

Shorter Notices*

Samuel Munzele Maimbo and Dilip Ratha (eds). *Remittances: Development Impact and Future Prospects*. Washington, D. C.: The World Bank, 2005. xxii+378 pages. Paperback. US\$ 30.00.

Remittances play a crucial role in the development of a country. Whereas workers remit money through banking channels or *hundi*, the benefit to the nation is maximised if they are remitted through normal banking channels. Therefore, there is a need to find out new technologies to remove unwarranted constraints such as costly fees and commissions, inconvenient banking hours, and insufficient banking services in the foreign countries. This book is the first comprehensive study on remittances of overseas workers and demonstrates that the developing countries have recognised the importance of remittance flows and are working towards gradual removal of the constraints. It identifies the key challenges faced by the development communities and developing country governments in harnessing the benefit of remittance flows. A timely addition to the economic literature in converting the World Bank's vision of 'world free of poverty' into a reality, it is a collection of articles on the issues, trends, and determinants, to maximise the development impact, strengthen the formal financial infrastructure, increase transparency in the informal financial infrastructure and migration, and develop further prospects of remittances. Although remittances complement the efforts by governments in enhancing the development process, yet they are neither panacea to development issues nor a substitute for sustained assistance. It would be difficult to imagine progress on the remittance agenda without progress on financial sector reforms, corporate governance, anti-corruption efforts, and other related issues.

Blanca Moreno-Dodson (ed). *Reducing Poverty on a Global Scale: Learning and Innovating for Development*. Washington, D. C.: The World Bank, 2005. xvii +267 pages. Paperback. US\$ 35.00.

This book deals with some common themes on scaling up poverty reduction explored in the findings of the Shanghai Global Learning Initiatives, a meeting held in Shanghai in 2004. The objective is to scale up global poverty reduction to the existing knowledge on poverty reduction and the effectiveness of aid. Scaling up requires time, management, continuous adaptation of programmes, policies, and practices to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by setting strategic

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targets and actions to empower the poor people to become active participants in moving out of poverty. In scaling up global poverty reduction, the participatory approach is of great importance, as poor people themselves know more about poverty than the others. The book provides insight to development practitioners about observed achievements in reducing poverty and the factors influencing it. Each chapter of the book highlights lessons from the case studies based on different poverty dimensions, focusing on such implementation factors as the role of commitment and leadership, institutional innovations, learning and experimentation, and external catalysts. The book provides a detailed framework for analysis, observation at country level, development as a process of learning and innovation, thematic analysis, lessons on community-driven development, learning scaling up through evaluation, operational implications, and issues for further research.

Ruth Alsop (ed). *Power, Rights, and Poverty: Concepts and Connections*. Washington, D. C.: The World Bank, 2005. viii+157 pages. Paperback. US\$ 20.00.

The concept of power, rights, and poverty as presented in a two-day seminar organised jointly by the World Bank and the United Kingdom Department for International Development in March 2004 is discussed in detail in this book. The first part of the book addresses the competing definitions and concepts of power and rights, focusing on observations and applications of these concepts in different countries. It is aimed at helping development practitioners, so that they apply these concepts to their work. The second part deals with supplementary material concerning theoretical conceptualisation of the definition of the power and overviews the literature on power and rights. The book provides a combination of relationship between theory and practice on the issues of power, empowerment, and human rights. Empowerment is crucial for development effectiveness, good governance, and growth. It enables citizens to claim their positions as equal members of the society having positive impacts on their lives and is a right-based approach to development based on justice and equity. The PRSP model tries to increase accountability and transparency and enhances rights—and empowers approaches to development instead of human rights approaches that focuses on the legal obligations and duties of state to individuals. The studies in this book project the World Bank's agenda to empower poor people. The comprehensive literature review presented in the last chapter is very useful.

Emiliana Vegas (ed). *Incentives to Improve Teaching: Lessons from Latin America*. Washington, D. C.: The World Bank, 2005. xiv+435 pages. Paperback. US\$ 35.00.

