Should Think Tanks do Policy Implementation in Developing Countries? Lessons from Argentina

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Abstract

We argue that there is a key role for think tanks dedicated to policy implementation in developing countries. In particular, there is a bridge between research centers and policymakers that is not always crossed effectively. Furthermore, many good ideas fail to become policy due to lack of dedication to implementation by traditional think tanks. Thus, a think tank dedicated to articulating the efforts of research centers and working directly with policymakers can make substantial contributions to development. We discuss the literature on NGOs and think tanks, and describe the current situation of think tanks in Argentina, showing that there is a niche for think tanks as described above. Finally, we present a case study that shows how these ideas work in practice.

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1) Introduction

Civil society in Argentina, and non-profit organizations in particular, have expanded rapidly in Argentina since the return of democracy in 1983. The military dictatorship of 1976-1983 systematically suppressed political and civil liberties, and thus thwarted the development of these organizations.

In the past two decades, new organizations of various sorts, ranging from political parties, local and international ecological organizations, human rights groups, private universities, faith-based organizations, research centers and think tanks have emerged and flourished.

In this paper we concentrate on organizations oriented to influencing policy decisions, in particular think tanks and advocacy groups. We show that these organizations play a relevant role in Argentine policymaking. However, we argue that there is a type of organization that is not present in Argentina: policy implementation think-tanks. Furthermore, we argue that institutions of this kind could have a very positive impact on the policymaking process. We present a case study from San Luis province in Argentina that helps illustrate this point. We place this discussion in the context of the literature on classifying NGOs and think-tanks, and argue that policy implementation think tanks represent an interesting and relevant category.

What do we mean by a policy implementation think tank? Basically, a think tank that is involved in micro policy formulation, and that actively lobbies the different levels of government to promote the implementation of these policies. Furthermore, this type of organization works as a “bridging organization” in that it brings together the work of research-oriented think tanks and bridges the gap with policymakers. We argue that this type of organization is especially useful in developing countries, in which State capacity – especially at the local level – is lower, and bureaucrats are less willing or able to implement the ideas put forth by research institutions. In Section 4 we further elaborate on this concept.

The paper is organized as follows. In Section 2 we discuss the literature that classifies NGOs and apply this classification to think tanks. In Section 3 we present a road map of think tanks and advocacy groups in Argentina. In Section 4 we define the concept of policy implementation think tank, and argue that it could play an important role in developing country policymaking. In Section 5 we present a case study that illustrates our points, and Section 6 concludes.

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2 See Brown (1991)
2) Related Literature: Classification of NGOs

NGOs are increasingly important throughout the world as providers of aid for those in need, as a solution to market failures and as providers to services to governments and individuals, among others. In fact, some economists argue that the difference between for profit and non-profit enterprises is merely formal, and that even in the absence of tax benefits, a large amount of donations would flow to non-profits. (see Glaeser and Schleifer (1998)).

The literature on NGOs and how to classify them is extensive and complex. The multiplicity of cross-country, regional and local experiences is tantalizing. A recent article by Vakil (1997) makes a brave effort at defining a typology of NGOs, and we draw from it heavily in this section to discuss the different types of organizations as a theoretical introduction to our analysis of Argentine think tanks and advocacy groups.

Vakil discusses this literature (see for example Salamon and Anheier (1992), Brown (1991), Wolch (1990)) and concludes that certain important elements emerge from previous studies. In particular, to properly classify NGOs, it is important to know their

- **Orientation**: What type of activities does the organization pursue? (advocacy, research, education, etc)
- **Level of operation**: Is the organization international, national, regional or local?
- **Client group**: Who are the beneficiaries of the organization’s activities? Who purchases the goods and services it provides? To who is the organization accountable?
- **Degree of commodification**: To what extent does the organization charge for the goods and services it provides?
- **Sector of operation**: In what “market” does the organization operate? For example, does it compete with businesses in providing services to the State or does it provide goods and services to disadvantaged groups?

With this in mind, Vakil goes on to argue that a simple yet clear and comprehensive classification should define two “essential descriptors” of NGOs: Orientation and Level of Operation. Then, depending on the issues under discussion, two more “contingent descriptors” could be added, namely, Sectoral Focus and Evaluative Attributes.

