



Social Dimensions of Adjustment

World Bank Experience, 1980–93



Carl Jayarajah
William Branson
Binayak Sen



A World Bank Operations Evaluation Study

Social Dimensions of Adjustment

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Foreword

This comprehensive study by the Bank's independent Operations Evaluation Department looks at all the evaluated adjustment operations supported by the Bank in 1980-93 (114 operations in 53 countries) and tracks what happened to poverty and income distribution. The findings dispel some popular myths about adjustment lending:

- Two-thirds of the 53 countries implemented the adjustment policies agreed with the Bank with a substantial measure of success. They reduced price distortions and inflation, stabilized their foreign exchange reserves, and achieved growth in income per head.
- Countries that successfully implemented adjustment reduced poverty. For 23 countries, enough poverty data are available for reliable "before and after" comparisons. Two-thirds of these countries successfully implemented adjustment, achieved per capita income growth, and reduced the numbers of people in poverty.
- Successful adjusters maintained or increased their social spending. In most of the countries that successfully implemented adjustment policies, real spending per head on health, education, and social security/welfare programs either rose during the adjustment period or rebounded soon after.

The findings of the study nonetheless emphasize that while macroeconomic stabilization processes are needed for growth, they are not sufficient for a poverty reduction strategy. Several countries that removed market distortions and achieved income growth saw little reduction in poverty. Macroeconomic policies need to be supplemented by measures to make the conditions for agriculture, business, and industry more transparent and competitive, to widen and deepen the resources available for productive use, and to raise the productivity of resources, both human and material. For the poor to benefit from growth, growth must take place in activities in which the poor participate. Hence the need for adjustment efforts to give deliberate attention to the sources of growth.

Trends in public spending emphasize the need for selectivity when budgets are to be cut, giving priority to essential services for producers and to basic health, education, and social security/welfare services. Even in countries that protected their overall levels of social spending, strong biases remained, for example, toward university—not primary—and hospital—not preventive—health care.

Few of the Bank's early adjustment loans provided for safety net programs, but such programs have become more common. Experience stresses the need for the Bank to deal explicitly

with the social dimensions of adjustment in new operations, and offers preliminary lessons for the design of safety net programs.

The study confirms previous OED findings regarding borrower ownership: the most common reason why adjustment efforts fail is poor government commitment. Thus, the Bank should lend for adjustment only where govern-

ments are committed to reforms and likely to sustain them.

Robert Picciotto
Director General
Operations Evaluation

Prefacio

En este estudio integral del Departamento de Evaluación de Operaciones, orgánicamente independiente, del Banco Mundial se examinan todas las operaciones de ajuste financiadas parcialmente por la institución en el período de 1980-93 (114 operaciones en 53 países) y que fueron evaluadas, y se investiga la evolución de la pobreza y la distribución de ingresos. Las conclusiones a las que se llegaron destruyen algunos mitos acerca del financiamiento para fines de ajuste, a saber:

- Las dos terceras partes de los 53 países comprendidos en el estudio aplicaron las medidas de ajuste convenidas con el Banco y obtuvieron resultados considerablemente buenos. Lograron reducir las distorsiones de precios y la tasa de inflación, estabilizar sus reservas de divisas y aumentar el ingreso per cápita.
- En los países que aplicaron eficazmente el ajuste se redujo la pobreza. Con respecto a 23 de ellos, se disponen de datos sobre la pobreza suficientes como para hacer comparaciones confiables “antes y después”. En las dos terceras partes de estos países se aplicó eficazmente el ajuste, y se logró aumentar el ingreso per cápita y reducir el número de personas que viven en la pobreza.
- Los que lograron buenos resultados con el ajuste mantuvieron o aumentaron el gasto

social. En la mayoría de los países en que se aplicaron eficazmente medidas de ajuste, el gasto real per cápita en salud, educación y programas de seguridad social y bienestar aumentó durante el período de ajuste o bien experimentó una recuperación poco después.

Sin embargo, las conclusiones del estudio hacen hincapié en que, si bien para lograr crecimiento hace falta un proceso de estabilización macroeconómica, éste no es suficiente desde el punto de vista de la estrategia relativa a la reducción de la pobreza. En varios países en que se eliminaron las distorsiones de mercado y se logró aumentar el ingreso, la pobreza disminuyó poco. Las políticas macroeconómicas deben complementarse con medidas que creen condiciones más transparentes y competitivas para la agricultura, el comercio y la industria, con el objeto de ampliar y reactivar los recursos disponibles para su uso productivo, y aumentar la productividad de los recursos humanos y materiales. A fin de que los pobres puedan aprovechar los beneficios del crecimiento, éste debe darse en las actividades en que ellos participan. Por ese motivo, es preciso que las medidas de ajuste contemplen expresamente las fuentes de crecimiento.

Las tendencias del gasto público ponen de relieve la necesidad de aplicar un criterio selectivo para hacer recortes presupuestarios, y

asignar prioridad a servicios esenciales para los productores y a los servicios básicos de salud, educación y seguridad social y bienestar.

Incluso en países que mantuvieron un buen nivel global de gasto social, persistió un acentuado sesgo, por ejemplo, a favor de la educación universitaria, en lugar de la primaria, y de la atención hospitalaria de la salud, en lugar de la preventiva.

En pocos de los primeros préstamos para ajuste del Banco se contemplaron programas relativos a redes de protección social, aunque ello fue más común en los posteriores. La experiencia revela enfáticamente la necesidad de que el Banco aborde expresamente los aspectos sociales del ajuste en las nuevas operaciones, y proporciona enseñanzas preliminares para la

formulación de programas de redes de protección social.

