2014 PEP International Conference:
Inclusive Growth and Employment for Poverty Reduction

Concept Note

From April 30 to May 8, 2014, will be held in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, the 11th edition of the PEP annual conference and general meetings, where approximately 150 participants – development researchers and practitioners, eminent scholars, representatives of various donor/international organizations and policy makers/stakeholders – will gather to discuss a variety of research and policy issues under the broad theme of inclusive growth and employment in developing countries.

The event will be hosted and organized in collaboration with the Institute for Advanced Development Studies (INESAD - Instituto de Estudios Avanzados en Desarrollo), based in Bolivia, with funding from the UK Department for International Development (DFID, or UK Aid) and Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

Objectives:

• Review of research evidence on specific policy issues related to growth and employment in developing countries
• Training and building capacity of developing country researchers for policy analysis and engagement
• Policy dialogue and communication to catalyze research-policy action agendas
• Enhance opportunities for global collaboration and networking, amongst researchers and practitioners, to generate evidence and support policy implementation.

Tentative program:

April 30 – May 3  Technical training and communication workshops
May 4  City tour
May 5-6  Review of research evidence on growth and employment
Presentation of research results from ongoing PAGE projects
Presentation of finalist proposals for the 2nd round PAGE funding
May 7  Policy conference/dialogue:
“Fostering entrepreneurship for inclusive growth and poverty reduction”
May 8  Networking and funding opportunities for new researchers
Individual meetings between PEP grantees and resource persons
May 8-9  PEP Management and Board meetings
Context: the PAGE program

This year’s event occurs at the heart of the current PEP research and capacity building program initiative for “Policy Analysis on Growth and Employment” (PAGE ¹) in developing countries, co-funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID, or UK Aid) and Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

In the context of this initiative, PEP is supporting a series of projects led by local research teams in developing countries (with priority given to low-income countries, fragile and/or conflict states), selected through competitive calls for proposals. A total of 25 projects were selected for support under the first PAGE funding round, following a call launched in September 2012 and the presentation of finalist proposals during last year’s PEP general meeting – held in South Africa (May 2-10, 2013). The second PAGE call for proposals, launched in October 2013, is now closed and submissions are currently under evaluation.

On the one hand, the 2014 PEP meeting will allow for those new applicant project teams shortlisted as finalists from the 2013 competition to present their proposals (before final selection); while on the other hand, several of the teams supported under the first PAGE round will be presenting their final research reports and outcomes (before publication).

In both cases, these presentations (May 5-6, 2014) will be discussed and commented in length with their peers, as well as with/by PEP resource persons and evaluators (international lead experts in the relevant research methods and themes).

Technical training and capacity building

As the core mission of PEP is to enhance capacity for development policy analysis in developing countries, the PEP annual conference (as part of the PEP manifold support/grant program) also comprises an important training component – primarily targeting researchers from developing and low income countries.

First, participating researchers from developing and low-income countries are provided an intensive training workshop (April 30 to May 3) in the relevant methodologies to be applied in selected research areas². For 2014, this will be related to analysis of policies for growth and employment – in reference to the PAGE program. Second, the same participants are also required to participate in a special workshop (May 3) to enhance their research communication and policy advocacy skills, for better policy engagement and impact based on scientific evidence.

Finally, all attending researchers (applicant and grantees) benefit not only from peer-review (through the group presentations, as described above) but also from the personal and customized mentoring by international leading experts, through individual meetings with PEP’s global resource persons with distinguished expertise in selected areas (May 8).

¹ Find out more about the PAGE program here: http://www.pep-net.org/themes/page/
² Find out more about these methods (PEP toolbox and research programs) here: http://www.pep-net.org/programs/
**Review of research evidence**

During the sessions of May 5-6, researchers from dozens of different countries will be presenting and discussing findings from ongoing projects related to policies on growth and employment, offering a unique opportunity in terms of international peer-reviewing experience for developing country participants. Discussion of these technical papers, along with the presentation of new project proposals, will also lead to an intense review of research evidence and knowledge gaps in relation to the identified priority issues for policy analysis under the PAGE program.

Those priority issues, listed below, were identified by an international group of policy experts, in the context of the two first PAGE calls for proposals, as especially relevant to address specific knowledge gaps and policy needs in terms of evidence base:

- Providing social protection to the informal sector
- Safety net complementarities
- Youth employment and entrepreneurship
- Employment intensity of non-agricultural growth
- China’s growth: opportunities and challenges for developing countries
- Entrepreneurial risk tolerance by gender
- Discrimination in credit access for women at the SME level

**Policy dialogue**

The gathering of such a variety of stakeholders is also the occasion to discuss the policy relevance and implications of PEP related research, through “thematically-focused” sessions, in order to define and support the research-policy action agenda.

In the context of the 2014 conference, on May 7, PEP is planning a special kind of policy dialogue on the specific theme of:

*“Fostering entrepreneurship for inclusive growth and poverty reduction”*

Whilst most national development or poverty reduction strategies now include the objective of increasing entrepreneurship amongst the poor, there is substantial heterogeneity in the types and aims of interventions (policies or programs) designed and implemented to achieve this objective.

The last few years have seen rapid growth in the amount of research and number of evaluations of these interventions in developing countries, but most analyses focus on specific dimensions or types of interventions, and thus tend to provide a “disaggregated” view on the matter.
Defining what subset of interventions is best for what kind of individuals and firms, and in what contexts, has been more elusive, as well as what kind of impacts to expect depending on firm size.

With this special event, PEP aims to gather different stakeholders engaged in initiatives involving the promotion of entrepreneurship as a strategy for poverty reduction and inclusive growth, to reflect and draw some important lessons through sharing of experience, evidence, policy and practice.

Hosted by a facilitator, this forum will feature a series of panels, involving 7-8 distinguished participants - experts, practitioners, donors and policymakers - who will invited to discuss a variety of key issues on the theme, based on different experience and perspectives.

Questions/interventions from the audience will be welcome during each session and, as they are to be documented (video-recorded) – to be made available and publicized as part of the PEP video series - efforts will also be made to produce a “live webcast” to connect the event with an external audience online.

Finally, the main lessons and recommendations drawn from this dialogue will be compiled, published and publicized by PEP for wider impact. PEP and its partners will reach out widely to communicate these outcomes using various means, including the circulation of related videos, policy briefs, newsletter (over 9500 recipients) and relays through social network pages.

Enhance opportunities for global collaboration and networking

In all its dimensions and component activities, the PEP annual conferences provide a unique international networking experience, and opportunity to share/compare knowledge and experience, amongst development researchers and practitioners from all around the world.

Historically, PEP annual conferences bring 150 to 200 participants, from 35 to 50 different countries - mostly from developing regions, but also from developed countries. These meetings thus lead to substantial knowledge transfers (South-South, North-South, and South-North), as well as greater coordination and/or collaborations between various institutions/stakeholders and initiatives worldwide.

In addition, as they are organized in the context of ongoing funded programs, PEP also leverages its annual conferences to nurture new ideas and identify young scientists who can be mentored and/or assisted through its manifold support program.

Beyond scientific qualifications, PEP competitions tend to favour the inclusion of women and young scholars, as well as those from low-income countries. Their participation in PEP conference and research activities will contribute to creating and building a growing pool of locally-based male and female researchers, to nourish and influence current and future debates related to economic policy, poverty, gender, inequality and sustainable development.
## Contacts

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