Rocco Zizzamia

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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

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., & 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.

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. **Conditionally appected, American Economic Review: Insights**

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

Boosting decent employment for Africa's youth, 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.

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)