Within this framework, think-tanks can be defined as having an orientation mainly towards policy research and advocacy. Furthermore, Argentine think-tanks are mostly of a national level of operation. Their client group varies, but is mainly composed of the State, private donors, international organizations and interest groups that finance research. Many think tanks also find it necessary to sell services such as monthly economic reports as a way to finance their operations. In the next section we attempt a classification of think tanks in Argentina.
3) Map of think tanks in Argentina

As we have mentioned before, the number of non-profit organizations in Argentina skyrocketed during the 1980s, as it did in many other Latin American countries, following the transition from an authoritarian to a democratic political system that took place during that decade. Years of military regimes weakened the fabric of civil society and made it difficult for groups of volunteers to associate to form civic organizations, particularly to organize around political or policy issues. With the return to democracy in 1983, it was possible for Argentines to start organizing and giving shape to a new third sector again, although the roots of civil organization go back to 1853, when the drafting of the Argentine Constitution first recognized the right of citizens “to form associations for useful purposes.” This right to associate in voluntary organizations was ratified and its importance highlighted in the revised Constitutional text of 1994. Today, with over 36 million inhabitants, Argentina has approximately 5000 organizations that fall under the NGO category. Over 80% of these have been created in the past fifteen years, with a dramatic increase in the number and resources of nonprofit organizations throughout the 1990s.

Nonprofit public policy research or advocacy organizations came into existence in this period of time, particularly as the policy role of political parties and government agencies lagged behind the demands imposed by the significant transformation of Argentina’s economy during the last decade. This void was filled by organizations similar to those described below, all aiming to induce policy makers to take their positions into account and thus affect the decision making processes at different levels of government. Some focus on specific issues (environment, responsible citizenship, transparency, etc.), while others have broader agendas of economic and political reform. What they all have in common is their intent to bridge the gap between the demands of certain groups of civil society and the work of policy makers.

Paradoxically, think tanks act both in partnership and as a counterbalance to government agencies. In many cases they complement and build on the work of public organizations (particularly in the delivery of social services), while other times they act as watchdogs and alternative sources of policy initiatives to the actions of governments. Using words from the Freedom House Regional Think Tank Initiative:

“As alternative sources of information, research, and expert opinion, public policy institutes, or think tanks, provide a critical balance to governmental authority. Unencumbered by political obligations and driven by core values and principles, think tanks act as independent forums for debate and sources of innovative ideas and recommendations. Their presence is critical for ensuring continued democratic and free market development in the emerging democracies.” Freedom House (1999)

In Argentina, research and advocacy organizations have alternated in these roles and changed their approaches and focus as the country underwent significant economic and political transformations during the last decade. In order to understand the current map of

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think tanks in Argentina, the following summary, which provides a brief review of some of the country’s leading organizations involved in public policy, might be useful:

- **Asociación Conciencia** was founded in 1982, as Argentina began its return to democracy, by a group of 20 women whose objective was to foster democratic and republican values and promote responsible citizenship. Conciencia engages mostly in issue campaigning in favor of democratic institutions and policies upholding republican governance. They currently work in 14 provinces and have 31 offices throughout the country.

- **Fundación Poder Ciudadano** was established in 1988 with the purpose of promoting civic participation and empowerment in five key areas: corruption control, citizen security, political representation and monitoring, democratization of justice, and education for civic engagement. They are very active in policy forums on topics of transparency and democratic accountability.

- **Grupo Sophia**, founded in 1995, brings together a group of young leaders with a vocation for public service, who share the objective of creating and developing an adequate environment in which members of the group can advance projects, ideas and proposals contributing to the improvement of government and governance in Argentina. The group finances and develops a wide variety of projects related to public policy and public affairs working in conjunction with academia, the private sector and government.

- **CEDI** is the research branch of Fundación Gobierno y Sociedad, established in 1997, by bringing together the leading public and private universities for rigorous analysis of core issues related to Argentina’s institutional development. CEDI’s focus is on “second generation reforms” through interdisciplinary work by top level researchers in economics, law and political science concentrating on fiscal and political institutional reforms.

- **The Foundation for Latin American Economic Research (FIEL)**, established in 1964, is devoted to applied economic research, with particular regard to the economic problems of Argentina and Latin America. The widespread circulation of F.I.E.L. studies seeks to contribute to the improvement of economic policy discussions in Argentina and provide an objective framework for decision making at macroeconomic and entrepreneurial levels.

