways they experience and seek to cope



with vulnerability is central to the health work that runs through STEPS Centre projects.

Our interest in 'framing' - the different ways different people understand and respond to a problem - and a 'bottom up' perspective links into POVILL's extensive survey work on household vulnerability to illness.

RETHINKING REGULATION

The STEPS Centre's Rethinking Regulation project, based in China and Argentina, is looking at the incorporation of 'inclusive' approaches and user perspectives in drugs regulation. This work has linkages to POVILL research on household/user perspectives on medicine access. STEPS Centre member

Ecology, technology and society

Health has been rising up the political agenda in rich and poor countries. Governments and charitable foundations are increasingly willing to support initiatives for addressing health-related needs. The political concern about global health is creating major opportunities for improving the lives of poor people. It is also creating risks that poorly designed interventions will fail to achieve their objective or even have damaging consequences.

This paper argues that we are approaching a major turning point in the organisation of national and global health systems. Its aim is to stimulate debate about how to support systems that take into account the complex interactions between ecology, technology and social organisation within which health problems arise and are addressed. Its primary concern is how best to ensure that the health systems that emerge from this period of change address the needs of the poor.

Download this paper and others in the series at: www.steps-centre.org/publications



Adrian Ely, who is part of the Rethinking Regulation team, will take part in the conference panel on 'Strategies for improving pharmaceutical use'.



INTERLINKED DYNAMICS

Dynamics is one of the STEPS Centre's three key themes. Understanding the interlinked social, technological and environmental dynamics that shape people's vulnerability to illness, and considering how both household strategies and health systems might be made more adaptive and resilient, are central to our work.

This strand of work links well into POVILL debates about health policy and health provision.

ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Ecological dynamics are a key element of the dynamic systems that households in Asia and around the world are now living with. In our work, the interaction between health-related concerns and environmental issues are increasingly coming to the forefront, particularly questions of how adaptive and resilient health policies are in the Asian context.

The 'Environment and health' conference panel will take a closer look at some of these issues.

EPIDEMICS: PATHWAYS OF DISEASE AND RESPONSE

Changing patterns of land use, interactions between humans, livestock and wildlife and new patterns of social behaviour have seen the emergence of a series of new infectious diseases that now threaten to reverse post-war progress towards improved global public health. The STEPS Centre's Epidemics research project focuses on understanding landscape-livelihood interactions and on procedures for addressing epidemics that support, rather than compromise, poorer people and social justice. We seek to work with others to open debate about epidemics, including consideration of the ways that citizens' own perspectives and popular epidemiology could become part of more deliberative, inclusive responses.

Find out more at: www.steps-centre.org/ourresearch/epidemics

Dynamic systems

'Dynamic Systems and the Challenge of Sustainability' attempts to create a rigorous approach to addressing dynamics and a useable guide to action.

The paper reviews approaches to understanding dynamics, and presents a framework for addressing dynamic contexts in debates about sustainable development.

Download this paper and others in the series including the STEPS Approach, Agriculture, Water and Designs at: www.steps-centre.org/publications



Governance

'Understanding Governance: pathways to sustainability' addresses the challenges of understanding the governance of dynamic social, technological and environmental systems, and their implications for sustainability and social justice.

The paper suggests key elements of a 'pathways' approach to understanding the current governance of social-technological-ecological dynamics, and seeks to inform new governance arrangements better able to meet sustainability goals and poorer peoples' priorities.



About the STEPS Centre

The ESRC STEPS Centre (Social, Technological and Environmental Pathways to Sustainability) is an interdisciplinary global research and policy engagement hub uniting development studies with science and technology studies. We aim to develop a new approach to understanding, action and communications on

sustainability and development.

The STEPS Centre is a collaboration between the Institute of Development Studies and SPRU Science and Technology Policy Research at the University of Sussex with a network of partners in Asia, Africa and Latin America and is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

Get in touch

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