

## ***Shorter Notices***

**Harry G. Broadman, James Anderson, Constantijn A. Claessens, Randi Ryterman, Stefka Slavova, Maria Vagliasindi, and Gallina A. Vincelette.** *Building Market Institutions in South Eastern Europe: Comparative Prospects for Investment and Private Sector Development.* Washington, D.C.: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank. 2004. 365 pages. Paperback. Price not given.

The eight countries of South Eastern Europe(SEE)—Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, and Serbia and Montenegro—have come out from the communist era to face the social and political challenges of making an economic transition, building market institutions, and executing wide-ranging policy reforms to promote private sector development and investment. This volume traces the development path for these countries. It reviews not only different policy options yielding positive results but also makes recommendations for effective progress in production and commerce. The emphasis throughout is on building the capacity of institutions to regulate markets and deliver public services.

This broad study has utilised data and perceptions from a set of 40 original enterprise-level business case studies, which were carried out in each of the eight countries in 2002, and from the two rounds of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development—World Bank Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey conducted in 1999 and 2002, which covered approximately 1600 firms in South Eastern Europe.

The book is divided in six chapters. In the first chapter, institutional aspects of the South Eastern European economy are discussed. This chapter reviews the economic trends in South Eastern European economies and reflects on the scope and methodology of this study. In the second chapter, the authors first review the state of market institutions that influences the business environment in the eight countries in the aggregate, then analyses the institutional impediments and the reform progress to date of the eight governments separately, in each of the four policy areas that are discussed in detail in the rest of the four chapters. These four major policy issues are: business competition and economic barriers to entry and exit; access to regulated utilities and services; corporate ownership, financial transparency, and access to finance; and commercial dispute resolution.

This is useful information for all observers interested in the future of South Eastern Europe. (Afia Malik)

**Yolanda Tayler (ed.).** *Battling HIV/AIDS: A Decision Maker's Guide to the Procurement of Medicines and Related Supplies*. Washington, D. C.: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank. 2004. 152 pages. Paperback. Price not given.

The prevalence and incidence of HIV are rising rapidly in many areas around the world. Although a few countries have achieved some success in controlling the incidence, the number of people needing treatment continues to rise. No doubt this epidemic has become an extraordinary challenge to global public health.

*Battling HIV/AIDS* is a useful guide that instigates standards and advice for securing HIV/AIDS medicines and related supplies for extending antiretroviral therapy (ART) and associated health services, such as basic and palliative care, disease prevention, treatment of opportunistic infections, and laboratory tests.

Most people with HIV live in the poor countries or in marginal groups and do not have access to ART. These countries and communities have many other competing priorities. The scaling up of treatment with antiretroviral drugs and other HIV-related medicines presents serious practical challenges. The various practical challenges faced by the policy-makers in scaling up the treatment of this epidemic are the subject matter in the first chapter of this guide. The second chapter highlights the second issue—the complex subject of intellectual property rights, mostly of patents, directly affecting the procurement of HIV/AIDS-related medicines and supplies. This chapter outlines the basics a procurement agency should know in dealing with the subject. The third chapter reflects on all the key stages involved in the management of medicine supply cycle for better outcomes in terms of appropriate and effective treatment for people with HIV. Rational selection of essential drugs for the treatment of HIV/AIDS; quantification, that is, estimates of each commodity needed for procurement and deciding how much to buy; and quality assurance of pharmaceuticals are the topics delineated in the fourth chapter. Chapter Five provides a guideline to strengthen the authority's capacity to administer procurement effectively and transparently as part of sound governance and good project management. In Chapter Six on "Pricing", it is argued that even the lowest available prices are unaffordable for most of the patients in developing countries, where about 3 billion people live on less than \$2 a day. This chapter elaborates on different factors involved in the determination of prices and key strategies public purchasers can pursue to bargain for low prices. Three detailed annexes are also provided. (Afia Malik)

**Greg Mettam (ed.).** *Voices of Asia: News Stories on Growth and Poverty by Award-winning Journalists*. Tokyo: Asian Development Bank Institute Publications, 2005. 162 pages. Paperback. Price not given.

