2024-02-09

Paula Pedro and Claudia Macías,

When I saw the opening for Research and Scaling Fellow Government Partnerships in J-PAL LAC, I was beyond excited. I think I’m a perfect match for the position. As you can probably tell from my background, my whole career has been driven by the impulse to make people’s lives better. I am grateful that my education and my career have given me the tools I need to do so.

I am currently working at Mexico’s Social Security Institute (IMSS), in an office that focuses on planning and evaluating policies designed to improve incorportation to the institute, i.e. to expand formal employment. As such, I’ve developed the skills to navigate the complexities of a public institution to advance the culture of evidence guided policymaking. I’ve also developed the analytical skills to work with the administrative datasets to produce insights that inform policy decisions. Additionally, I’ve been able to develop the skills to communicate these insights to a non-technical audience, which I undesrtand to be a key asset for the position.

I have first hand experience in the design and implementation of two randomized controlled trials in the Mexico City Labor Courts, which were partly sponsored by [J-PAL](https://www.povertyactionlab.org/initiative-project/improving-labor-courts-fighting-corruption-competition). I was co-manager of one project, responsible with the techincal aspects of the implementation and data collection for analysis. In the other RCT, my role was more analytical, as I was invested in the data analysis and the production of reports. I believe these experiences have given me a wide range of skills to work with the government partners to design and implement RCTs, as well as to scale up successful interventions.

The one thing in the job description that I don’t fully meet is the requirement for a graduate degree, as I’m currently enrolled in a master’s degree in Applied Economics at ITAM, and I have aims to further my studies abroad in the medium run. However, I believe this makes me a a better match for the opening, since I am deeply engaged in the applied research community, taking classes with top researchers in the field and working on my own research projects. I am on the first year of the program, and currently at the top of my class, which I think speaks to my interest and ability to learn and grow in the field of evidence based policymaking.

The reason why I am so interested in this position is that I believe it is a perfect match to my skills and professional interests. Specifically, I am interested in promoting the evidence-based culture in my government, and I am interested in learning about how we can make life better. Also, although I have almost three years of experience in research in labor economics, I am also eager to find new research interests. I think I have a lot to learn from the J-PAL LAC team, and I am eager to contribute to the team’s mission.

I am confident that my skills and experience make me a strong candidate for the job. I am looking forward to the opportunity to discuss how my background, skills and interests align with the at J-PAL LAC. Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss my application in further detail.

Esteban Degetau