- **The Instituto de Estudios sobre la Realidad Argentina y Latinoamericana (IERAL)**, created in 1977 by Fundación Mediterránea, is dedicated to the study and debate of economic, social and institutional problems of Argentina and Latin America. It aims at furthering the cause of free markets and social progress. As a center of research in applied economics and government, all of IERAL’s work translates into diagnoses and policy reform proposals. Almost all members of IERAL have had actual government experience at some point in time, whether at the national, provincial or local levels.
The Center for the Implementation of Public Policies promoting Equity and Growth (CIPPEC), was founded this year by an interdisciplinary group of experts whose objective is to inform and shape policies in the fields of education, health care, budgeting and public sector reform, improving the quality of decisions made at the different levels of government. To this avail, CIPPEC works closely and across party lines, with leaders in academia, business, media, and social and political environments building action oriented coalitions that aim to improve the outcomes of government action. Key elements in achieving CIPPEC’s objectives include understanding and influencing government decision-making processes; designing and implementing effective executive, legislative and judicial strategies; coordinating grassroots support programs; drafting and analyzing policy proposals; and monitoring regulatory, administrative and legislative initiatives.

In Figure 1, we classify the main Argentine think tanks along the orientation and level of action axes. In the vertical axis we classify think tanks with respect to how much of their resources are allocated to conducting research or engaging in the implementation of projects and policies. In the horizontal axis, we classify them with respect to the extent to which their focus is on national or regional policymaking.

Figure 1: Classification of Argentine Think Tanks

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<th>Implementation oriented</th>
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<td>Conciencia</td>
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4) What is special about a policy implementation think tank?

Think tanks are generally considered to be organizations that attempt to influence policy by producing good ideas applied to policy problems through high quality research, and then trying to convince policymakers to implement these ideas. In a recent article on think tanks, William Dunn argued that

“One of the main functions of think tanks is to conduct policy analyses which offer creative, insightful and even counterintuitive solutions for complex problems of great public importance. Nevertheless, think tanks are unlikely to earn a reputation for excellence unless they concentrate on alternative solutions to a problem – rather than the supposed certainty that a single policy will solve that problem – and judiciously employ a strategy of multiple advocacy in reaching policy recommendations. Think tanks must develop specific strategies of contingent policy communication to guide the preparation of policy documents and oral briefings. After all, the mission of think tanks is to improve public policy by maximizing the likelihood that policy analyses will be used to solve real-world problems.” Dunn (1996), p. 1.

In this section we argue that think tanks that invest resources in actual micro policy formulation and implementation – especially in developing countries – have a higher likelihood of influencing policy, and can become relevant and positive actors in policymaking. We call these organizations policy implementation think tanks.

We have seen that the main think tanks and advocacy groups in Argentina play an important role in the formulation of policy and in increasing public awareness on certain policy issues such as the importance of civic participation, corruption and the environment, among others. However, the third sector can be an even more active participant in the policy process. In particular, a policy implementation think tank could contribute to improving the quality of policies pursued and the effectiveness with which they are implemented, especially at the provincial and municipal level.

We define a policy implementation think tank as a think tank that is involved in micro policy formulation, and that actively lobbies the different levels of government to promote the implementation of these policies. This type of organization also attempts to bridge the gap between research and policymaking that exists especially in developing countries. In these countries, State capacity – especially at the local level – is lower than in developed countries, and bureaucrats are less willing or able to implement the ideas put forth by research institutions. This means that the caveat often placed on developed country think tanks regarding not getting involved with actual policy implementation is counterbalanced by the added benefit of doing so. In terms of Figure 1, a policy implementation think tank would be in the upper-right quadrant.

A policy implementation think tank is different to a typical think tank in that its emphasis is not in producing and publicizing research (although it does produce research when necessary to complement the ideas of other think tanks and researchers). Rather, the resources of the organization are devoted to helping different levels of government implement better policies. This can be done in two ways: either by providing technical
assistance and consulting services or by conducting advocacy campaigns to mobilize voters for a cause, so as to give incentives to politicians to implement the desired changes.

The relevant question now is whether such an organization can play a relevant and positive role in developing country policymaking. We argue that it can. In addition to the traditional contributions made by think tanks, it can:

1) **Articulate the efforts of domestic and international think tanks and research centers, bringing the best ideas to the hands of policymakers.** This is relevant in developing countries, because many times the bureaucracy lacks the political motivation or the ability to understand and implement the recommendations of think tanks. Thus, an organization that concentrates on working with the different levels of government, providing technical assistance and consulting services can contribute to overcoming these difficulties.

