

Development Dialogue Seminar

TIPS and the DST/NRF Chair in Social Change at the University of Johannesburg invite you to the following Development Dialogue seminar

"India's Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme: Reflections on its Impacts and Implications"

Presented by Prof. James Manor

Date: Monday, 6th June 2011

Time: 12h30 – 14h00

Venue: TIPS Offices, 826 Government Avenue, Corner of Percy St, Pretoria

In 2005, India introduced the world's first employment guarantee, creating new meaning for the concept of a right to work. This is achieved through the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, established through an act of parliament (NREGA), which gives every rural household the right to demand 100 days of employment (manual labour) per year at a minimum wage. With over 55 million participants, NREGA has become one of the largest poverty programmes in history. Since 2006, it has provided over two billion person-days of work – 48% of which have gone to women. It also includes real innovation in the use of transparency mechanisms to combat corruption. As a vital part of the campaign that saw India's government re-elected in 2009, it has also become politically unassailable.

But this programme is by no means perfect. It has struggled to ensure downward accountability to poor people, and to build an awareness of the rights in the Act at grassroots level; it has not always been able to overcome bureaucratic resistance, or to deepen intended collaboration with civil society. Design flaws have created problems (although several have been remedied). And yet its achievements are massive enough to make it an important example of innovation in poverty reduction as well as employment creation.

Professor James Manor holds the Anyaoku Chair at London University's Institute of Commonwealth Studies, a school that he previously directed. He has done research in South Africa and four other African countries, but he is mainly an India specialist. He and Professor Rob Jenkins in New York have done extensive field research on NREGA in villages and state capitals in India since 2007; they have worked with the ministry that administers this programme, and are in the process of completing a book on the subject.

Directions to our offices can be downloaded from: <http://www.tips.org.za/about/contact>

Please RSVP by email: Rozale@tips.org.za to confirm your attendance for catering and seating purposes.

About the Development Dialogue Seminar Series: These seminars are designed for those involved with policymaking. The Seminars offer a platform to share views and ideas on specific development issues and alternative policy strategies. To access the presentations of seminars which have already taken place, check: <http://www.tips.org.za/events>