



Understanding Inequalities for more Effective Public Policies

**Resources & Publications
from the Agence Française de Développement
Publishing**

Research on Inequalities

Research, evaluations, innovation... Savoirs AFD is the AFD Group's brand dedicated to promoting knowledge. Explore our resources and recent publications released by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) Publishing to gain a better understanding of inequalities, so that public policies can respond to them more effectively.

A multidimensional approach to inequalities

AFD's research explores the different dimensions of the concept of inequality, as well as its many implications. From income and opportunity inequalities to vulnerability and poverty, including social mobility, these studies help shed light on societal dynamics, the role of public policies, and interactions with other global challenges such as climate change.

Tools and methods to foster dialogue

Research relies on specific tools and methods to better analyze inequalities and provide stronger recommendations for public policies and development strategies.

A dedicated Research Facility on Inequalities

AFD and the European Union have each made the fight against inequalities a priority. In this context, the two institutions launched their collaboration on reducing inequalities with the creation of the EU-AFD Research Facility on Inequalities in 2017.

- **During the first phase of this Facility (2017–2020), 22 research projects were carried out across 32 countries, aiming to better understand socioeconomic inequalities, their drivers, their effects, and their dynamics.**
- Following the success of this first phase, **the Facility was extended in 2021**. This new phase contributes to the development of more effective public policies for reducing inequalities in four partner countries: **South Africa, Colombia, Indonesia, and Mexico**. **The Extension made it possible to publish around fifty research papers and policy briefs, contributing to the policy dialogue on inequalities in partner countries.**

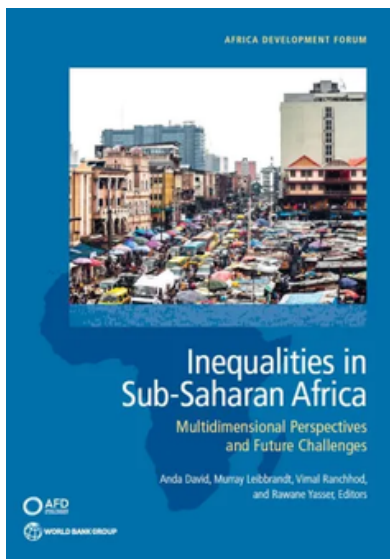
Learn more :



Our publications on inequalities

Our flagship publication: **Inequalities in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Rising inequalities pose substantial barriers to sustainable development, and it is within this context that this book, ***“Inequalities in Sub-Saharan Africa: Multidimensional Perspectives and Future Challenges”***, contributes to ongoing debates, offering a comprehensive analysis of the current challenges and future perspectives of inequality on the African continent



**Download
the publication**



Our recent publications on inequalities



Reducing Inequalities Despite Climate change? Rethinking Progress Towards Reducing Income Inequalities and the Impact of Climate Change in Developing Countries

This multicountry study incorporates the economic resources of countries and measures how countries are combining their resources to reduce income inequality. It also examines the effects of climate — temperature and rainfall — on effort by countries to reduce income inequality.

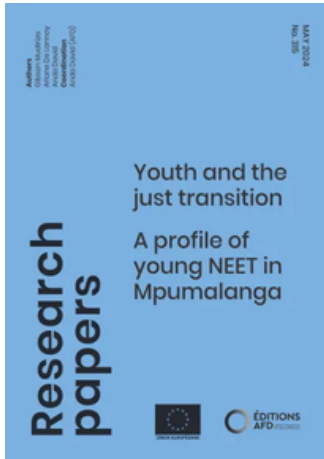


Distributional Impact of Fiscal Policies: A Survey of Methodological Approaches

This research paper is meant to be a guide for analysts and policymakers on available tools for assessing the distributional impact of existing fiscal systems as well as policy reforms. In particular, we present detailed overviews of fiscal incidence analysis (FIA) and tax-benefit microsimulation models (MSM). The paper also briefly reviews alternative approaches to value benefits from education, health, and infrastructure, as well as different methods to analyze the distributional impact of fiscal policy by gender.



Our publications on inequalities in South Africa



Youth and the just transition. A profile of young NEET in Mpumalanga



With one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world, South Africa's planning for a just transition needs to take into account the vulnerabilities of its youth cohorts, especially those that can be qualified as not in education, employment or training. This paper provides a profile of young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET) in Mpumalanga province, the region with the highest exposure to the coal exit.