Effective, non-corrupt, and transparent governance plays an important role in any country. But equally important are the citizens and the numerous civil society

institutions. If they are well-informed about the functions of their governments, they are effective channels through which views on national issues can be aired. The Asian Development Bank is strongly committed to supporting programmes that aim to strengthen the processes of good governance across the Asia-Pacific region. The Bank is sponsoring the annual Developing Asia Journalism Awards programme to strengthen the voice of the civil society of the Asia-Pacific region on the international stage, as well as to encourage personal efforts made by journalists from countries in the Asia-Pacific region that provide high-quality, balanced coverage of the real issues affecting growth and development in the region.

*Voices of Asia* is the collection of important award-winning work of journalists from the Asia-Pacific region. Twenty-four extraordinary articles selected for this volume reflect on poverty- and development-related issues like disease, lack of even primitive sanitation, inadequate schooling facilities, unemployment, and the problem of environmental degradation. The stories in the volume highlight not only the problems but also some positive side of the development, that is, the success stories of the ordinary and often poor people fighting courageously against extreme poverty and deprivation. Some of the stories risked the annoyance of politicians, government officials, and wealthy power barons. (Afia Malik)

**J. Luis Guasch.** *Granting and Re-negotiating Infrastructure Concessions: Doing It Right*. Washington, D. C: The World Bank Institute Development Studies. 2004. 194 pages. Paperback. Price not given.

In most developing and industrial countries, infrastructure services have traditionally been provided by government enterprises, but these enterprises have proved to be inefficient, have been unable to provide much-needed investments, and often have been motivated to achieve political objectives. Moreover, given scarce public resources and the challenging needs in the social sectors, most countries have opted for private participation in the provision of infrastructure. Private participation can take a variety of forms, from management contracts to concessions (also in a variety of forms) to full privatisation. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the need for private sector involvement in the provision of infrastructure services has attracted many bidders; but to secure efficient performance, a proper design of concession contracts and a regulatory framework are essential. This book draws lessons from the experience of around 1000 examples in Latin America in relation to the design and implementation of concession contracts. During the 1990s, governments throughout the region awarded contracts to the private sector to operate a range of public utilities, including electricity, water supply and sanitation, as well as airports, railways, and port services.

The book builds on the argument that while the model and conceptual framework are suitable, the problems have arisen due to faulty design and

implementation. The design of any concession contract is important to encourage both parties to act in accordance with the agreed terms of the concession—to ensure long-term sector efficiency and dynamic expansion. Therefore, the main objective described for this book is to provide assistance, by means of thorough analysis and detailed policy lessons, in the design of future concessions and regulations and to restrain the frequency of inappropriate re-negotiation. There are a number of concerns that have been raised about the concessions model. These include limited sharing by users of the efficiency gains, pervasive conflicts and re-negotiations in the sectors, and weak regulatory effectiveness. Given these concerns, the book evaluates the concession process, the regulatory framework, and their outcomes—to determine the continued usefulness of the process for countries, investors, and users and to suggest the adjustments needed. As such, the main issues addressed in the book are the design of concessions; the regulatory framework; the high incidence of contract re-negotiation; and the implications for infrastructure performance and overall welfare.

This title is the fifth in an occasional series by the World Bank Institute. It is expected to meet the information and knowledge needs of infrastructure reformers, regulators, and contract re-negotiation teams, and will help ensure that public-private partnerships are used in the most efficient way to meet the infrastructure needs of the world's poor. (Afia Malik)

**Kulsum Ahmed, Yewande Awe, Douglas F. Barnes, Maureen L. Cropper, and Masami Kojima.** *Environmental Health and Traditional Fuel Use in Guatemala*. Washington, D. C.: World Bank, 2005. 118 pages. Paperback. Price not given.

Half of world's population is exposed to indoor air pollution (IAP), primarily from burning solid fuels for cooking and heating purposes. Recent World Health Organisation estimates show that indoor smoke from solid fuels causes 1.6 million deaths annually, accounting for 2.7 percent of the total global disease burden. Guatemala presents a peculiar example in this regard as adverse health impacts of IAP disproportionately affect children in poor rural households, ninety seven percent of which use wood as the main cooking fuel. There is a growing recognition of the injurious effects of IAP on health, and this book is one such attempt in that direction. It estimates the health impacts of traditional fuel use, and outlines strategies for mitigating environmental health damage due to its use in rural Guatemala.

