WOMEN’S RIGHTS AND CITIZENSHIP

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARD

FINAL REPORT

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MAY 2005-OCTOBER 2006

Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office
Montevideo, Uruguay
INTRODUCTION

In recent years, decentralisation reforms have become pivotal to the development plans of most countries in the South. Decentralisation is being promoted as a way to foster both economic development and democracy, effectiveness and inclusiveness. In the contemporary context, it is frequently associated with privatisation in areas such as service provision. Although decentralisation is usually presented as beneficial for women, there is a significant gap in research and knowledge on the impact of decentralisation on women and their rights. The former Gender Unit's series of regional research competitions on this theme was launched at the end of 2003 to address this gap, and five projects in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) were selected for funding in 2004. A further five have just been selected in South Asia (SA). For Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), the Women's Rights and Citizenship Program launched a research competition on the theme. The aim of the competition is to support research that empirically investigates whether and how contemporary decentralisation reforms, in practice, contribute to or on the contrary hinder the realization and protection of women's and girls' civil, political, social, economic and/or cultural rights. To foster South-South knowledge exchanges a global workshop was carried out in Buenos Aires, Argentina 2006 to bring together the grant recipients from all three competitions and the creation of an informal network on gender and decentralisation.

One interesting feature of this competition is that for the first time, the Program decided to outsource the process to coordinating institution. To do so, IDRC carried out a thorough competitive process where IDRC received proposals from Argentina, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela. Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO)-Argentina was awarded the assignment in September 2005. From that moment on, collaboration between FLACSO and IDRC has provided valuable lessons for future ventures. Within the framework of the competition, four research projects from Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador and Paraguay were selected, each of which were allotted an amount of up to CAD$120,000 and have a duration of two years. Likewise, the agreements between the Coordinating Institution and the selected contestants were signed two months after the selection meeting. Following the signing of the agreements, the Coordinating Institution has taken responsibility for the monitoring of the research projects, the organisation of the global workshop for exchange among the selected contestants and the submission of financial and technical progress reports to the IDRC. The contract between the Coordinating Institution and the IDRC will have a duration of 36 months.

As a LACRO based PDA it was my responsibility to oversee the above mentioned process. Federico Burone, Colleen Duggan and Claudie Gosselin supervised me. This final report reviews the process in the three main phases. First, the rationale behind this competition. Second, the process of selecting the coordinating institution whose task is to manage the competition on behalf of IDRC and Third, the process of working with FLACSO. In all cases, it attempts to track down the process that took place as well as reflect the lessons that can be learnt from it. Additionally it suggests some priorities for future programming in the region and presents some of the supplementary activities carried out on the theme during the duration of the award.
ESTABLISHING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE COMPETITION

The Women’s rights and citizenship’s thematic umbrella, provides a helpful framework within which to situate this research competition—and the research competition provides an excellent opportunity to critically investigates whether and how contemporary decentralization reforms, in practice, contribute to or on the contrary hinder the realization and protection of women’s and girls’ civil, political, social, economic and/or cultural rights. Beall et al (2004) associate the rise of the citizenship discourse with the increasingly political interpretation of “participation” in development on the one hand, and the rise of the “good governance” agenda on the other. However, in an attempt to capture the meaning of gender justice, the rationale behind this competition introduces an additional dimension, rights. The protection and realization of women’s human rights is generally recognized as a key component of sustainable and equitable development. Examples of these rights include, but are not limited to: the right to health; the right to choose the number of children and timing between them; the right to education; the right to vote and be elected; the right to work and to have safe and healthy working conditions; the right to liberty and security of the person; the right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food and housing; and equality before the law. Human rights include not only the rights guaranteed in national legislation and constitutions, but also the rights outlined in international human rights instruments such as conventions, covenants, declarations, and General Comments of United Nations treaty monitoring bodies. The notions of governance and rights have emerged in the past decade as a fruitful approach to conceptualizing the relationship between citizens and government (Painter, 2000, Beall et al, 2005). Put together, the notions of governance and rights tend to pose development issues in ways that put the justice aspects in the foreground. By adopting a human and women’s human rights approach to development it is possible to extend all human rights to all persons as the ultimate goal of rights-based development, while human rights also provide a normative framework which governs the process of development. By integrating accountability to this approach, it becomes operational, therefore contributing to the notion of gender justice as equality of outcomes as developed by Goetz (2003). Increasingly in Latin America and the Caribbean the context within which women’s human rights are to be protected and realized is one of decentralized or decentralizing states.

