

The Slawson Award

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Geographical
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Advancing geography
and geographical learning

Emmeline Skinner

Education

- BA Hons in Spanish and French at St Catherine's College, Oxford University
- MPhil in Latin American Politics and Economics at St Antony's College, Oxford University
- PhD in Human Geography at University College London (awaiting viva at end of Nov 2006)

Current position

Social Development Adviser in the Research and Evidence Division of the Department for International Development (DFID), London



Slawson Award

Emmeline received the Slawson Award in 2003 for her work entitled *Older people, Poverty and Social Livelihood Strategies in Latin America*. The proportion of older people in Latin America is estimated to treble from 7.9% to 22.6% by 2050, raising concern not just because of its demographic impact, but also because of Latin America's negative context of economic underdevelopment with persistent levels of poverty and inequality to which older people are particularly vulnerable. Co-funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and HelpAge International (HAI), this research aimed to contribute to greater understanding of older people's livelihood strategies in Latin America.

It involved a year's fieldwork in three contrasting urban zones of La Paz, where 600 household surveys, 16 focus groups and more than 40 semi-structured interviews with older people and their family members were conducted. The research examined whether older people's contributions to household and family are reciprocated with care and support, analysing the informal livelihood strategies they use in relation to the household, community, labour market and wider political environment. It examined the multiple survival strategies used by older people and analyses the factors affecting their access to different assets.

Since the Slawson Award

After completing her overseas fieldwork in Bolivia in 2004, Emmeline returned to London where she finished writing up her PhD and eventually submitted her thesis in August 2006. During this period of time she presented the results of her research at international conferences in Bolivia, Argentina, Sweden, Spain and the UK, as well as in seminar series in the universities of Oxford, London and Seville and workshops at HelpAge International (HAI). In November 2005 she was awarded a DFID-sponsored scholarship to present her work at the Development Studies Association Conference at the Open University. In June 2006 she was given the Han Emanuel Award to present a paper at a conference on 'social protection in an ageing world' in Sigtuna, Sweden, organised by the Foundation For International Studies On Social Security (FISS) and will have her work published in a book they are currently producing. She has also published a chapter in a recent book on non-contributory pensions, co-authored an article for a peer-reviewed journal and provided input for a number of HAI policy papers and publications.

The experience gained and skills learned through her overseas fieldwork have also enabled Emmeline to become involved with other international research programmes and she is currently co-investigator in a research project looking at migration and older people in Spain and is also a visiting researcher at the Oxford Institute of Ageing (OIA) in the University of Oxford.

In September 2006, Emmeline began working with the Department for International Development (DFID) as a Social Development Adviser in their Policy and Research Division. After several years in the Equity and Rights Team, where she continued to pursue her interest in issues around social exclusion, older people and social protection, she is now moving to work in the Research and Evidence Division. She has also maintained her academic ties and has been lecturing on international development and climate change at the University of Oxford.