2) **Contribute much needed human capital at the local level of government.** In many developing countries, there are simply not enough qualified human resources to fill the necessary positions in each province or municipality. Thus, a think tank that works on policy implementation at the local level of government can take advantage of economies of scale arising from the replication of projects in different regions.

3) **Help reform-minded policymakers implement their programs more effectively.** In many cases, honest, competent politicians are elected to local office. If these politicians are successful in implementing a reform agenda, and are recognized by their electorate, the national press, etc, this can generate a demonstration effect across jurisdictions, improving policymaking throughout the country.

We believe that the synergies between the different activities give this type of organization the potential of becoming a role model for think tanks throughout the region.

Traditional think tanks are not suited for this purpose, because their resources are mostly dedicated to research and publication. Thus, however high the level of their academic production, their ideas many times never reach the relevant policymaker, or are not implemented due to a lack of political will, technical expertise or voter pressure.

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4 Notice that these two activities also help us distinguish a policy implementation think tank from a regular advocacy group. These organizations usually are more single-issue groups, and most of them do not work directly with governments (e.g. Greenpeace).
5) What role can a Policy Implementation Think Tank play in a Developing Country? A case study from Argentina

In this section we will discuss how a policy implementation think tank can be a key factor in facilitating the introduction of innovative policies. We will do this by analyzing the implementation of charter schools in the province of San Luis, Argentina. First, we will provide some data related to the Argentine and San Luis systems of education. Then, we will explain some characteristics of the San Luis charter schools, summarizing the advantages that working from an independent think tank implied for the implementation of the project.

Argentina has 30,000 schools of primary and secondary education. Attendance rates are relatively high for primary education, with a national average of 94%, varying from more than 99% in the city of Buenos Aires, to less than 90% in the poor province of Chaco. Rates are lower for secondary education, though the numbers are rising since eighth and ninth grades were made compulsory in the last few years. The 23 provinces and the autonomous city of Buenos Aires manage public schools, and regulate the system of private schools, to which 25% of the country’s students attend. Provinces vary greatly in size, ranging from Buenos Aires province, which with its 16,000 schools is the biggest school system in South America, to the small province of Tierra del Fuego, with only 48 schools. In some provinces, a large share of students attend private schools (50% in the case of the city of Buenos Aires), while in others this share is almost insignificant.

Although the federal constitution establishes that the provinces are responsible for the provision of educational services, the federal government was allowed to create public schools outside the boundaries of federal territories in 1905. By the 1950s, most secondary schools and many primary schools were run by the national Ministry of Education. During the last years of that decade, a timid attempt at decentralization started. That process accelerated in 1978, when the military dictatorship transferred all primary schools to the provinces. The final step toward decentralization was taken in 1991. With the passing of law 24.049, Congress decided to transfer the rest of the schools to the local authorities. This measure implied a deep change for the role of the national ministry: it became a “ministry without schools”.

In 1993, a new Federal Law of Education was passed, substituting the old law from 1882. Among other major reforms, the law provided a legal framework for the role of the national Ministry of Education, leaving it with five explicit responsibilities:

1) Coordinating the policies of the 24 sub-national governments;
2) Establishing the basic contents of primary, secondary and teachers’ education;
3) Promoting the improvement of the educational system of the poorest provinces;
4) Evaluating student, teacher and school performance all over the country; and
5) Creating an information system to improve the design of educational policies.

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5 Antonio Cicioni, one of the authors of this paper, was coordinator of the charter schools project in San Luis, as part of the team of Fundación Gobierno y Sociedad, hired by the province in 1999.
6 The first two objectives are mainly the responsibility of the Federal Council of Culture and Education, where the 24 provincial ministers work in coordination with the national ministry and a representative from
The new Federal Law consolidated a new institutional arrangement for education, and implied that the provinces had become the main actors in defining and implementing policies for basic education. This meant a difficult challenge for most provinces, given that historically they had not considered education as their exclusive responsibility. The national ministry was often used as a scapegoat when problems arose. Under the new rules, they found themselves virtually alone in facing the many and complicated interests that the different stakeholders have in shaping educational policy. Furthermore, the economic stability that Argentina experienced following the introduction of a Currency Board in 1991 made rational planning of government actions feasible again. In particular, this allows a clear discussion of the allocation of public resources. Finally, the traditionally weak State capacity of provincial governments was seriously challenged by the incorporation of hundreds of new schools, complicating the situation of their long neglected bureaucracies even more.