For the purposes of this competition we established that decentralisation refers to political and administrative reforms that transfer varying amounts and combinations of function, responsibility, resources, and political and fiscal autonomy to lower tiers of the state (e.g. regional, district, municipal governments, or decentralized units of the central government). Decentralisation may also transfer functions and responsibilities to quasi-state or private institutions. In the contemporary context, decentralisation is frequently associated with privatization in areas such as service provision. Decentralisation is also linked to new forms of interaction between a variety of institutional actors (including NGOs, community groups, women’s groups, etc.) at the local level, often characterized as “partnerships”. What is important in analyzing particular cases of decentralisation is to be clear about the precise form that decentralisation takes, asking what is decentralized; how it is decentralized; to what extent it is decentralized; who benefits from decentralisation and to look at fiscal arrangements for financing decentralized responsibilities, such as the design and functioning of local government systems for revenue-collection.

Arguments that support decentralisation go from those that claim that it increases efficiency in development management to those that imply that decentralisation has positive effects on local governance, participation and citizenship. Decentralisation and governance are concerned with the relationship between individuals and the nation states they live in and this relationship seems to be particularly crucial at the local level. Arguably this relationship can have positive effects in the development process. More recently, human rights approaches have been introduced to these debates, theoretically integrating the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system.

1 Annex 1. Background paper.
into the plans, policies and processes of development (Beall et al, 2004). However, less explored are the implications of the decentralisation, good governance, and rights approaches in relation to women’s rights. Decentralisation and local governance are frequently presented as beneficial for women. However, the reality is not so simple. Local government is the level closest to the general population, but relationships, structures and processes of local governance can limit both the space for women’s participation and the policy potential for addressing gender issues. Formal and informal systems and relationships cut across local governance, limiting the space for women’s participation and for taking up issues important to them. Beall (2005) argues that when the impulse for decentralisation is efficiency rather than equity, gender interests and women’s rights are less likely to be addressed.

By integrating governance and rights to the decentralisation debate it is possible to develop citizenship as the “claiming of rights”, while at the same time working gradually in the fulfillment of these rights. However, it is necessary to clarify the concept of citizenship in the context of this IDRC competition Citizenship, understood not simply as an abstract characteristic, but as ‘active citizenship’ that is, “implying participation and agency” (Molyneux, 2004:12). In the context of decentralisation, these expanded notions of citizenship take on very concrete manifestations at the local level. As we have seen, the locality is increasingly identified as a key space for politics and development. In decentralized and decentralizing regimes, and especially in cases that involve some degree of political devolution, local governments become the most proximate arena for engagement with the state, as key managers or mediators of local development, and as the level of the state with direct responsibility for the delivery of basic services, the management of local resources (Mac Lean, 2003). However, it is not necessarily beneficial for women. By exploring how decentralisation is enabling women to have better access to resources, participate actively and build and exercise agency, we can ask how decentralisation contributes to gender justice and shapes women’s experiences as local citizens.

In Latin America, as a starting point it seems that it is not very clear how decentralisation is contributing or not to advancing gender justice and women’s citizenship. The case of reproductive health and sexual rights exemplifies this problem. As analysed above, in most parts of Latin America, health services have been decentralised. However, there is a number of concerns surrounding how effectively health services have been decentralised. First, women are primarily targeted in their reproductive role, while ignoring some other dimensions of curative care. Second, it can be argued that there has been an instrumental use of women to achieve broader development goals, such as decreasing birth rates. Forced sterilizations are relatively common in the region, particularly within indigenous communities in Mexico (Freyermuth and Jiménez, 2000) and Peru (La Rosa:38)). Third, decentralized health services do not necessarily get closer to people, but continue to reproduce institutional/cultural bias, as the example form Mexico shows, where indigenous women feel no respect from health care workers. Fourth, at the same time far less progress has been evident in the campaign for sexual and reproductive rights, an issue which has met with considerable resistance across much of the LAC region. (Molyneux, 2004). Abortion remains a criminal offence across the LAC region, with the exception of only three countries (Cuba, Puerto Rico and Guyana).

