

# Rocco Zizzamia

---

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

✉ [rocco.zizzamia@economics.ox.ac.uk](mailto:rocco.zizzamia@economics.ox.ac.uk) 🌐 [roccozizzamia.github.io](https://roccozizzamia.github.io)

---

## 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

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

## Research

### SELECT PUBLICATIONS

- 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.
- 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., & Ranchod, 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.

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

[Group versus individual coaching for rural social protection programs: Evidence from Uganda, Philippines, and Bangladesh](#) (with Stefan Dercon, Emily Beam, Dean Karlan, and others). NBER Working Paper No. 34309. **Submitted**

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)

Ultra-poor graduation programmes and resilience to climate shocks (with Nasir Iqbal and Saima Nawaz)

## Past appointments

### RESEARCH

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)

*Education Support During Climate Crises: An Evaluation of Cash and Remote Learning*, Strategic Impact Evaluation and Learning | IPA

\$740,000 2025 - 2027

*Anticipatory action for climate disaster response*, Weiss Asset Management Foundation

\$1,000,000 2024 - 2025

*The impacts of an ultra-poor graduation program in building resilience in flood-prone Pakistan*, IGC

\$25,000 2025

*Research on climate change adaptation practices using micro-narratives*, Gates Foundation

\$85,000 2025

*Anticipatory action for climate disaster response*, J-Pal King Climate Action Initiative

\$250,000 2023 - 2025

<i>Boosting decent employment for Africa's youth</i> , International Development Research Centre <b>CAD\$500,000</b>	<b>2019 - 2022</b>
<i>Working to learn: an evaluation of an on-the-job training program</i> , J-Pal Post-Primary Education Initiative <b>\$25,000</b>	<b>2019 - 2022</b>

## Awards

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

## 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.

**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](mailto:stefan.dercon@economics.ox.ac.uk)); Pramila Krishnan ([pramila.krishnan@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:pramila.krishnan@qeh.ox.ac.uk)); Christopher Woodruff ([christopher.woodruff@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:christopher.woodruff@qeh.ox.ac.uk))