

Seeking New Scholarship in Migrant Remittances: A Call for Dissertations, Theses and Faculty Research

I. Promoting the Development Potential of Remittances

In the past five years the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), through its Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF), has supported numerous activities aimed at increasing the development impact of migrant remittances. These include technical assistance projects, data collection and applied research, and awareness raising. These efforts have been aimed at lowering the cost of sending money home, facilitating the participation of transnational families in the banking and financial system, increasing the range of financial products available to migrants and their families, and lowering a variety of legal and regulatory barriers impeding the development impact of remittances.

There is a growing literature on remittances, and an increasing number of projects sponsored by international institutions and civil society organizations aimed at promoting the development impact of these flows. Even so, there remain serious gaps in knowledge regarding this important topic.

To contribute to a better understanding of the development potential of remittances, the IDB-MIF is issuing a call for Doctoral dissertations and Masters theses completed by students in universities in all 47 IDB member countries in the Americas, Western Europe, and Asia. The purpose of this exercise is to serve as a clearinghouse for relevant research being produced by a new generation of scholars and professionals.

In addition, the IDB-MIF is seeking original, unpublished research on remittances produced by faculty working in universities in Latin America and the Caribbean.

II. Academic Research

Completed Doctoral dissertations and Masters theses in any academic discipline, in universities located in the Americas, Western Europe, Japan, and the Republic of Korea are eligible. Preference will be given to work that yields concrete policy prescriptions for improving the development impact of remittances received in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Specific areas of interest include:

- LAC Remittance Market Structure and Firm Behavior
 - Remittances market structure, types of competition, profitability, partnerships, mergers and alliances, including linkages between money transfer companies and financial institutions, etc.

- Market strategies of money transfer companies, banks, credit unions, and other financial institutions, pricing, discriminatory and collusive arrangements
 - New consumer and institutional products, such as remittance-backed housing and microfinance instruments, savings and financial products, securitization, and other remittance-backed finance vehicles
- Public Authorities, Policy Environment and Remittances
- Legal and regulatory structures, at all levels of government, that alter the incentives facing migrants and their families regarding sending, spending, investing, or saving their money, including specific programs to encourage, channel or divert remittance flows;
 - Impact of macroeconomic policies on remittances flows, volumes and uses;
 - Macroeconomic instruments and policies needed to account for impact of remittances;
 - Effect on remittances of anti-money laundering and anti-terrorism legislation, and related issues;
 - Remittances and immigration-related policies
- Remittances and Technology
- New technologies, applications and platforms that cut costs, improve quality, facilitate the creation of new products, and expand market coverage
 - Technical innovations designed to improve transparency and monitoring of financial flows, including anti-money laundering and other illicit activities
- Productive Uses and Impacts of Remittances
- Role of remittances in business start-ups, finance, and investment in LAC
 - Remittances and household savings rates
 - Link between remittances and diaspora-led businesses, such as in tourism, nostalgic trade, and related areas
 - Remittances and return immigrants
 - Remittances and expenditures on housing and real estate
 - Remittances and technical training and education
- Migrant Households and Remittances
- Economic and demographic variables, including gender, and decision-making by remittance senders and receivers,
 - Differences in motives to remit and related economic behavior (consumption, saving, investment, etc.) based on income, education, ethnicity, expectations, background of senders and receivers, and related areas
 - Remittances and labor force participation
- Financial Inclusion and Remittances
- Programs to increase the financial literacy of migrants and families

- Consumer relations efforts by money transfer companies, banks and other financial institutions
 - Programs to improve transparency and cost disclosure by remittance companies and financial institutions
 - Civil society programs to facilitate the participation of migrants and families in financial systems, such as through projects with hometown associations, etc.
- Remittances and Human Development
- Impact of remittances on poverty, health, housing, and education
 - Remittances and gender and ethnicity
 - Remittances and equity, and income and wealth distribution
 - Remittances and rural and urban development

III. Eligibility

a. Dissertations and Theses

Doctoral dissertations and Masters theses completed in universities located in IDB Member Countries between 1 January 2005 and 31 December 2006 are eligible.

The author of the winning dissertation or thesis will be commissioned US\$10,000 to prepare a chapter or article under their name, either for an IDB peer reviewed book to be co-published with an academic press, or for a special edition of the forthcoming Inter-American Development Bank Journal, *Remittances and Development*. Other authors of dissertations or theses receiving "honorable mention" will be commissioned US\$5,000 to prepare monographs or other IDB publications on topics of special interest.

b. Faculty Research

Faculty working in universities located in Latin America and the Caribbean are also invited to submit papers on the above topics. The author of the winning paper will be commissioned US\$5,000 to prepare a chapter or monograph, under their name, for publication by the IDB. Authors receiving "honorable mention" will be commissioned US\$2,500 to prepare monographs or similar publications of special interest. Faculty members employed by universities located in Latin America and the Caribbean who are on sabbatical, on visiting appointments, or in temporary residence in institutions outside of Latin America or the Caribbean are eligible to submit research.

Employees of the Inter-American Development Bank and their immediate families are not eligible to compete for cash prizes.

IV. Submission and Selection Process

Dissertation, theses and faculty papers may be submitted in any of the four official languages of the Inter-American Development Bank: English, Spanish, Portuguese or French. Each submission should be accompanied by a one to two page executive summary of the research project in English.

A Selection Committee comprised of university faculty, staff in research organizations and multilateral organizations from IDB member states will make the final selection by 31 December 2006.

Submissions of dissertations and theses should be sent both in paper form and electronically to:

Paper copies:

Steven R. Wilson
Multilateral Investment Fund
Stop W0202
Inter-American Development Bank
Washington, D.C. 20577

Electronic copies: stevenw@iadb.org

Papers submitted by faculty members should be sent in electronic form only.