Even countries like Mexico, which has ratified all conventions and facultative protocols protecting women’s rights remains reluctant to translate this into practice. Following our framework it is possible to argue that there is a gap for women to move from being passive recipients of rights to actively claiming them, and hence becoming active citizens. One thing is to have access to decentralized health services as passive recipients. A very different one is to use these services as claimants of reproductive and sexual rights. As explained before, this transition is most unlikely to happen if it is not accompanied by agency.

As a result of the analysis presented above, five principles for research emerged. They were not specific research topics, but rather recommendations about cross-cutting issues and approaches to consider in the design of research projects.

- **Women’s (and/or girls’) access to and control over public resources, and access to health and education services and other public services such as water, sanitation, agricultural extension, state-provided credit,**
Of interest is how decentralisation reforms, in concrete instances, shape gendered access to and control over services and resources for development.

- **Women’s political participation at the local level.** A body of research and documented experience on women’s political participation in LAC decentralized systems already exists, but there is a need for research that considers the conditions and policy impact of such participation. There is also a need for action-oriented research focusing on what is required at the local level in order to facilitate women’s access to office (the right to be elected) in the decentralized context, as well as local policy-making that works to protect and realize women’s rights.

- **Decentralisation and national machineries for women.** What becomes of national agencies, bureaus or ministries for women in decentralisation processes? A related issue is how national gender policies and programmes for the realization and protection of women’s rights fare in decentralized systems: what impact do local priorities have on horizontal equity?

- **Accountability.** *Accountability is claimed to be the most crucial element in successful decentralisation.* At the same time, accountability is considered an essential element for achieving gender justice. Therefore, a crucial issue to explore is the extent to which decentralised services or political structures are accountable to women. It is therefore important to question the gendered nature of accountability mechanisms and processes associated with decentralisation.

- **Rights.** One main critique of rights frameworks is that enforcement poses many challenges. However, a way to exercise active citizenship is moving on from being passive recipients of rights to actually owning and claiming them. Latin America, as many authors suggest, is a region where the language of rights has been widely adopted. However, the truth is that for most people, particularly the most disenfranchised, the language of rights still remains beyond the realm of their everyday lives.
Selecting the coordinating institution required the careful drafting of terms of reference by Colleen Duggan, Federico Burone and Francisco Cos-Montiel. One of the objectives was to have a fair, competitive and transparent process. The following criteria were considered when choosing the Coordinating Institution:

**What were the desired features of the coordinating institution?**

- Was a recognised legal entity capable of entering into contractual arrangements and assuming legal, administrative and financial obligations. The institution should be non-profit-making and have its legal address in one of the LAC countries.
- Provided tangible evidence of its professional excellence and solid academic background in the area in question.
- Had 3 years’ experience of research project and regional initiative administration. In order to strengthen their professional expertise, the institution was allowed to make alliances with external experts or institutions. Please note that the IDRC entered into agreements only with the coordinating institution. It is the responsibility of the coordinating institution to enter into agreements with other participating institutions. Regardless of the number of participating institutions, the coordinating institution remained accountable for the entire value of the IDRC grant.
- Offered a solid accounting-administrative system and the ability to transfer funds and make payments across the whole region.
- Showed commitment to playing a leading role in the promotion of research on decentralisation and women’s rights in the whole LAC region.

**What are the responsibilities and duties of the selected institution:**

- Developing and implementing a plan to publish and disseminate the call including.
- Launching and managing the calling process; answering queries and questions, as well as requests for information, and keeping a record of the proposals received.
- Reviewing the proposals received, dismissing those that do not meet the requirements in the terms of reference of the call, and drawing up a short list for subsequent evaluation by the members of the Selection Committee.
- Leading, in coordination with the IDRC, the process of identifying the external evaluators that shall be members of the Selection Committee.
- Coordinating the sending of proposals and selection directions to the members of the Selection Committee. Collecting and tabling evaluations and sending results to the members of the Committee.
- Organising the Selection Committee meeting.
- Communicating the results of the call to the participants.

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2 Annex 2: Terms of Reference.
- Requesting reviews from the selected proposals, in accordance with the Committee's recommendations.

- Administering the IDRC funds, including the management of the agreements with the selected institutions as well as the drafting and submission of financial reports to the IDRC.

- Giving advice to the different research projects to ensure that they achieve their objectives in time. At the request of the IDRC, sharing the reports on the technical progress of the projects.

- Keeping a constant liaison with the IDRC representative so as to identify needs and provide technical and research support to the selected institutions (methodological support, bibliographical material, etc.).

