

DR SILVIA ESPINOSA

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Silvia Espinosa is a Senior Economist with more than 20 years of professional and academic experience in social protection and poverty alleviation in developing countries. She has vast experience in modern programme evaluation and applied microeconomic techniques. She holds a PhD in Economics from University College London. She previously held a position at the World Bank in Washington D.C., and has been involved in numerous projects with academics and government agencies on Latin American and African countries. She has advised in the creation of integrated social protection systems in both Colombia and Morocco, co-authored a reference book on Social Protection in Colombia for the UNDP, and academic papers on social protection in Colombia and Mexico. In recent years, she has also worked on application of high-dimensional quantile regression analysis to the determinants of stunting in Timor-Leste.

Recent Positions

Policy Pulse Institute, UK

2024- Policy Lead
Expert advice on design, monitoring, and evaluation of cash transfer programmes.

Melbourne Institute

2025 Research Consultant
Research on determinants of stunting in Timor-Leste (with Diana Contreras Suárez).

2024 Visiting Scholar. Host: Diana Contreras Suárez
Research on social protection programmes

EU support programme for social protection, Morocco

2023 Social Protection Expert
Expert advice on the design of a national direct cash transfer programme in Morocco

University of Bristol, Department of Economics

2023-2024 Research Consultant
Research on social protection and informality

The World Bank Group, Impact Evaluation Group

2020-2023 Economics Consultant
Impact evaluation of World Bank projects.

University of Melbourne, Department of Economics

2022 Research Consultant
Co-authoring of academic paper on women's empowerment and agricultural productivity.

The World Bank Group, Africa Gender Innovation Lab

2015-2021 Economics Consultant
Economic research on women's bargaining power in Ghana.

2014-2015 Extended Term Economics Consultant, Washington D. C.
Economic research on women's bargaining power in Rwanda.

Education

- 2014 **PhD in Economics**, University College London
Thesis: *“Intended and Unintended Incentives in Social Protection Programmes: Evidence from Colombia and Mexico”*
- Techniques used: Regression Discontinuity Design, Panel Data,
Randomised Control Trial evaluation, Discrete Choice Dynamic Programming.
- Thesis Advisor: Professor Orazio Attanasio
Thesis Examiners: Professor Richard Blundell (UCL)
 Dr Ahu Gemici (Royal Holloway)
- 2008 **MPhil in Economics**, University College London
- 2007 **MSc in Economics**, University College London — Awarded with Distinction
- 2002 **BA Economics**, Universidad de los Andes, Colombia — GPA 4.4/5.0

Research

Current research

1. “Child height-for-age and remoteness in Timor-Leste: A lasso quantile regression analysis”, joint with D. Contreras Suárez. *Submitted*
2. “Household Production Efficiency, Women’s Empowerment and Household Cooperation”, joint with M. Goldstein, K. Jones, T. Koroknay-Palicz, and M. Recalde
3. “Social Protection and Incentives to Labour Informality: A Regression Discontinuity Design applied to Colombia’s Non-Contributory Health Regime” PhD chapter under revision
4. “Incentives to Participation in Conditional Cash Transfer Programmes: A Structural Analysis of Mexico’s Urban Oportunidades” PhD chapter under revision

Book

With Núñez, J. *Pobreza y Protección Social en Colombia* (Poverty and Social Protection in Colombia), UNDP Colombia, ISBN: 9589759653 (2006, in Spanish)

Book chapters

With Rivas, A. and Sánchez, F. “Carrots or Sticks: Factors Associated to the Decrease in Homicide and Crime in Bogota (1993-2002)” *The Costs of Violence* (Las Cuentas de la Violencia), Grupo Editorial Norma, Universidad de los Andes, Facultad de Economía, ISBN 9584503243 (2007, in Spanish)

Other research working papers

- 2014 “Incentives to School Attendance in Conditional Cash Transfer Programmes: an Evaluation of a Pilot for Mexico’s Oportunidades” PhD chapter (joint with O. Attanasio)
- 2005 “Pro-poor Growth and Pro-poor Programs in Colombia”, with J. Núñez, *CEDE Document* No. 2005-42
- 2005 “Social Assistance in Colombia: Diagnosis and Proposals”, with J. Núñez, *CEDE Document* No. 2005-42 (in Spanish)
- 2005 “Neither Rich Always nor Poor Always: Vulnerability in Colombia”, with J. Núñez, *CEDE Document* No. 2005-15 (in Spanish)

- 2005 "Exclusion and Incidence of Social Expenditure", with J. Núñez, *CEDE Document* No. 2005-16 (in Spanish)
- 2005 "Taxes and Tax Reforms in Colombia, 1980-2003", with F. Sánchez, *CEDE Document* No. 2005-11 (in Spanish)

Research Experience and Other Employment

- 2006–2013 **Institute for Fiscal Studies**, London, UK
PhD Scholar, Centre for the Evaluation of Development Economics (EDePo)
- 2001–2005 **Research Center for Economic Development (CEDE)**, Department of Economics, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia
Junior researcher. Director: Professor Fabio Sanchez
- 2005 **National Planning Department (DNP)**, Colombia
Advisor, Mission for the creation of a Strategy for Poverty and Inequality Reduction in Colombia
- 2004 **Ministry of Social Protection**, Colombia
Advisor, Creation of the Social Assistance component of Colombia's Social Protection System
- 2003–2004 **Secretary of the Treasury**, Bogota, Colombia
Creation of public expenditure forecasting models for Bogotá

Honors and Awards

- 2010–2011 Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, University College London
- 2009–2010 Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award, University College London
- 2007–2010 Overseas Research Student Award, University College London
- 2006–2007 WM Gorman Scholarship, University College London

Recent presentations

- 2024 Australasian Development Conference, University of Melbourne; Brown Bag Seminar, Melbourne Institute.

Teaching Experience

- 2013 Undergraduate Microeconometrics, University College London, teaching fellow for Professor Aureo de Paula
- 2010 Graduate Econometrics, University College London, teaching fellow for Dr. Walter Beckert
Undergraduate Microeconomics, University College London, teaching fellow for Dr. Donald Verry
- 2009 Graduate Econometrics, University College London, teaching fellow for Dr. Karthik Kalyanaraman and Dr. Raffaella Giacomini
- 2003 Colombian Economic History, Universidad de los Andes (Colombia), teaching fellow for Professor Fabio Sanchez
- 2002 Undergraduate Macroeconomics, Universidad de los Andes (Colombia), teaching fellow for Dr. Leonardo Villar