QUALITY IN ECONOMIC POLICY RESEARCH
The Case of Paraguay

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THE CONTEXT

Education in Paraguay

1. Primary and secondary school: quantitative progress not matched by higher quality education.

2. Tertiary education: dramatic increase in number of universities but without quality control on programs and teaching.

3. No research tradition in universities. Graduation of professionals without critical thinking.
THE LIMITS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN PARAGUAY

1. Increasing number of institutions that offer higher education attracting students and professors in higher quantity.

2. Few professionals with Ph.D or M.A. degrees and few graduate programs offered

3. “Taxi Professors”: low payment, many courses, many universities

4. Careers supplied do not match needs of the country

5. Social Sciences: without tradition of research in universities.
THE PATH TO RESEARCH IN ECONOMICS

- Professional opinions in the mass media
- Advising Committees at the National Congress
- Organizing meetings between policy makers and private sector leaders
- Producing materials on relevant economic issues for different social, economic and political actors.
- Connecting with foreign research institutions and professionals
- Elaboration of Research Projects to be presented to international foundations
- Defining areas of expertise
MAKING THE DIFFERENCE

• The practice of peer reviews between CADEP members and professionals of other institutions in the country.

• Elaborating papers for foreign think tanks and participating in international conferences and workshops: early networking

• Pioneering work: selecting research subjects on the Paraguayan economy

• Pioneering work: introducing new issues for research and debate

• Creativity for data collection and data processing
BUILDING RESEARCH CAPACITY

- Founding members educated in the United States and Europe
- Gathering other local well educated professionals for joint research projects.
- Inviting professionals from other countries for comparatives studies on common relevant economic subjects.
- Partnership with scholars that research on Paraguay at foreign universities.
- Research learning from participating in different academic networks.
BUILDING RESEARCH CAPACITY (cont...)

- Training university students as junior researchers: concepts and methods for Applied Economics.
- Improving capacity of junior researchers through assistantship to visiting scholars.
- Fostering junior researchers for graduate studies abroad
CONCLUSION

OVERCOMING HURDLES FOR RESEARCH:

• Lack of qualified human resources
• Poor quality and availability of data and sources of information
• Absence of a network for academic debate on economic policies.

CONTRIBUTIONS

• Filling the space of research in Economics in the country.
• New approaches to relevant issues of the Paraguayan economy.
• Improving the level of discussions of economic policies
Thank you!

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