- Organising, in coordination with the IDRC, a workshop for the exchange of knowledge of gender and decentralisation issues in Southern Africa, South Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. Drafting a document summarising and presenting the workshop's main lessons.

What were IDRC's Responsibilities?

- Providing an "issues paper" that gave intellectual direction to the call.

- Providing the basic terms of reference of the call (themes, research questions, etc).

- Identifying a liaison as a focal point and institutional point of reference with everything related to the calling, selection and monitoring process.

- Participating as a member of the Selection Committee.

- Participating in the Workshop.

- Keeping a constant liaison with FLACSO's representative so as to identify needs and provide technical and research support to the selected institutions (methodological support, bibliographical material, etc.).

Selecting the recipient institution

To select the host institution, an intensive scoping exercise was carried out by the GU’s Latin America based PDA under the guidance of RD Federico Burone and GU Senior Program Specialist Colleen Duggan. Following that, four prestigious institutions from Argentina, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela were shortlisted and invited to present proposals to IDRC. The four institutions presented strong and sound proposals. However, the final decision was reached on the following basis: i) Experience in the relevant topic, ii) capacity to reach potential researchers, iii) proposal description and institutional capacity to conduct it and iv) cost. After a rigorous analysis FLACSO Argentina was selected taking into account the following factors: FLACSO-Argentina has a very high reputation in gender issues across the region. Additionally, has an extensive data base and other information technologies that will enable it to distribute quickly the call for proposals. Finally, this institution has relevant experience in conducting projects and in managing funds from international donors. It is accountable, transparent and honest according to the financial and account information provided.

3 For a complete description of the selection process read Annex 3.
LESSONS LEARNT DURING THE PREPARATION PROCESS

The preparation process takes time and it should be expected to have periods of time that demand an extra amount of work, particularly in finishing the background paper and also in the selection process. Moreover, extra time should be allowed to prepare the PAD and the MGC. In terms of the MGC, it was understandable as it was a new activity and there were many questions from GAD, as this was the first time this outsourcing was done. Working on very tight deadlines is not very realistic because the work depends on many instances. You depend on different people's timings and it is very important to have enough time for the planning and preparation process.

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<tr>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>DATES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation of draft background issues paper</td>
<td>May-July 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission of first draft</td>
<td>end of July</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scoping out Collaborating Institutions in LAC (Competition Administrator)</td>
<td>August</td>
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<tr>
<td>Share TORs of Collaborating Institutions with potential Candidates</td>
<td>August 17-30</td>
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<tr>
<td>GU and IDRC colleagues feedback on first draft of background paper</td>
<td>by August 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follow-up phone interviews with potential collaborating institutions – answer questions, clarify doubts</td>
<td>Aug.30 – Sept.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepare mini-report on interview process and discuss in teleconference with GU Program Specialist (Colleen) and LACRO Director</td>
<td>by Sept.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission of second draft, background paper</td>
<td>by Sept. 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Selection of Collaborating Institution</td>
<td>by Sept. 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation of terms of reference for Call for Proposals</td>
<td>October</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work out contract details for Collaborating Institution (with support from GAD rep in Ottawa and GU Coordinator)</td>
<td>November</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submission of TORs for competition and approval by GU Coordinator/LACRO Director</td>
<td>December</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sign contract with Collaborating Institution and Start-up Competition administration project</td>
<td>January</td>
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<td>Selection of international Jury</td>
<td>January</td>
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<td>Translation of TORs and related competition application documents into Spanish</td>
<td>January</td>
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<tr>
<td>Launch of competition (Collaborating Institution)</td>
<td>January</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline for Submission of proposals</td>
<td>30 March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Selection of shortlist</td>
<td>May 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Selection meeting</td>
<td>Jun 12-13</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Workshop</td>
<td>27-31 August 2006</td>
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WORKING WITH FLACSO

As explained above, this research competition was managed and administered by a partner institution in Latin America, namely, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, FLACSO-Argentina with WRC’s supervision. FLACSO was selected on a fair and competitive basis. Although externally-managed the competition modality was similar to what it was for the Centre-administered small grants competition in Sub Saharan Africa and South Asia on the same theme. Gloria Bonder, coordinator, and Monica Rosenfeld, researcher are in charge of managing the competition.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COLLABORATING INSTITUTION