Public Employment Programmes in South Africa's Changing Social Protection Landscape



The paper examines the role of Public Employment Programs (PEPs) within South Africa's evolving social protection landscape, emphasizing their intersection with unemployment, inequality, and social policy. The study highlights structural inequalities—such as land dispossession, concentrated economic power, and spatial inequities—that perpetuate poverty and unemployment.

Our publications on inequalities in South Africa



The local economic development effects of income transfers in South Africa. The Social Relief of Distress grant

Following the onset of COVID-19 in April 2020, this qualitative study considered the effects of the Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grant on local economies in five urban and peri-urban locations in South Africa, through the perspectives of informal traders. In a context of acute inequality, the SRD was introduced at a time of economic, health and social crisis due to the onset of COVID and measures implemented to limit its spread and was a key policy mechanism intended to ameliorate the differential effects of these measures on vulnerable groups.



Can Cash Transfers to the Unemployed Support Economic Activity? Evidence from South Africa

Persistently high unemployment has plagued South Africa over the last few decades, while concurrently there has been a dearth of state-provided income support to the working-age economically active population. In response to the pandemic the government introduced the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant – the country's first unconditional cash transfer targeted at the unemployed. At the time of writing, however, no causal evidence of the grant's effects exist.



Our publications on inequalities in South Africa

Stimulus effects of a large public employment programme



What effect does government spending on social programmes have on private sector incomes and jobs? Policy-makers, especially in developing countries with low average incomes and productivity, often perceive a trade-off between alleviating poverty and unemployment directly with social assistance and public employment programmes, versus other resource allocation options intended to support economic growth and job creation with long-run benefits.



Proposal for the extension, redesign, and repurposing of the SRD for the goal of poverty reduction



The study examines the special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant (hereafter 'SRD') and provides recommendations to maximise its impact on poverty reduction. The SRD showed itself to be an excellent investment of government spending because it reduces poverty and can increase job search.



Our publications on inequalities in South Africa



Developing a Youth Labour Market Index for South Africa at the sub-national level

Assessing the labour market situation for young people is a critical area of research that has attracted the attention of scholars and policymakers globally. However, understanding the complexity of the labour market for youth, particularly in developing countries, requires a comprehensive, multidimensional approach. We address this need by developing a Youth Labour Market Index (YLMI) for South Africa, incorporating ten indicators that capture the unique youth labour market situation from various perspectives.



Skills ecosystem mapping of MSMEs located within the Nkangala District Municipality

This paper examines the skills ecosystem for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Nkangala District Municipality (NDM), Mpumalanga—a coal-dependent region central to South Africa's Just Energy Transition (JET). Using a systemic framework, it maps local networks, policy alignment, and coordination shaping MSME development in an inclusive, low-carbon economy.



Our publications on inequalities in South Africa



An Analytical Framework to Assess Green Transition Jobs in South Africa

In this paper we propose an analytical framework for profiling workers who are likely to be impacted by the energy transition, based on what work they do and in which industry they work. By combining a bottom-up approach to identify occupations related to the green transition, with a top-down approach to identifying 'brown' industries, we arrive at a matrix that allows us to look at where on the nexus between green transition occupations, and brown industries, workers find themselves



Spatial Inequality, Sub-regional governance and Subjective Well-being - The case of South Africa

This paper examines how spatial variation in inequality and quality of institutions interact to explain variation in subjective wellbeing. Literature suggests that better institutions and lower level of inequality improve subjective wellbeing. However, evidence that examine how the interaction between these two variables explain variation in wellbeing is relatively scarce.



Our publications on inequalities in Colombia & Mexico



Fiscal Incidence and Public Spending: Public Policy Scenarios for Colombia

In 2020, Colombia recorded the highest levels of inequality and poverty in the last decade. The increase in these indicators can be attributed to poorer labour market performance and the COVID-19 pandemic. In this context, this analysis examines these indicators using the fiscal incidence methodology developed by the Commitment to Equity Institute (CEQ), which makes it possible to identify the effect of tax structures and social spending in the country on poverty and inequality

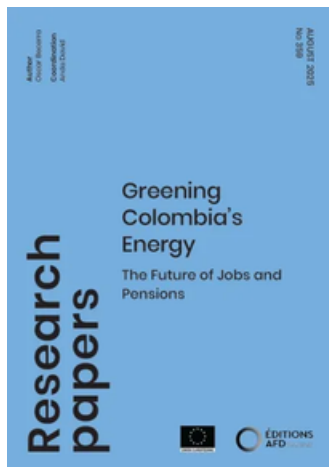


Quantifying Green Job Potential in Colombia: A Task-Based Approach

This paper examines the impact of the green transition on the Colombian labor market. Using a task-based approach and data from the 2022 Colombian Household Survey, we find that approximately 22.6% of Colombian employment is linked to green tasks, with 15.9% directly affected by the green transition.