A few years after the conclusion of the decentralization process, it is clear that some provinces are adjusting better than others to the new situation. This is naturally related in part to exogenous variables, like the percentage of schools transferred, or the fiscal situation of the provincial government. However, and although serious research has not been done yet, it is clear for those involved in educational policy that some provinces have shown themselves much more willing to innovate than others in the always sensitive area of education. The small province of San Luis is probably the best example among the innovators.

San Luis is situated close to the geographic center of Argentina. With only 350,000 inhabitants, it has one of the smallest educational systems of the country. The ministry manages 380 schools, and there are about 20 private schools. At least one third of public institutions are very small rural schools with up to three teachers. San Luis also has a particular political situation. Since the return of democracy to Argentina, in 1983, the same governor, Adolfo Rodríguez Saá, has been reelected four times. He is currently serving his fifth period, a unique case in modern Argentina. Thanks to a federal tax incentive program that favors the location of industries in San Luis, the province has grown impressively since 1983. It currently has the third highest GDP per capita among Argentine provinces, and has invested strongly in infrastructure, thus reverting an image of being a backward province.

Despite political stability, educational policy has been very unstable in San Luis. The government has made several attempts at implementing major systemic changes since 1983. For example, it passed a provincial law of education, created and then eliminated a ministry of education, organized a congress of educators to discuss and agree on a provincial educational policy, and created new administrative regions, among others. These efforts could not avoid permanent conflict with teachers’ unions, however, and Education Ministers lasted on average less than two years. Furthermore, when a national standardized test was taken for the first time in 1994, it showed that the performance of the national universities. This council, according to the Federal Law, is responsible for the implementation of the new law. The national ministry is also responsible for regulating the higher education system.
San Luis schools was dismal. The same happened with the second evaluation, taken in 1995. Once again, the governor sacked the Minister, and offered the position to Héctor Torino, a young politician from a small town of the interior of the province. Torino has proved himself capable of attaining what seemed impossible: surviving as a Minister. He has been in charge for four years now and has been able to implement reforms which are unique in Argentina.

In November 1998, Antonio Cicioni, while working for Fundación Gobierno y Sociedad, visited San Luis in order to study the impact of the reforms made to the regulations for becoming a school principal or a system supervisor. As in the rest of Argentina, the procedures to attain those positions were heavily regulated. San Luis eliminated the old rules, and allowed a new influx of educators into public schools. While interviewing the minister, he offered us to integrate his managing team at the ministry. We responded by offering him to implement charter schools in San Luis. Although Torino did not know about the charter schools movement in the United States, he was acquainted with independent schools in Britain. He listened attentively to our proposal, which included the hiring of Fundación Gobierno y Sociedad to implement the project, and finally he accepted. The next step was to convince governor Rodríguez Saá, which we did at a special meeting at the foundation’s office in Buenos Aires. A team of five moved to San Luis in February 1999, staying until January 2000. By then, the first five charter schools of Argentina had opened their doors, with more than 2000 students registered (which represent more than 2% of the total number of students in San Luis), and more than 200 educators hired.

Charter schools are self-managed schools funded by the government. They are public schools, so they are not allowed to discriminate their student population in any way, and they cannot charge students any kind of fee. Funds are given monthly to the non-for-profit corporations (“educational associations”) that run the schools, according to the quantity of students they have. The per-student allocation varies according to the location of the school, and the type and level of education. In the case of San Luis, the educational associations are chosen through a competition organized by the ministry. An independent committee chooses the best projects and the government signs with them a five-year contract, which can be extended if the school proves it has been able to improve the quality of education. Charter schools can be promoted for a number of reasons. In the case of San Luis, the idea was to create better schools without spending more money than what state-run public school cost. If charters are well implemented, it is possible to offer to those who cannot afford an expensive private education a better, mission-focused school. In summary, an effective charter school program can create effective schools where the government usually fails to do so.

In order to implement an effective charter schools program, it is necessary to be able to guarantee at least four elements during the process. First, the legislation that allows the creation of charter schools must be adequate, since small differences in the regulations
can imply big differences in the policy outcome. Second, it is essential to be able to select the winning projects based exclusively on merit criteria. Third, it is important to give the interested educators assistance on how to create a charter school, particularly for those who have not been involved in the creation of a privately-run school before. Finally, it is fundamental to establish an effective auditing system once the schools exist, especially regarding the administration of public funds.