- Development of dissemination plan for publicizing competition including the compilation of a centralized mail-out list of potential participants
- Launch of the competition on the Gender site of the IDRC web-page and email mailout of 4,000 messages
- Managed the application process, responded to queries and tracked incoming proposals
- Assisted in identifying candidates for the international jury
- Prepared the short list for jury members
- Prepared proposals packages for peer review by the jury
- Mailout short list proposals to jury members
- Final selection of competition awardees by a panel of international experts
- Organized selection committee meeting
- Communication of results to awardees
- Requested revisions to proposals
- Development of contracts with awardees; Sent out and sign contracts
- Monitor project implementation; prepare periodic technical reports for IDRC
WORKING WITH FLACSO: EXPECTED RESULTS

One of the expected outcomes of working with FLACSO is that it is hoped that the competition will foster stronger collaboration between traditional research institutions, academics, and grassroots organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean that are working on decentralization and women’s rights. It is expected that the research competition will further generate a body of research that illustrates how issues of gender, governance and women’s rights are inextricably intertwined. Specifically, the resulting comparative case studies emerging from the competition will illuminate how gender roles, relations and inequalities affect political processes such as decentralization, and vice-versa. Thus, an important aim of the research project is to integrate this type of research into policy at local, national and international levels. The research project further endeavours to fill the gap in cross-regional comparative work on the topic of decentralization and women’s rights through a knowledge sharing workshop that took place in Buenos Aires in August 2006 with the participation of fellow awardees from the SSA and SA competitions.

As a result of the CFP interest in the region on the topic of decentralization and women’s rights has increased, one example is that FLACSO received more than 1000 mails asking for information and requesting consultations on different subjects and topics related to the research competition. The LAC competition received around 85 proposals from all over the region, of which 77 proposals were complete. The 77 proposals are from 17 different countries although unfortunately there were no proposals from the English speaking Caribbean countries.

In terms of the proposals received, some came from larger countries in LAC as well from organizations that have a long tradition working on gender issues. However, other proposals came from a variety of countries, including smaller countries in LAC but also from smaller organizations working on gender issues. Moreover, some of those projects came from rather large and well-known organizations, important in the development field that have never before worked on gender issues. Some of these organizations are working on governance, and policy issues and felt attracted to the topic of decentralization and women’s rights and subsequently submitted a proposal for the competition.

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**Working with FLACSO**

*Lessons learnt during the short-listing process.*

**Lesson 1 – Working closely with the Coordinating Institution**

The first time the competition is outsourced it is important for IDRC’s staff to work closely with the coordinating institution because the institution might not be familiar with IDRC’s standards, rules and practices. As a PDA it was crucial to spend a lot of time with FLACSO to share the expectations of IDRC. It was very useful to be involved in the selection process for the South Asia research competition which provided me with knowledge on what IDRC was expecting from the competition in terms of empirical evidence and conceptual thoroughness. I was able to pass this onto FLACSO, which gave comparability to the competition.

**Lesson 2 - Assessing the proposals**

It was absolutely essential to be part of the shortlisting process as there were moments where it was important to have an IDRC view. For example, some projects had a very strong cultural studies angle and were not well versed in the field of development and although they were conceptually strong FLACSO would have short-listed them.
Lesson 3 – Writing very precise TORs
It is very important to have very thorough terms of reference that specify the roles of IDRC and the coordinating institution because the expectations and visions of both institutions can be different at moments. A major recommendation is that TORs have to be very exhaustive and very clear, specifying IDRC’s responsibilities, involvement and expectations.

A final word goes to the importance of FLACSO’s role as a potential cornerstone for positioning the decentralization and women’s rights agenda in the region. To some extent this has been already done through FLACSO’s efforts to reach a big number of potential participants in the competition via their extensive electronic database. And eventually by sharing some lessons learnt from the International Workshop that took place in August 2006. However, by being the competition’s co-coordinator, FLACSO has a unique opportunity to play an important role in building the capacity for further research and advocacy in the theme in LAC. However, since the theme is also relatively new in their agenda they also need to go through a capacity building process themselves. There are other organizations in the region such as Centro de la Mujer Tristan in Peru that has been doing research in the field for a number of years and has a very high reputation.