Our publications on inequalities in Colombia & Mexico



Greening Colombia's Energy: The Future of Jobs and Pensions

This paper evaluates the effects of Colombia's transition to a low-carbon economy on employment and pensions. Utilizing a three-stage analysis integrating national energy scenarios, an input-output model, and a pension microsimulation model, we quantify the green transition's effects on employment and pensions.



Distributive Impact of Green Taxes in Mexico

In Mexico, as in most countries globally, energy taxation, particularly through taxes on fuels, serves as the primary carbon pricing instrument.

This study quantifies the size and the distributive effects of green taxes (and anti-green subsidies) in Mexico, principally focusing on excise taxes (IEPS, from its initials in Spanish) levied on coal and fuels, as well as subsidies for residential electricity consumption.

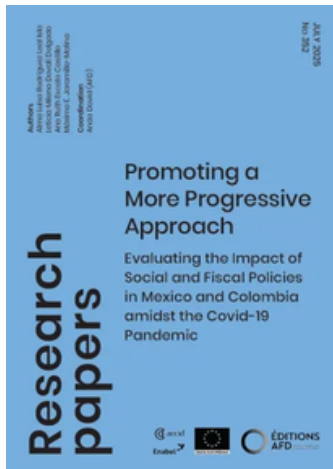


Our publications on inequalities in Colombia & Mexico



Social Mobility, Care Policies, and Social Protection

In this study, we shed light on the connections between social mobility and social protection related to care. The objective is to examine women's opportunities for choice and life achievements in terms of social mobility. In particular, it proposes a broader human development approach that, beyond education, health, and social security, integrates the contribution of both paid and unpaid care work to individuals' wellbeing and social mobility.



Promoting a More Progressive Approach - Evaluating the Impact of Social and Fiscal Policies in Mexico and Colombia amidst the Covid-19 Pandemic

This research paper analyzes the redistributive impact of some fiscal policies and social programmes (direct taxes and transfers) before and after the pandemic crisis in Mexico and Colombia, following the CEQ methodology. It considers different concepts such as Market Income, Market Income plus Pensions and Disposable Income in order to analyze the impacts of fiscal policies and social programmes on inequality in these countries.



Our publications on inequalities in Indonesia



The Benefits of Marine Protected Areas in Fighting Inequality and Fostering Environmental Sustainability in Indonesia

This research paper aims to explore the potential benefits of marine protected areas (MPAs) and assess their impact on environmental sustainability and inequality in Indonesia.



Balancing Conservation and Community Welfare: Enhancing the Management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Indonesia

This paper explores the dynamic of the MPAs management in Indonesia, focusing on how they have addressed not only issues related to the biodiversity conservation but also the welfare of the community who live near MPAs.



Our publications on inequalities in Indonesia

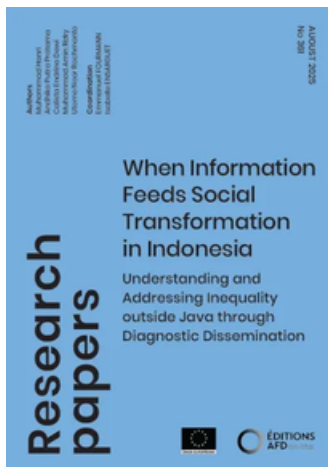


Can social inclusion benefit ecosystems?



Reconciling social and environmental challenges through better management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Indonesia

(Available in French)



When Information Feeds Social Transformation in Indonesia: Understanding and Addressing Inequality outside Java through Diagnostic Dissemination



The findings of this report emphasize that inequality in Indonesia extends beyond income distribution, encompassing access to education, healthcare, infrastructure, and economic opportunities. These inequalities are further compounded by geographic isolation, governance challenges, exposure to natural disasters, and uneven economic transformation.

