

NOBEL SYMPOSIA SERIES

South Africa and the elite bargain for development

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Empowering the Unempowered: Cash and Cash-Plus Approaches to Extreme Poverty

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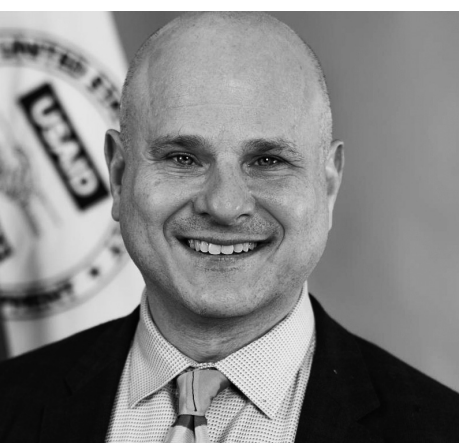
BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Stefan Dercon is Professor of Economic Policy at the Blavatnik School of Government and at the Economics Department at the University of Oxford. He is also Director of the Centre for the Study of African Economies. Between 2011 and 2017, he was Chief Economist of the Department of International Development (DFID), the government department in charge with the UK's aid policy and spending. Subsequently, he advised successive Foreign Secretaries at the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

His research interests concern what keeps some people and countries poor: the failures

of markets, governments and politics, mainly in Africa and South Asia, and how to achieve change. His recent book *"Gambling on Development: why some countries win, and others lose"* reflects on this, based on his research and on his experience in the world of policy making.

Belgian by birth, he studied economics and philosophy at the Catholic University of Leuven, completed a DPhil in Economics at Oxford, and worked previously also at the Catholic University of Leuven, Addis Ababa University and WIDER-UNU Helsinki.



Dean Karlan is the Frederic Esser Nemmers Distinguished Professor of Economics and Finance at Northwestern University, and the Founder and former President of Innovations for Poverty Action, a non-profit organization dedicated to discovering and promoting solutions to global poverty problems. Since November 2022, Karlan is Chief Economist of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Prior to that, he was on the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the MIT Jameel Poverty Action Lab. In 2015, he co-founded Impact Matters, a nonprofit dedicated to estimating and rating impact of nonprofit organizations in order to help

donors choose good charities and to promote more transparency in the nonprofit sector.

His research focuses on microeconomic issues of poverty, typically employing experimental methodologies and behavioural economics insights to examine what works, what does not, and why to address social problems. His work spans many geographies and topics, including sustainable income generation for those in abject poverty, credit and savings markets for low-income households, agriculture for smallholder farmers, small and medium entrepreneurship, weight loss and smoking cessation, and charitable giving.

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