Flora Tristan could work in partnership with FLACSO and this could bring two advantages: First, it would provide FLACSO with first hand knowledge on the topic and Second, would help FLACSO to bridge the gap that often exists between academic institutions and grassroots organizations. This would help to bring together knowledge generated in universities and advocacy organizations. Together, they could work towards refining their advocacy activities and eventually claiming their rights. Claiming actual rights, as identified in the background paper, represents the main challenge in the region. In other words, by linking an academic institution with a grassroots organization working in the topic of decentralization it is possible to help women translate legal provisions into rights in the context of decentralizing states in LAC. To complete this virtuous circle, FLACSO would ideally seek to establish a partnership as well with an advocacy organization in the region engaged in constructive policy dialogue research in the region. Fundar in Mexico could be an example. In this case, the knowledge created through an iterative process between Flacso and Flora Tristan could be used both in a downwards direction by women’s groups for their advocacy purposes and in a upwards direction by policymakers. By working in innovative partnerships, partner organizations such as FLACSO would enable IDRC to simultaneously support evidence based research while advancing women’s rights in the region. Realistically, no organization can do this on its own, but for FLACSO it might be possible to boost synergy by supporting different activities that can translate research into social change.
The Women’s Rights and Citizenship (WRC) supported workshop was organised by FLACSO’s Gender, Society and Policy Area. With a participation of over 30, the event provided an opportunity for knowledge sharing on gender and decentralization issues in SSA, SA and LAC. During the workshop, renowned experts from LAC and SA gave technical advice to the winners of the recent LAC and SA competition on Decentralization and Women’s Rights to sharpen research questions and methodologies as well as to identify gaps and policy windows. This support was very welcomed by researchers who found it very useful for their forthcoming research.

The workshop brought together the grant recipients from all three competitions in order to foster South-South knowledge exchanges and the creation of an informal network on gender and decentralisation.

General Objectives:

1. Knowledge sharing on gender and decentralization issues in SSA, SA and LAC.
2. Presentation of research findings from SSA, and early comparative analysis among SSA awardees.
3. Presentation of research proposals from SA and LAC, and sharpening of research questions and methodologies.
4. Identification of research gaps and policy windows by regional or international experts with regards to issues of women’s rights and decentralization.
5. Discussion of ‘next steps’ strategies for the decentralization and women’s rights competition series.

The workshop was jointly planned by FLACSO and the WRC team which provided intellectual guidance while logistical aspects were FLACSO’s responsibility. The workshop aimed at creating a critical mass as well as becoming a fulcrum for networking. One important aspect of the workshop was the role of international and regional experts. There was an expert from each region as well as renowned global authority on the theme. During the workshop, one of the main discussion topics was the best way to use research for advocacy. Additional guests invited to the workshop included individuals from potential partner institutions, including UNIFEM and CIDA.

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4 For a complete report of the workshop see Annex 4.
Countries represented in the workshop
The following section identifies some potential partners and priorities in the region for future programming. They are distributed in the region and do not conflict with research currently funded under the Decentralization and Women’s Rights competition. One notable feature of LAC is that the rights agenda is not seen as a western imposition, on the contrary it has gained ownership within the women’s movement and support from regional conventions on women’s rights such as Belem do Para. At the same time, LACRO has a long tradition supporting gender related projects in the region and ICT4D, RPE, and GGP have integrated a gender angle. The recent launch of the Competition on Decentralization and Women’s Rights has granted greater visibility to the theme. For that reasons this can be an important moment to support further research which can provide important lessons for advancing the Women’s Rights and Citizenship agenda. This could be done through a two pronged strategy: Working with renowned organisations, but also opening the space for new and smaller partnerships. In light of the preceding overview and also based in the paper commissioned on Gender Justice in LAC (Molyneux, 2004) by the former Gender Unit, several areas present themselves as priorities, opening up new fields for future research. This research should encourage the active participation of research advocacy and policy communities, developing a range of disciplinary and inter disciplinary approaches to develop conceptual and empirical work.

