

For immediate release

New perspectives on technological innovation for poverty reduction and development

A joint UNU-WIDER/UNU-MERIT workshop 30-31 October, Maastricht, the Netherlands

Technological innovation by entrepreneurs has been critical to economic growth in the world's wealthy countries. Many developing nations have, over the past half century, attempted to replicate this success, but with mixed results.

To consider the role of entrepreneurship and technological innovation in development, [UNU-WIDER](#) and [UNU-MERIT](#) are jointly organizing a workshop to be held in Maastricht, The Netherlands, on 30 and 31 October 2008.

Professor Wim Naudé, a senior research fellow at UNU-WIDER, is co-organizer of the workshop. "The financial crisis which broke in 2008 will give further impetus to promoting and supporting entrepreneurial innovation as development finance is likely to be reduced in coming years, requiring innovative new approaches to poverty reduction through private sector development."

The workshop will take a critical look at the relationships between entrepreneurship and innovation, how entrepreneurship and technological innovation can contribute to development, and how the policies of countries, donors and development agencies can facilitate or hinder entrepreneurship and innovation.

Professor Adam Szirmai, professorial fellow at UNU-MERIT and co-organizer of the workshop, emphasizes the importance of taking a closer look at the actors that are ultimately responsible for innovation. According to Szirmai: "It is the small and large entrepreneurs who create new jobs, new or better products, and who can transform their economies. We need to understand how they cope under difficult circumstances and how their creative potential can be unleashed."

The workshop will also focus on how globalization affects entrepreneurs in developing countries, and whether social entrepreneurship could make a difference to poverty. Moreover, the workshop will ask what is wrong with national systems of innovation in developing countries, and how latecomer countries can speed up industrialization through innovation. Case studies will consider the Indian software industry, Chinese high-tech incubators, and the challenges facing African countries such as Nigeria and South Africa.

The keynote speakers at this workshop are **Professor Alice Amsden** from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and **Dr Suma Athreye** from Brunel Business School. A total of 19 papers will be presented and discussed. Further details, a programme, and a list of participants can be found [here](#).

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