Education is defined as one of the most crucial means to fighting against poverty and inequality and to attain the development of a country. The book

emphasises challenges in improving education in Latin America. The role of improving education faces challenges; implementing effective incentives in methodological approaches using the best available data is one of them. And teachers certainly play an important role in enhancing student learning. They do respond to incentives that vary in nature and consequently they enter and remain in teaching and/or leave that profession. The teaching quality depends on the expected enhanced incomes of the teachers, or the better performance of the students in the tests. Empirical evidence shows that clarity in behaviour influences the effectiveness of teacher incentive reforms. Factors other than the teacher's compensations, like classroom atmosphere and school-based management reforms, also have a great impact on teaching quality and student learning. The book focuses on the impact of education reforms that affect the teaching quality by raising teacher's accountability in response to the increased incentives for raising student learning. Therefore, it should be of great interest to government officials, NGOs, research institutions, and universities.

Anwar Shah (ed). *Fiscal Management*. Washington, D. C.: The World Bank, 2005. xxxiv+254 pages. Paperback. US\$ 35.00.

Sound fiscal management helps determine the course of economic development, as well as social equality for the poor, and other disadvantaged groups. Developing countries mostly suffer due to unsatisfactory governance systems in allocation of resources, revenue systems, and delivery of vital public sector services. The book analyses the issues of fiscal prudence, fiscal stress, bureaucratic inefficiency, citizen empowerment, and public integrity. It addresses in detail the government's fiscal health including political economy of the budget, performance-based budgeting, revenue performance, and debt management. It proposes measures to assess the net worth of the system, fiscal risks, civil services reforms, and the institutions of accountability. The idea is to enable the policy-makers and the practitioners to diagnose institutional weaknesses and the methods to overcome these constraining factors.

Anthony G. Bigio and Bharat Dahiya. *Urban Environment and Infrastructure: Towards Livable Cities*. Washington, D. C.: The World Bank, 2004. xxi+149 pages. Paperback. US\$ 25.00.

Cities are the engine of growth in developing countries and absorb increasing proportions of the national population. The urban population grows fast and impacts water resources and the agricultural population in the region. Therefore, there is a great need to improve the quality and livability of the urban environment. This book is the first major outcome of the urban environment thematic group and reviews the World Bank's commitment to improve the urban environment quality, based on the

‘expanded brown agenda’ that covers protecting and enhancing environmental health in the urban areas, saving water, soil, and air quality from contamination and pollution, and minimising the urban impact on natural resources at the regional and global scales, thus preventing and mitigating the urban impact of natural disasters and climate change. The World Bank usually provides necessary funds for the projects for improvement of water and sanitation facilities, urban development programmes, environmental conditions, energy crises and the transport sector, with a view to providing better facilities to the urban poor. This book is a combination of empirical analysis, case studies, and consultations. It assesses World Bank’s funding for such urban environment facilities and also identifies the gaps in the relevant projects.

United Nations. *China in a Globalizing World.* Washington, D. C.: United Nations, 2005. xiii+183 pages. Paperback. US\$ 20.00.

China is a fast-growing economy in our globalising world, and its robust economic growth has reduced poverty and achieved the United Nations Millennium Development Goal of halving world poverty much before the target date of 2015, at least for its own people. This book is a collection of presentations made at various seminars organised by UNCTAD and the Ministry of Commerce of China with the participation of Asian Development Bank Institute. Much useful information is provided on the spectacular growth of China since the mid-1990s, its globalisation and integration into the world economy, and its links to its neighbours as partners or competitors for trade and investment. The academics and policy-makers in the world are examining the “China Phenomenon” and its impact on world economies for achieving the sustained economic development in their respective economies. The China model differs from the previous development models, and perhaps can be followed in both the developing and the developed countries to attain rapid growth. Particularly interesting is the information about rapid growth together with achievement of welfare benefits for the general population, and about bridging the gap between China and the rest of the world within the shortest possible time.