- Women’s (and/or girls’) access to social policy and control over social services. It is striking how little work on this area is being carried out on how women are being affected by changes in the social policy regime following the implementation of structural reforms.
- National machineries for women. Very little research has been done on this topic. What becomes of national agencies, bureaus or ministries for women in decentralisation processes? A related issue is how national gender policies and programmes for the realization and protection of women’s rights fare in decentralized systems: what impact do local priorities have on horizontal equity?
- Accountability. Accountability is claimed to be the most crucial element in achieving gender justice. Therefore, a crucial issue to explore is the extent to which services or political structures are accountable to women. It is therefore important to question the gendered nature of accountability mechanisms and processes associated with governance.
- Rights. One main critique of rights frameworks is that enforcement poses many challenges. However, a way to exercise active citizenship is moving from being passive recipients of rights to actually owning and claiming them. Latin America, as many authors suggest, is a region where the language of rights has been widely adopted. However, the truth is that for most people, particularly the most disenfranchised, the language of rights still remains beyond the realm of their everyday lives.
- Access to justice. The complex and often inefficient legal systems in much of Latin America are acknowledged to have placed severe limits on the practice of citizenship, and rights claims are further thwarted as access to the legal system is limited by its opaqueness and expense. Making the legal system open and accessible is seen by legal advocacy campaigners as central to deepening the democratic process, involving both legal professionals at the highest levels of the justice system and forming part of the practice of grassroots organisations through legal literacy programmes and trained ‘para-legals’ who work with low income women.
- Governance. The existing studies of state institutions have not so far explored the complexities of governance understood as political process. Work needs to be done on the ways that state institutions function, how policies are made, how governance is or is not accomplished.
- Legal Pluralism: A fourth area that needs more study is that of the gendered implications of legal pluralism. During the 1990s constitutional reforms in the majority of Latin America countries gave some recognition to indigenous rights.
- Data bases. The region still suffers from a paucity of reliable and comparable data on issues relating to women’s rights.
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<th>Country</th>
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<td>Work, Political Participation and Public Policy</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cem@cem.cl">cem@cem.cl</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.cem.cl">www.cem.cl</a></td>
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<td>Mexico</td>
<td>GIRE - Grupo de Información en Reproducción Elegida</td>
<td>Abortion, Sexual and Reproductive Rights.</td>
<td><a href="mailto:correo@gire.org.mx">correo@gire.org.mx</a></td>
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<td>Mexico</td>
<td>FUNDAR</td>
<td>policy influence</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.fundar.org.mx">www.fundar.org.mx</a></td>
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<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>Coordinación de Mujeres del Paraguay</td>
<td>Feminist movement in Paraguay.</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mujeres_py@yahoo.com">mujeres_py@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>Centro Flora Tristán</td>
<td>Women's Rights, Citizenship, Health Rights, Rural Development Decentralization.</td>
<td><a href="mailto:postmast@flora.org.pe">postmast@flora.org.pe</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.flora.org.pe">www.flora.org.pe</a></td>
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<td>Peru</td>
<td>Manuela Ramos</td>
<td>Right to a life without violence, Economic Rights, Political Rights and Citizenship and Sexual and Reproductive Rights.</td>
<td><a href="mailto:postmast@manuela.org.pe">postmast@manuela.org.pe</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.manuela.org.pe">www.manuela.org.pe</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>Cotidiano Mujer</td>
<td>Human Rights, Economy</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cotidiano@cotidianomujer.org.uy">cotidiano@cotidianomujer.org.uy</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.cotidianomujer.org.uy">www.cotidianomujer.org.uy</a></td>
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OTHER ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA OF WRC

VISITS TO LACRO

On December 14th, LACRO received the visit of Dr Marisa Belausteguigoitia Rius, Director of the Gender Studies Program at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). During the meeting Dr. Belausteguigoitia presented the program and a publication Miradas al futuro: hacia la construcción de sociedades sustentables con equidad de género co financed by IDRC.

On February 2nd LACRO received the visit of Dr Rania Antonopoulos. She is an Associate Professor at Bard College and Research Scholar of the Levy Economics Institute where in 2004-5 she initiated the Planning of the Gender Equality and the Economy program. She specializes in gender and economics, international competition and globalization, and long-run determinants of foreign exchange rates. Antonopoulos has been a consultant for UNDP and since 2002, a co-principal investigator and co-coordinator for the Knowledge Networking and Capacity Building on Gender, Macroeconomics, and International Economics Program (GEM-IWG). Her current research is focused on gender-aware, employer-of-last-resort policies and economic modeling that includes unpaid work. Antonopoulos received a Ph.D. in economics from the New School for Social Research.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY IN LACRO

To contribute to the series of activities to celebrate International Women's Day, our office supported an International panel on Citizenship and Women’s Rights. The event was organized by two women’s groups, in collaboration with the Uruguayan Gender Machinery and took place on Tuesday 14 in Montevideo, Uruguay. The session was opened by the Canadian Ambassador to Uruguay, Ms Patricia Fuller and included the participation of Marta Lamas from Mexico and Michelle Bonner from Canada. Three discussants from Argentinean and Uruguayan women’s group provided the panel with a fulcrum for dialogue and discussion.