Given the relation between IAP and women's and children's health, the book provides linkages with respect to achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of reducing child mortality and improving maternal health. It identifies various factors acting as barriers to reduce IAP in rural homes and discusses in this connection the lack of national policy, training, inter-institutional coordination, access to resources, and leadership. To overcome these hindrances the

authors suggest four types of interventions, which are: monitoring the problem and an improved understanding of the links between health and poverty reduction; greater inter-institutional coordination; making people aware of the problem to promote behavioural change; and implementing technical options.

The authors also identify various areas that need further investigation to formulate a successful policy intervention. In this regard, they stress the need of an analysis of the costs and benefits of different mitigating options, and of the availability of liquid petroleum gas (LPG) in rural areas. They emphasise the need for an assessment of the existing rural development programmes, and the provision of proposals based on worldwide experiences on how best to integrate the technical options with these programmes. The book can be of interest to those working in the fields of environment, energy, public health, and socioeconomic development. (Durr-e-Nayab)

**Luc J. A. Mougeot (ed.).** *Agropolis: The Social, Political and Environmental Dimensions of Urban Agriculture*. London: Earthscan and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), 2005. 286 pages. Paperback. Price not given.

“Agropolis” is a term, coined by Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC), combining the Latin word “ager” (meaning “field”) with the Greek word “polis” (meaning “city”) to imply a city of fields or an agricultural city. Urban agriculture is becoming an increasingly popular practice in cities worldwide. The book links urban agriculture with urban development concerns targeted by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It does so in a wide range of developing country contexts, including those of Namibia, Togo, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Cuba, and Argentina, with the aim to assist local planners in working out strategies to effectively deal with urban food insecurity, poverty, and environmental degradation.

The primary objective of *Agropolis* is to improve the quality and impact of Southern urban agriculture expertise through issue-focussed, participatory, applied and internationally networked dissemination of research. The themes of research dealt with in this book include: migration and food security; pest control systems; urban livestock adoption; gender dimensions of urban open-space cultivation; agriculture and local sustainable development; and neglected issues of the form and substance of research on urban agriculture. The editor believes that “urban agriculture” is still viewed by most as an oxymoron but asserts that a growing number of developing country cities link urban agriculture to their food security agenda. Urban agriculture is slowly reducing the compartmentalisation of space and time, and this development will transform the way a city functions and ultimately affects the very meaning of “urbanity” and “rurality” in the future. (Durr-e-Nayab)

**Indermit S. Gill, Truman Packard, and Juan Yerno.** *Keeping the Promise of Social Security in Latin America*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press/World Bank, 2005. 341 pages. Paperback. Price not given.

Devising ways to reform the social security systems, especially those for the aged, currently engage the policy-makers worldwide. The present book evaluates these reforming ways in Latin America from the viewpoint of the individual rather than that of governments alone. The authors, drawing on two decades of ground-breaking pension and social security reforms in Latin America and the Caribbean region, analyse the successes and shortcomings of the reforms and propose the priorities and strategies for the future. They stress the need to prevent poverty in old age as the cornerstone of the public pension schemes, and suggest that this could be achieved by extending coverage to broader segments of society and encouraging personal savings.

The book is organised in three parts. Part One gives a detailed account of three dimensions of social security reforms: the fiscal, financial, and social benefits from the pension reforms in the Latin American region. Part Two provides an analysis of how governments can help individuals deal with retirement. This part is mainly about the subjective aspect of the whole issue: about how individuals view social security; about how individuals rate the savings component of the social security reforms; and the personal preferences of individuals. The third and the last part deals with the future of social security systems in Latin America, focussing mainly on preventing poverty in old age and improving personal savings.

The authors' premise is that preventing poverty among the old is of prime importance, and for this the extent of coverage is the best criterion to gauge the effectiveness of any formal social insurance system. It is emphasised that although poverty prevention should provide a minimum pension to those people who are "unfortunate or unwise", saving should be the core for earnings replacement during old age. There should be compatibility between poverty prevention and individual savings as excessively generous or ill-designed poverty prevention programmes can reduce contributions to voluntary or mandatory savings and also create incentives for informalisation of employment. Likewise, they stress the need to pay attention to the size of the mandatory savings, arguing that high contribution rates can discourage workers. The book may interest pension specialists and policy-makers not just in Latin America but elsewhere as well. (Durr-e-Nayab)