The hiring of an independent think tank was essential, in the case of the San Luis charter schools program, to guarantee the correct implementation of these four elements. Fundacion Gobierno y Sociedad (FGS) was an external organization. However, the team from FGS that went to San Luis worked with very close ties to the Education Minister in the implementation of the project. In some situations, the team “used” its independence as a way to effectively push the agenda. In other cases, it practically acted as an official voice of the executive power. We will now detail three examples of how this was put into practice, and thus we will show how a think tank can help governments effectively put into practice innovative public policies.

1) **The prestige factor**: the fact that the team was part of a prestigious Buenos Aires organization was useful for the local government’s strategy, which stressed the fact that experienced professionals were in charge of developing key aspects of the program. However, this same strategy eventually led to the accusation from some groups of this being a “foreign” project. Because of that, this element eventually was discarded for the public “selling” of the project, and its use was limited to different contexts, such as other provincial governments, foreign academics, etc.

2) **The independence factor**: the fact that FGS was an external organization with high autonomy for developing the project allowed it to guarantee the non-interference of the government in some key aspects of the implementation process. For example, it made it possible to establish an evaluation committee that was completely independent from the ministry. It also permitted the team to talk to opposition parties or groups, and to educators not identified with the provincial government, from a different perspective, less influenced by suspicion than if it had been part of the ministry. It finally allowed the team to take charge during the current year of the auditing program for the schools. This is a task where independence of criteria and action is essential in attaining the goals of transparency and effective use of public funds.

3) **The flexibility factor**: provincial bureaucracies in Argentina are very rigid organisms that have tight restrictions for action. For FGS, being an external organization with its own funding and hiring capabilities was essential to keep the necessary flexibility to perform all its responsibilities. In stark contrast to the different sections of the ministry, the team could allocate its resources according to the project’s short-term needs, in a process that had several changes from one month to the next. Both the

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7 An extensive literature in the U.S. explains the many differences among the almost 40 laws already passed by American States’ legislatures, and the consequences that they have had on the development of their respective charter schools programs.

8 The auditing is being done by CIPPEC, another Buenos Aires policy implementation think tank. The heads of the project are however the same as during the initial phases of the implementation.
ministry and state-run schools are severely limited in their ability to do this, because of the numerous restrictions and rules that affect the use of financial resources and personnel hiring.

Had the government lacked the political vision and courage to carry on with a policy that has so many powerful enemies, it would not have been possible to develop successfully the San Luis charter schools project. At the same time, it was a crucial fact that a policy implementation think tank had a main role in the process. First, the same idea of creating charter schools was brought by a think tank to the government of San Luis. Second, it was a responsibility of the team that went to live to San Luis to do all the economic and legal studies necessary to design the law – they even wrote the legal instruments used. FGS presented the projects in dozens of meetings, with members of the legislature, opposition groups, and many schools all over the province. The team was in charge of assisting the educators that came from all over Argentina to analyze the possibility of creating a charter school in San Luis. Finally, the team gathered a prestigious evaluation committee, and then worked with the winning groups to organize the beginning of their projects.

These tasks and many others could be performed thanks to the strong autonomy that the team had and, at the same time, the strong support given by the Minister of Education. It was a useful mix of politicians convinced by the need of a reform, and professionals dedicated to the countless details that allow any reform to be implemented, that allowed San Luis to have the first self-governing public schools of Argentina.

This experience shows how when a think tank gets involved in the micro design of policy and allocates resources to push for the implementation of policy, excellent results can be achieved. We believe that this experience can be the basis of many other similar successes developed by other think tanks. Furthermore, we believe it presents a model for the type of project that would be developed by a policy implementation think tank: one that involves bringing good ideas to the attention of policymakers, designing an effective solution to a particular problem and finally working so that the solution is implemented.

6) Conclusion

We have presented an overview of think tanks and advocacy groups in Argentina, and argued that there is a niche to be filled by a policy implementation think tank. We also presented a case study that outlines the type of work that a policy implementation think tank could do in developing countries. We hope that this paper contributes to clarifying the actual and potential role of non-profits in developing countries and in the Argentine political process in particular.

Furthermore, we hope that this paper serves also as a call to action. The best test for our ideas would be if policy implementation think tanks crop up in different countries, and then observe their actions. For starters we are founding such an organization in Argentina.
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