CONFERENCES ATTENDED

6TH GEM-IWG International Conference on Engendering Macroeconomics and International Economics
University of Utah, Salt Lake City, June 12-13, 2005

Keynote address: Development with a Gender Perspective: Opportunities and Obstacles
Cecilia LOPEZ, President, Fundación Agenda Colombia, (Former Ambassador to the Netherlands and Former Minister of Planning and Minister of Agriculture, Colombia)

Symposium on "Gender Equality, Tax Policies, and Tax Reform in Comparative Perspective"
The Levy Economics Institute of Bard College May 17-18 2006

The symposium focused on the gender dimensions of tax policy and tax reforms in countries at different levels of development. Topics of interest included:
- gender biases in direct taxation, including biases in individual and joint filing, and the structure of exemptions, deductions, and allowances;
- gender biases in indirect taxation, including VAT and excise or sales taxes;
- impacts of personal income taxation on labor supply, household production, and time use;
- gender issues in tax reform and fiscal decentralization; and
- methodological issues in tax burden and tax incidence analysis from a gender perspective.

7TH GEM-IWG International Conference on Engendering Macroeconomics and International Economics
University of Utah, Salt Lake City, July 2-3, 2006

Keynote address: Valuing Non-Market Work: Macro and Micro Issues
Nancy Folbre, Professor and Chair, Department of Economics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, U.S.A.

Know How Conference and Gender Book Fair
UNAM, Mexico City August 21-25.

This year's Conference topic was "Weaving the Information Society: A multicultural and gender perspective". Today, the role of information and communication services around the world is crucial to ensure that women, women's organizations, public policy makers, researchers and media have access to relevant information. This contributes to the advances and growth of women in the local, regional and international level. During the Book Fair, the Spanish Edition of "Gender Mainstreaming in Poverty Eradication and the Millennium Development Goals" by Naila Kabeer was launched. Additionally, several IDRC co-edited publications on gender and development in Spanish were on display during the fair, getting attention from different participants from LAC.

Conference on Employment Guarantee Policies: Theory and Practice
The Levy Economics Institute of Bard College October 13-14 2006

The focus of this conference was on government policy initiatives that can create a safety net through public service employment for individuals who are ready, willing, and able to work but find themselves in an economic environment that does not offer employment opportunities. In this conference academics and policy analysts presented research findings and exchange views on

- Past and current country-level experiences of employment guarantee programs
- Public service employment and price stability
- Public job creation programs that can substitute for unpaid work disproportionately carried out by women and children
- Feasibility of implementing public service employment programs
- Improving the design and effectiveness of existing programs
- Designing tools useful for policy and impact analysis including time-use surveys and economic modeling
- The effects of public service employment in promoting gender equality and pro-poor growth
For the first time, the organisation and launch of the research competition and the ensuing monitoring process of the selected projects within the framework of the competition was coordinated by an external institution selected through a restricted scouting and interview process. IDRC decided to outsource the competition’s administration to Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO)-Sede Argentina. Although this new modality is expected to allow IDRC’s staff to do a close follow up of the competition without devoting a great proportion of their time to administrative tasks, the truth is that during the first phase close work with the coordinating institution. It is expected that for future competition, the amount of time devoted by IDRC’s staff would be less. It is hoped that the competition will foster stronger collaboration between FLACSO and traditional research institutions, academics, and grassroots organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean that are working on decentralization and women’s rights. The research competition will further generate a body of research that illustrates how issues of gender, governance and women’s rights are inextricably intertwined. Finally, this can be an important moment to support further research which can provide important lessons for advancing the Women’s Rights and Citizenship agenda in the region. This could be done through a two-pronged strategy: Working with renowned organisations, but also opening the space for new and smaller partnerships.
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La Rosa, L. 2004 Descentralización del sistema de salud: una oportunidad para el empoderamiento de las mujeres y la transversalización de la perspectiva de equidad de género. Organización Panamericana de la Salud, Washington, D.C.


Molyneux, M. 2004. 'Gender Justice, Citizenship and Entitlement in Latin America and the Caribbean, Gender Unit commissioned paper, 2004