Our Policy Dialogues

POLICY DIALOGUES

Strengthening Public Employment Programmes in South Africa's Social Protection Framework

November 2024 - No. 18 (EN) AFD Research Facility on Inequalities

Issue

Despite many of the fundamental principles enshrined in the South African Constitution, the country's public employment programmes (PEPs) have not been able to effectively address the needs of the most vulnerable. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, leading to a significant increase in unemployment and poverty. The AFD team is conducting a research project to assess the impact of PEPs on the lives of the most vulnerable in South Africa.

Issue

These changes already constitute a significant step towards addressing the needs of the most vulnerable. However, the impact of these changes on the lives of the most vulnerable remains to be seen. The AFD team is conducting a research project to assess the impact of these changes on the lives of the most vulnerable in South Africa.

Issue

The AFD team is conducting a research project to assess the impact of these changes on the lives of the most vulnerable in South Africa. The project will involve a series of interviews with key stakeholders, including government officials, civil society representatives, and members of the most vulnerable communities. The findings of the project will be used to inform policy recommendations and to support the development of more effective PEPs.

Issue

The AFD team is conducting a research project to assess the impact of these changes on the lives of the most vulnerable in South Africa. The project will involve a series of interviews with key stakeholders, including government officials, civil society representatives, and members of the most vulnerable communities. The findings of the project will be used to inform policy recommendations and to support the development of more effective PEPs.

Strengthening Public Employment Programmes in South Africa's Social Protection Framework

South Africa faces an enduring unemployment crisis compounded by structural inequalities. Public Employment Programs (PEPs) represent a critical intervention in this landscape, offering income support, fostering social inclusion and bridging gaps between social assistance and active labour market policies. This brief outlines strategic directions to optimize PEPs within a cohesive social protection framework.



POLICY DIALOGUES

Rethinking progress towards reducing inequalities in developing countries, while integrating climate change

August 2024 - No. 19 (EN) AFD Research Facility on Inequalities

Issue

Inequality within and across countries, although there are no specific targets in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), remains a key challenge for the world. The AFD team is conducting a research project to assess the impact of climate change on inequality in developing countries. The project will involve a series of interviews with key stakeholders, including government officials, civil society representatives, and members of the most vulnerable communities. The findings of the project will be used to inform policy recommendations and to support the development of more effective strategies to reduce inequality.

Issue

The AFD team is conducting a research project to assess the impact of climate change on inequality in developing countries. The project will involve a series of interviews with key stakeholders, including government officials, civil society representatives, and members of the most vulnerable communities. The findings of the project will be used to inform policy recommendations and to support the development of more effective strategies to reduce inequality.

Issue

The AFD team is conducting a research project to assess the impact of climate change on inequality in developing countries. The project will involve a series of interviews with key stakeholders, including government officials, civil society representatives, and members of the most vulnerable communities. The findings of the project will be used to inform policy recommendations and to support the development of more effective strategies to reduce inequality.

Rethinking progress towards reducing inequalities in developing countries, while integrating climate change

Efforts of countries to reduce inequalities (SDG10) can be measured after incorporating their economic resources, but also after examining the effects of climate change on this global effort. On average, countries have exerted only 50 percent of their effort in reducing income inequality, but this effort differs from region to region. Sub Saharan Africa recorded the least average effort of 39%, reminding that the potential & scope for improvement to reduce income inequality differs across SSA countries.



POLICY DIALOGUES

Are Municipal Governance Issues Worsening the Effects of Inequality in South Africa?

February 2025 - No. 14 (EN) AFD Research Facility on Inequalities

Issue

In South Africa, inequalities do not exist in isolation but are fundamentally shaped by spatial factors. The legacy of apartheid, which used spatial segregation to enforce exclusionary policies, continues to influence economic and social outcomes today. Traditional economic performance metrics such as GDP often fail to capture the lived experiences of individuals, particularly when measured at a national level. The AFD team is conducting a research project to assess the impact of municipal governance issues on inequality in South Africa. The project will involve a series of interviews with key stakeholders, including government officials, civil society representatives, and members of the most vulnerable communities. The findings of the project will be used to inform policy recommendations and to support the development of more effective strategies to reduce inequality.

Issue

The AFD team is conducting a research project to assess the impact of municipal governance issues on inequality in South Africa. The project will involve a series of interviews with key stakeholders, including government officials, civil society representatives, and members of the most vulnerable communities. The findings of the project will be used to inform policy recommendations and to support the development of more effective strategies to reduce inequality.

