

Rocco Zizzamia

Centre for the Study of African Economies · Manor Rd · Oxford OX1 3UQ, UK

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Current Appointments

Lecturer in Quantitative Methods (Dept. of Int. Development, University of Oxford) Sept. 2025-present
Research Fellow (Dept. of Economics, University of Oxford) Nov. 2022-present

Education

University of Oxford, DPhil, International Development 2023
University of Oxford, MPhil, Development Studies (Distinction) 2018
with concentration in Development Economics
University of Cape Town, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Economic History (First Class) 2015
University of Cape Town, Bachelor of Social Science in Philosophy (First Class) 2014
Visiting student, University of California, Berkeley

Research

WORK IN PROGRESS

[Acting early under uncertainty: Anticipatory cash transfers in the context of flood disasters](#) (with Stefan Dercon, Ashley Pople, Hannah Timmis, Prabhmeet Matta)

Learning Traps? Experimental Evidence on Threshold Dynamics in Education (with Noam Angrist and Claire Cullen)

Education Support During Climate Crises: An Evaluation of Cash and Remote Learning (with Noam Angrist and Stefan Dercon)

Welfare-Risk Trade-offs in Anticipatory Aid: A Portfolio Theory Approach (with Prabhmeet Matta)

[Fostering Adaptation to Climate Change: The Role of Multifaceted Social Protection Programmes and Microcredit](#) (with Anindita Bhattacharjee and Prabhmeet Matta)

SELECT PUBLICATIONS

Zizzamia, R., Stefan Dercon, Emily Beam, Dean Karlan, and others. (*forthcoming*). [Group versus individual coaching for rural social protection programs: Evidence from Uganda, Philippines, and Bangladesh](#), *American Economic Review: Insights*.

Zizzamia, R. (*forthcoming*). [Rejection sensitivity and on-the-job search: A lab-in-the-field experiment in South Africa](#), *Journal of Behavioural and Experimental Economics*.

Jain, R., Budlender, J., Zizzamia, R., & Bassier, I. (2023). [The labor market and poverty impacts of COVID-19 in South Africa](#). *South African Journal of Economics*. 91(4), 419-445.

Schotte, S., & Zizzamia, R. (2022). [The livelihood impacts of COVID-19 in urban South Africa: A view from below](#). *Social Indicators Research*. 1-30.

Zizzamia, R., Schotte, S., & Leibbrandt, M. (2022). [Snakes and Ladders and Loaded Dice: Poverty Dynamics and Inequality in South Africa, 2008 to 2017](#). *South African Journal of Economics*. 214-242.

- Zizzamia, R., Bassier, I., Budlender, J., Leibbrandt, M., & Ranchhod, V. (2021). [Locked down and locked out: Repurposing social assistance as emergency relief to informal workers](#). *World Development*, 139, 105271.
- Clementi, F., Fabiani, M., Molini, V., & Zizzamia, R. (2021). [Are We Really Painting the Devil on the Walls? Polarization and its Drivers in Sub-Saharan Africa in the Past Two Decades](#). *Journal of African Economies*.
- Zizzamia, R. (2020). [Is employment a panacea for poverty: A mixed-methods investigation into employment decisions in South Africa](#). *World Development*. 130. 104938.
- Schotte, S., Zizzamia, R., & Leibbrandt, M. (2018). [A poverty dynamics approach to social stratification: The South African case](#). *World Development*, 110, 88-103.

Consulting and past appointments

RESEARCH

Consultant (Inter-American Development Bank)	2026
Fulford Junior Research Fellow (Somerville College, Oxford University)	2023 - 2025
Consultant (BRAC International)	2025
Consultant (International Labour Organization)	2022
Research Officer (Southern African Labour and Development Research Unit)	2016 - 2021
Visiting Fellow (GIGA German Institute for Global and Area Studies)	2018
Short-Term Consultant (World Bank Group, Poverty Global Practice Unit)	2017 - 2018

TEACHING

Lecturer and convener, Quantitative Methods (Oxford Dept. of International Development)	2024-2025
Lecturer, Economics Foundation Course (Oxford Dept. of International Development)	2025
TA, Quantitative Methods (Oxford Dept. of International Development)	2020-2022
TA, Various (Philosophy Dept., University of Cape Town)	2013 - 2014

Grants (PI or co-PI)

<i>Education Support During Climate Crises: An Evaluation of Cash and Remote Learning</i> , Strategic Impact Evaluation and Learning IPA \$740,000	2025 - 2027
<i>Anticipatory action for climate disaster response</i> , Weiss Asset Management Foundation Grantholder: GiveDirectly \$1,000,000	2024 - 2025
<i>The impacts of an ultra-poor graduation program in building resilience in flood-prone Pakistan</i> , IGC \$25,000	2025
<i>Research on climate change adaptation practices using micro-narratives</i> , Gates Foundation \$85,000	2025
<i>Anticipatory action for climate disaster response</i> , J-Pal King Climate Action Initiative \$250,000	2023 - 2025
<i>Boosting decent employment for Africa's youth</i> , International Development Research Centre CAD\$500,000	2019 - 2022

Working to learn: an evaluation of an on-the-job training program, J-Pal Post-Primary Education Initiative
\$25,000 2019 - 2022

Awards

Clarendon Scholarship 2019 - 2022
Oxford Dept. International Development Scholarship 2022 - 2023
Papiya Ghosh Thesis Prize (best MPhil thesis in Development Studies) 2018
Skye Foundation Scholarship 2016 - 2018
Michael Wills Scholarship 2016 - 2018

Presentations

Since 2016 I have presented original research at over 40 international conferences and seminars.

Public engagement

My research has been featured in the [Financial Times](#), [The Economist](#) ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#)), [The Mail and Guardian](#), among others. My own public-facing writing can be found [here](#).

Service

Policy engagement: Policy modeling for the [Special Covid Grant Working group](#) – proposal to introduce a [Social Relief of Distress Grant](#) adopted by the South African government.

Mentoring: Co-founder of the [Oxford Africa Society Mentorship Scheme](#)

Refereeing: American Economic Review: Insights; Journal of Economic Inequality; Economic Modelling; World Development; Review of Development Economics; Applied Economics Letters; South African Journal of Economics.

Associate Editor: Oxford Development Studies

Editor: [CSAE Working Paper Series](#)

Organiser: CSAE Workshop on Social Protection and Climate Adaptation (2024); CSAE Research Seminar (2024-2025)

Other information

Programming/Software - Stata, R, Python

Languages - English (native), Italian (native), German (actively learning), Afrikaans (basic)

Sport - Oxford University First Marathon Team and half-Blue colours. Marathon PB: 2h28

References

Stefan Dercon (stefan.dercon@economics.ox.ac.uk); Pramila Krishnan (pramila.krishnan@qeh.ox.ac.uk); Christopher Woodruff (christopher.woodruff@qeh.ox.ac.uk)