

Final Progress Report

Sustainability Science Program

September 1, 2008 – August 31, 2009

Name: Robyn Meeks

Date: August 5, 2009

Field(s): PhD program in Public Policy, with focus in Development Economics and Environmental Economics

Degree program, institution and (expected) graduation date:

Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

Expected completion is Spring 2011

Faculty host(s) at Harvard name and department:

Rohini Pande, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

Michael Kremer, Economics Department, Harvard University

Description of SSP-related research activity, including a title:

As part of my SSP fellowship during the 2008-2009 academic year, I assisted Professor Michael Kremer in organizing two conferences on issues related to water, health and development. The first conference was in Cambridge, MA during December 2008 and the other was in San Servolo, Italy in July 2009.

This first conference was a one-day event on December 12, 2008, entitled "Scaling-Up Distribution of Water Treatment Technologies in Developing Countries." The objectives for this workshop were to understand some of the barriers to wide-spread adoption, preview a range of distribution channels that are being piloted in the field, and explore ideas for how some of these may be scaled up. The workshop brought together practitioners and academics who have been working to expand access to clean water technologies. The first half of the day was devoted to understanding some of the barriers to widespread adoption of these technologies and previewing a range of ideas on how to distribute them in ways that take these barriers into account. The second half of the day included a discussion session on addressing the technological and marketing challenges to scaling up alternative distribution models.

The workshop went well with approximately forty-five participants representing a broad array of institutions and fields of expertise. I was involved in the preparations for this conference and will be writing a workshop report, which will be circulated to conference participants and should provide the basis for one of the background papers for the San Servolo conference.

The Executive Session on Water and Human Well-being was convened by the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and Venice International University on July 20 - 21, 2009. The session was one in a series on Grand Challenges of the Sustainability Transition organized by the Sustainability Science Program at Harvard University with the generous support of the Italian Ministry for Environment, Land, and Sea.

Discussion during this event focused on sharing new evidence from applied research on game-changing water technologies and human behaviors that affect environmental health outcomes. In addition, sessions addressed strategies to move beyond promising pilot projects to scalable programs; public, private, and integrated approaches were considered. The interconnections between sustainability and scale were explored, giving policymakers an explicit opportunity to help shape the research agenda of leading biomedical and social scientists working at the intersection of water and health. Key themes were addressed during the Executive Session, including the science of water and health, issues of household behaviors, economic issues, and key implementation issues.

Please note: Many of the follow-up questions in the suggested progress report template are not applicable to me, given that the tasks for my fellowship are not research-based, but instead are related to conference organization. For this reason, I have omitted such questions from my report.

Description of major other intellectual or professional advancement activity(ies) over the past academic year, including working title(s) (e.g., PhD qualifying paper, dissertation, non-SSP research project paper, job search):

I completed my qualifying paper in the fall of 2008, which was titled, “Property Rights and Access to Water Sources: Evidence from a Land Titling Program in Rural Peru.” Once the requirements of this year are completed, I will begin working on my prospectus.

Please list citations for reports, papers, publications and presentations that built on your fellowship research (please list full citations here, paragraph length abstracts, and attach copies of URLs if possible):

Two documents were written summarizing the events of each conference. These documents are available at the Sustainability Science website:

<http://www.cid.harvard.edu/sustsci/events/workshops/09water/>

List any awards or grants received this year for the current or coming year:

Taubman Center Dissertation Fellowship, Harvard University
Academic year 2009 – 2010