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Search Committee

Social & Behavioral Sciences Team
Washington D.C

Dear members of the search committee,

I wish to apply for the Associate Fellowship that you advertised in the your website. Having a strong background in Economic Analysis and Public Policy with a special interest in Development Economics, I felt I could be a good candidate for the position.

Through my experience and studies I have developed a strong interest in the use of behavioral and experimental economics on public policy and economic theory. Having read the latest annual report I was thrilled to discover that the SBST can make the most of my experience and knowledge. My research agenda focuses on the study of the effectiveness and the efficiency of policy interventions with a social component in developing countries. In particular I am interested in social norms, early childhood education for the poor and governance and accountability in the public sector. My experience in using innovative experimental methods for impact evaluation and self-governance would enrich SBST's work. When I received the invitation to apply for the new position at the team, I felt compelled to apply.

I believe in the value of spillovers across the social sciences towards building knowledge and improving wellbeing. Similarly, bridging the gap between rigorous theory and practical policy requires a research agenda focused on implementation and impact evaluation. Both my research on impact evaluation of social interventions, on one hand, and past experience using economic experiments to teach non-academics are examples of this.

I have ten years of experience in conducting large-scale economic experiments in the lab and in the field across all different instances: experimental design, management, implementation, analysis and disclosure of results. Some of these economic experiments have been conducted as particular modules for impact evaluation programs. Aside from conducting lab experiments in Italy and London, most of my experience comes from developing countries such as Colombia, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Argentina, Peru and Uruguay. Some of the economic games I helped design at the University of Los Andes in Colombia have been used in Africa (Kenya, Ghana, Mali, Namibia and South Africa), Asia (Thailand, Maharashtra in India) and East Europe (Albania). In addition, my experience in the field and as a volunteer has given me strong client orientation and excellent interpersonal skills. Being in the academia I mentored several people who work now on behavioral related fields.

Through four years of evaluating policy interventions in Colombia (a workfare program, a conditional cash transfer program and an early childhood development pilot) I am able to combine experimental measures with behavioral theory to understand drivers of development in poor countries. I have experience in technical policy dialogue at the micro level in two education sectors: early childhood development (targeted to poor households) and basic education (focused on Information & Communications Technologies). I also have

teaching experience to non-academic professionals and graduate students on behavioral and experimental economics. Last April I designed and taught a course on impact evaluation focused on social interventions.

I have two PhD degrees in Economics, focusing on behavioral economics and development economics. The first one, from the University of Siena in Italy is related to the effect of incentives and interventions on individual social preferences. The second one, from University College London is focused on i) measuring outcomes using novel economic experiments and separating mechanisms by which incentives and interventions perform, and ii) structural estimation of behavioral models to observe how mechanisms such as heterogeneity of social preferences and communication work. Having worked under different faculty and in different academic communities has allowed me to develop a rich research agenda. This agenda now includes published papers in first tier academic journals and working papers that have been presented in conferences and seminars in Europe and the US.

My two references are my two mentors Orazio Attanasio (policy evaluation and early childhood development, UCL-IFS), and Sam Bowles (social science research and analysis, Santa Fe institute and USiena). You will find their contact information in the last section of my CV.

Many thanks for the opportunity to present my application. I would be pleased to talk with you any time at your convenience. I can be reached via email at spolaniareyes@gmail.com. I can also be reached by telephone at +1 (734)277-1984.

I look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,



Sandra Polania-Reyes