El estudio confirma conclusiones anteriores del DEO con respecto a la identificación de los prestatarios con los proyectos: la razón más común por la que fracasan los esfuerzos de ajuste es la falta de compromiso de los gobiernos. En consecuencia, el Banco debe otorgar préstamos para fines de ajuste sólo cuando los gobiernos estén empeñados en la reforma y puedan sostenerla.

Robert Picciotto
Director General
Evaluación de Operaciones

Préface

Cette étude d'ensemble réalisée par le Département de l'évaluation des opérations, département indépendant de la Banque, est consacrée à toutes les opérations qui ont été appuyées par l'institution entre 1980 et 1993 et qui ont déjà été évaluées rétrospectivement (114 opérations dans 53 pays). Elle cherche à déterminer les incidences que ces opérations ont eues sur la pauvreté et la distribution des revenus. Ses conclusions démystifient certaines des idées reçues sur les prêts à l'ajustement :

- Les deux tiers des 53 pays ont obtenu des résultats notables dans la mise en oeuvre des politiques d'ajustement arrêtées d'un commun accord avec la Banque. Ils ont réduit les distorsions des prix et l'inflation, ont stabilisé leurs réserves de change et sont parvenus à accroître le revenu par habitant.
- Les pays qui ont réussi leur ajustement ont fait reculer la pauvreté. Pour 23 pays, on dispose de suffisamment de données pour faire des comparaisons fiables entre la situation « avant et après ». Les deux tiers de ces pays ont réussi leur ajustement, sont parvenus à accroître le revenu par habitant et ont réduit le nombre de pauvres.
- Les pays ayant réussi leur ajustement ont maintenu ou accru leurs dépenses sociales. Dans la plupart de ces pays, les dépenses réelles par habitant consacrées aux pro-

grammes de santé, d'éducation et de sécurité/protection sociale ont soit augmenté pendant la période d'ajustement, soit repris peu après.

Toutefois, les conclusions de l'étude montrent bien que les processus de stabilisation macroéconomique sont nécessaires à la croissance, mais pas suffisants pour faire reculer la pauvreté. En effet, plusieurs des pays qui ont supprimé les éléments faussant le libre jeu des forces du marché et qui ont obtenu une croissance des revenus ne sont guère parvenus à réduire la pauvreté. Les politiques macroéconomiques doivent s'accompagner de mesures visant à créer un environnement plus transparent et plus compétitif pour l'agriculture, les affaires et l'industrie, à élargir et renforcer les moyens permettant des utilisations productives et à augmenter la productivité des ressources tant humaines que matérielles. Pour que les démunis profitent de la croissance, celle-ci doit intervenir dans les activités auxquelles ils participent. Aussi faut-il que les efforts d'ajustement soient délibérément axés sur les sources de croissance.

L'orientation des dépenses publiques fait ressortir la nécessité d'une démarche sélective lorsque les budgets doivent être réduits, afin de privilégier les services indispensables aux producteurs et les services de base dans les secteurs de la santé, de l'éducation et de la sécurité/pro-

tection sociale. Même dans les pays où le niveau global des dépenses sociales a été maintenu, on a continué, par exemple, à favoriser nettement l'université plutôt que l'enseignement primaire, et les soins hospitaliers plutôt que la santé préventive.

Les programmes de protection sociale faisaient rarement partie des premiers prêts à l'ajustement octroyés par la Banque, mais ils sont aujourd'hui plus courants. On a clairement constaté à l'usage que la Banque devait explicitement s'attaquer aux dimensions sociales de l'ajustement dans les nouvelles opérations et on a commencé à tirer des enseignements permettant de mettre au point des programmes de protection sociale.

L'étude confirme les conclusions auxquelles le Département de l'évaluation des opérations était déjà parvenu au sujet du rôle capital de l'attitude de l'emprunteur : l'échec des efforts d'ajustement tient le plus souvent à un manque de détermination des pouvoirs publics. Aussi, la Banque ne devrait-elle consentir des prêts à l'ajustement qu'aux gouvernements déterminés à entreprendre des réformes et susceptibles de les mener à bien.

Robert Picciotto
Directeur général
Evaluation des opérations

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AGETIP	Agence d'Exécution des Travaux d'Intérêt Public (Senegal)
ALCID	Adjustment Lending Conditionality and Implementation Database
CIH	Crédit Immobilier et Hôtelier (Morocco)
CPI	Consumer price index
DFC	Development finance company
EDUCO	Primary education programs in El Salvador
EMENA	Europe, Middle East, and North Africa
EMSAP	Economic Management and Social Action Program (Madagascar)
ESF	Emergency Social Funds (Bolivia)
ETF	Employment and Training Fund (Tunisia)
FD	Fiscal deficit
FHIS	Social Investment Fund (Honduras)
GDI	Gross domestic investment
GDP	Gross domestic product
GQ	General quadratic
ID	Institutional development
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OED	Operations Evaluation Department
PAM	Program Against Malnutrition
PAMSCAD	Program of Actions to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment (Ghana)
PAPSCA	Program for the Alleviation of Poverty and the Social Costs of Adjustment (Uganda)
PAR	Poverty assessment report
PCR	Project completion report
PFDS	Public Food Distribution System (Bangladesh)
REER	Real effective exchange rate
RID	Real interest rate differential
SAL	Structural adjustment loan
SAP	Social Action Program
SDAP	Social Dimensions of Adjustment Program (Cameroon)

SDP	Social Development Program (Chad)
SECAL	Sectoral adjustment loan
SFD	Social Fund for Development (Egypt)
SIF	Social Investment Fund (Bolivia)
SIMAP	Social Impact Amelioration Program (Guyana)
SIRP	Social Infrastructure and Relief Project (Guinea-Bissau)
SRP/MPU	Social Recovery Project/Micro Projects Unit (Zambia)
TA	Technical assistance
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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