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International exposure for young researchers – the GIZ Master Class in Public Finance

August 2015, by Matthias Witt

What researcher does not experience the urge of going through stacks of academic papers and crunching mountains of data, attempting to extend the borders of knowledge - at least by a centimeter? Often, it is a lonely process, and particularly academic researchers from developing countries rarely have the opportunity to test their preliminary results with internationally renowned academics.

Experienced professors took time to mentor young scholars from African and other developing countries in their newest research projects at the 71st Annual Seminar of the International Institute of Public Finance (IIPF) held at Trinity College in Dublin from 20 to 23 August 2015. Twelve early-stage researchers participated in the first master class of this kind facilitated by GIZ's Good Financial Governance in Africa programme, and financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the European Union). The aim was to provide them with an opportunity to present their research proposals and recent unpublished results and receive feedback on content and methodology from six experienced and internationally recognised academics like Prof Dhammika Dharmapala, a professor at the University of Chicago and Prof Jukka Piirttilä, a research fellow based at the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) in Finland.



Kausik Bhadra's research paper analyses the inequality effect of fiscal policy in the health sector in India.

A supervisor was allocated to two master class participants and presentations done during parallel break-away sessions. The separate presentations were followed by a subsequent poster session where all participants and supervisors met to exchange on their presentations and the feedback received.

This format provided for both intimate dialogue amongst presenters and the academics as well as an open forum for exchange among participants and supervisors on the respective research topics.

“The master class was a very important initiative to improve my research agenda. The supervisor is a very competent professional in the field and gave important advice to improve the quality of my work,” said Pedro Jucá Maciel after his presentation.

Pedro Jucá Maciel from the Ministry of Finance in Brazil presented his paper titled “Rethinking Public Finance: Developing Institutions for Better Outcomes” to Prof. Joana Naritomi based at the London School of Economics. His article proposes a framework for pointing out the institutional layouts related to public finance and enhancing the effectiveness of the performance of the public sector from an interdisciplinary approach.

The overall feedback from the event is encouraging. Participants valued the opportunity for reflecting on ideas at an international stage. Sandhya Garg from India hits the nail with her sentiment that the comments she received were encouraging and guiding as well as stimulating for further research.

The idea to support early-stage public finance scholars who are striving to augment their research skills, in cooperation with the IIPF, forms part of the GIZ programme’s aim for increased cooperation among public finance stakeholders in order to strengthen the representation of Africa in global discussions on good financial governance.

For further information please visit <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/15725.html> or contact Dr Matthias Witt (matthias.witt@giz.de).



Tommy Adams (far left) presented his paper on “Property Taxation in Sierra Leone: Practices, Performance and Options for Reform” together with Suranjali Tandon (fourth from the left) whose topic was „Designing Policies in the Presence of Hawala Markets.“ They were supervised by Prof Dhammika Dharmapala (middle).