Issue

The AFD team is conducting a research project to assess the impact of municipal governance issues on inequality in South Africa. The project will involve a series of interviews with key stakeholders, including government officials, civil society representatives, and members of the most vulnerable communities. The findings of the project will be used to inform policy recommendations and to support the development of more effective strategies to reduce inequality.

Are Municipal Governance Issues Worsening the Effects of Inequality in South Africa?

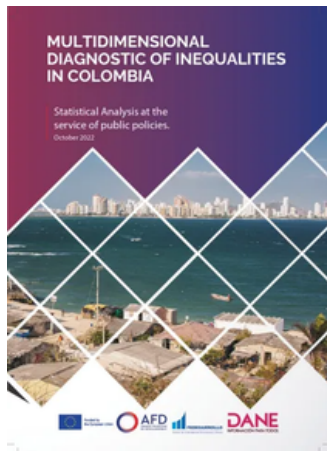
In South Africa, inequalities do not exist in isolation but are fundamentally shaped by spatial factors. The legacy of apartheid, which used spatial segregation to enforce exclusionary policies, continues to influence economic and social outcomes today. Traditional economic performance metrics such as GDP often fail to capture the lived experiences of individuals, particularly when measured at a national level.



Issue

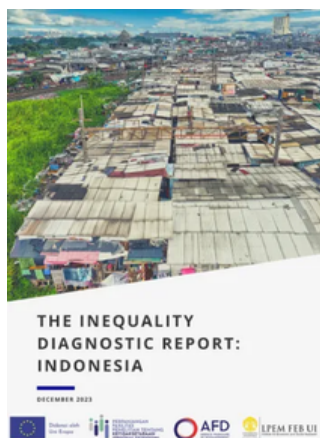
The AFD team is conducting a research project to assess the impact of municipal governance issues on inequality in South Africa. The project will involve a series of interviews with key stakeholders, including government officials, civil society representatives, and members of the most vulnerable communities. The findings of the project will be used to inform policy recommendations and to support the development of more effective strategies to reduce inequality.

Our Inequality Diagnostics



Multidimensional diagnostic on inequalities in Colombia

In brief, this Multidimensional Diagnostic is key to understanding the gaps that exist in Colombia, and allows for evidence-based decision-making and progress towards reducing inequalities. This document has been produced in the framework of the Extension of the Research Facility on Inequalities.



The Inequality Diagnostic Report: Indonesia

The Inequality Diagnostic Report measures multidimensional aspects of inequalities in Indonesia in the last decade, while also identifying policies that shape the current state of inequality in the country. The report analyzes inequalities in Indonesia from a comprehensive point of view, which takes into account its multiple dimensions such as income distribution, labour income, household assets and services, but also spatial inequality or gender disparities.



Learn more about the Inequality Research Program

- The EU–AFD Research Facility on Inequalities



- First Phase of the Research Facility on Inequalities (2017–2020)



- Extension of the Research Facility on Inequalities



Our media & partners

Grandes Lignes, AFD's Research on Development Podcast



Discover the key findings of our studies on inequalities in Sub-Saharan Africa with experts from AFD and the World Bank in an episode of our podcast Grandes Lignes.

Listen to the episode here :



THE CONVERSATION

The Conversation France is an online media outlet and a non-profit association. Our collaboration model between experts and journalists is unique: our goal is to share knowledge by bringing researchers' voices into the public debate



Global dev

GlobalDev is a blog that aims to connect development research with effective policies. We make research accessible to everyone so that evidence can inform policies and have a positive impact!



Our AFD's Experts on Inequalities



Anda DAVID

Anda David is an economist at AFD responsible for research on inequalities, poverty, and international migration.

Economist and scientific coordinator of the EU-AFD Research Facility on Inequalities.

Davida@afd.fr



Emmanuel Fourmann

Emmanuel Fourmann, a research officer at AFD, works on the links between inequalities, taxation, and the environment, notably within the framework of the EU-AFD Research Facility on Inequalities.

Fourmanne@afd.fr



Rawane Yasser

Rawane Yasser is a researcher at the AFD working on inequalities, poverty, labor markets, and international migration.

yasserr.ext@afd.fr



Savoirs AFD

Research, evaluations, innovation... **Savoirs AFD is the AFD Group's brand dedicated to knowledge sharing.** In addition to publications released by **Agence Française de Développement Publishing**, our knowledge-sharing formats are diverse and aim to make the insights produced with our partners accessible.



Learn more about AFD's development research activities

<https://www.afd.fr/en/research-news-events>

