



## Call for Papers

### Conference on Gender and Agency in Latin America and the Caribbean

Washington DC - November 10th, 2014

### Co-sponsored by the World Bank and the Research Network on Inequality and Poverty (NIP-LACEA)

#### Background:

Building on the work of Amartya Sen and Sabina Alkire, the World Development Report on Gender and Development (World Bank, 2012) defines **agency as the ability to make choices to achieve desired outcomes**. This ability to make meaningful choices and act upon them is an attribute and manifestation of development; using Sen's words, agency is *constituent to development*. At the same time, Sen and other authors recognize the instrumental value of agency: agency may act as a powerful catalyst for improving welfare as measured by concrete metrics of policy success, such as income growth and poverty reduction. Similarly, while the WDR 2012 defines agency as one of the three principal components of gender equality, along with endowments and economic opportunities, it recognizes that agency is a prerequisite for taking advantage of endowments and economic opportunities in order to transform them into desired outcomes.

**In Latin America, agency is the dimension of gender equality where the least progress has been achieved over the last decades.** Indeed, while there has been impressive progress in more gender equitable distribution of endowments and economic opportunities, lack of progress in advancing women's agency is manifested in high rates of gender based violence, adolescent fertility rates and, despite recent progress, low rates of political and community participation. More subtle manifestations of agency, including self-efficacy, autonomy, self-control, aspirations, are notoriously hard to measure in quantitative surveys, but qualitative works suggest that they are low and that their scarcity contributes to proliferation of other developmental challenges, including persistence of poverty<sup>1</sup> or adolescent pregnancy<sup>2</sup>.

#### Details:

This Call for Papers invites researchers to submit papers relevant for advancing knowledge on how to measure and expand women's agency.

The Call seeks papers which provide evidence of causal links between manifestations of agency and other phenomena. Papers focused on evaluating impacts of greater agency on other development

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<sup>1</sup> For example, see "The Capacity to Aspire" by Arjun Appadurai in Rao, V., and M. Walton (eds.) "Culture and Public Action", 2004.

<sup>2</sup> "Teenage Pregnancy and Opportunities in Latin America and the Caribbean: on Early Childbearing, Poverty and Economic Achievement". World Bank, 2012.

outcomes, such as poverty, labor market indicators, etc., are encouraged to apply, as well as papers investigating the reverse direction: the impact of environmental, household, community characteristics and policies on agency.

The Call accepts papers focused on a wide range of manifestations of agency, but particularly encourages those on: adolescent pregnancy, domestic violence, and participation in decision making. Papers contributing to the literature on agency measurement are also highly encouraged.

**Assessment Criteria:**

The papers will be assessed based on originality, analytical rigor and policy relevance.

**Eligibility**

The Call for Papers is open to all researchers. Finished papers or advanced drafts are accepted. Entries must:

- Clearly reflect the theme of the Call for Papers “Gender and Agency in Latin America and the Caribbean.”
- Include a completed submission form and attach a finished paper or advanced draft by the deadline.
- Submit relevant materials in English.

**Process:**

Researchers must submit completed papers or advanced drafts by email to [LACgenderagency@worldbank.org](mailto:LACgenderagency@worldbank.org) by September 26, 2014. The papers should include the title of the paper, author(s), affiliation, and contact information, and should address the main question(s) examined, relevant literature, unique contribution to the literature, and methodology employed. Eligible submissions will be reviewed by at least two members of the Selection Committee according to defined criteria: originality, analytical rigor, and policy relevance.

Based on the Committee’s evaluations, papers will be selected for presentation or a poster session at the Gender and Agency Conference at the World Bank Headquarters in Washington, D.C. on November 7th, 2014. Travel and accommodation expenses will be provided for authors of the papers selected for presentation; authors of the papers selected for poster sessions will be expected to cover their travel and accommodation costs.

Following the Conference, the authors will be asked to submit the final version of the paper by February 1<sup>st</sup>. The Selection Committee will evaluate the final set of papers for publication in the Conference Proceedings.

**Only papers by individuals who are active members of LACEA, and whose memberships are active at the time of the meeting, can be presented.** For membership information please consult [www.lacea.org](http://www.lacea.org).

**Timeline:**

**Submissions accepted until: September 26, 2014**

Notification of paper acceptance: October 10, 2014

Presentations at World Bank-NIP Conference in Washington DC (USA): November 10, 2014

Final Papers Due: February 1, 2015